THIS ISSUE: PERSIAN MUSIC

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- Music, Islam and Persian Sufism
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- Swaying to Persian and Middle Eastern tunes in London

PLUS
Reviews and events in London
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Dear Reader

Jane Lewisohn, SOAS

The Iranian baby is rocked in its mother’s arms to the mode of Dashti; street vendors hawk their wares in mode of Abu ‘Ata’ or Afshari; the mason calls for a brick from his partner in Shur or Humayun or Isfahan; and the beggar appeals to the passers-by with a cry in Gusha-yi Mansuri. (Ruhu’llah Khaliqi)

From the beating human heart, the song of the nightingales, the patter of raindrops and the whistling of the wind, music pervades every aspect of human life. Each region of the Middle East brings a unique flavour to their music, informed by their native languages, dialects and local customs. Although each region and ethnicity features its own unique local musical tradition, there is a common thread underlying Middle Eastern musical traditions that makes them immediately recognizable. In this issue of The Middle East in London, we give you a taste of the flavours of Persian music.

Laudan Nooshin gives us insights into the soundscapes of an ever-changing Tehran metropolis, revealing how ancient sounds are intermixed with the modern urban cacophony. Parmis Mozafari’s article describes the resilience of female performers in Iran, where musicians constantly run the risk of falling foul of the authorities when it comes to their performances. Pejman Akbarzadeh’s review of Sepideh Raissadat’s CD shows how Persian female performers have found a receptive audience for their music in the West.

Mohammadamin Hashemi, in his analysis of the modern and traditional discourses in Persian music in Iran in the 1960s, shows how musicians in the Middle East have strived to reconnect with their musical roots in the past and the present, distancing themselves from modern innovations. Houman Sarshar and Maryam Farshadfar zoom in to give a close-up of the contributions of specific Persian musicians. Sarshar provides an overview of some of the important contributions of Jewish musicians to Persian music during recent centuries. Farshadfar focusses on the introduction and reception of the piano in Persian music and the compositions of the iconic maestro Murtaza Mahjubi, whose compositions continue to be widely performed today.

Terry Graham explains how Sufism provides the spiritual base for music in Persia and throughout much of the Middle East. Ilana Webster-Kogen demonstrates that if there is one thing that conservative Shi’ite jurisprudents and the Wahhabi fundamentalists agree on, it is that music should be kept on a tight leash or banned all together. Roya Arab in her essay on Persian and Middle Eastern music in London today gives us a glimpse into the thriving Middle Eastern music scene among the various diaspora communities in London. Stefan Williamson Fa reviews Laudan Noushinn’s book Iranian Classical Music: The Discourses and Practice of Creativity and finds it a valuable resource for those looking for an in-depth approach to Persian music. Finally Ramin Nassehi recounts the contributions of Khodadad Farmanfarmaian to the economic development of Iran, while Touraj Atabaki and Nasser Mohajer remember the contributions of Homa Nategh to the field of Iranian History.

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Standing on a flat rooftop in north Tehran on a warm summer’s evening I am immersed in sound: the overlapping strains of the call to prayer echoing from local mosques; a rock beat from a passing car; the call of birds circling the mountains; a distant ringtone; picnickers in a local park; the low-level hum of the city below’. (field notes, August 2015)

Tehran is a vibrant metropolis of more than 8 million inhabitants, cradled in the foothills of the Alborz Mountains; it has been a political and cultural centre for over 200 years. During this time it has experienced exponential growth from a walled town of around 60,000 to one of the largest cites in the region. Under Pahlavi rule (1925-1979) an extensive programme of urban expansion led to the destruction of historic buildings regarded as symbolising the regressive traditionalism of the preceding Qajar monarchs. Reza Shah Pahlavi envisioned a capital city fit for a nation that was modern, Western-facing and secular. The dominant discourses promoted the idea of modernity as incompatible with tradition and the resulting tensions, which eventually erupted in the 1979 Revolution, can still be felt, seen and – crucially – heard in many areas of life. Inspired by the work of ethnomusicologists such as Abigail Wood on the sounds of Jerusalem’s old city and Matt Sakakeeny on New Orleans, I have recently embarked on a project exploring the sounds of contemporary Tehran. Whilst Urban Studies has tended to privilege the visual and spatial, the recent attention to sound opens up exciting avenues of exploration in relation to the ways in which it shapes and is shaped by the urban context, and how it acquires meaning in relation to both public and private, live and mediated experiences. I became interested in such questions on my first extended trip to Iran as an adult in the late 1990s. One of my lasting memories, having arrived late at night and not having been in Iran for over 30 years, was being gently woken by the distant sound of the dawn azan, amplified over a city still hushed in the half-light. I felt that I was experiencing something quite unearthly. And of course, the beauty of its sound aside, the azan is a powerful symbol of religious devotion and piety, of the higher authority of God, of essence, of eternal

Recent attention to sound opens up exciting avenues of exploration in relation to the ways in which it shapes and is shaped by the urban context
It's interesting to consider both the immense changes to the sonic environment, but also how the more stable and familiar sounds – the azan, birds, water in the joob – mediate the experience of rapid urban change.

truth. Proclaimed by a disembodied voice from minarets which were once the highest points in the city, the sound is all-pervasive. This could indeed be the voice of God. Not only does the azan mark significant points in the day, until recently it would have been the most far-reaching sound in Tehran and the only sound to cross the boundaries between public and private domains.

Today, the peace and calm evoked by the azan continues to symbolise tradition, continuity and stability but the public soundscape over which it previously reigned is an increasingly diverse collage, some of which I sought to capture last summer: from taxi drivers calling out their destinations, the ubiquitous Tehran traffic, water flowing through the joob, the bustle of the Tehran bazaar, the singing of birds – caged in shops and free in the mountains, the low-level hum of Tehran from the mountains, the buzz of electricity pylons, hawkers selling their wares on the Tehran metro, street musicians, to the women’s section of a sports club or the muted sounds of a local shrine. I also talked to people about their sonic experiences of the city. One theme that emerged constantly was the rapid pace of change in Tehran’s physical infrastructure – including new buildings, roads, tunnels, and so on – something I certainly felt after a five year absence, particularly in more affluent parts of the city. But even those living in Tehran described how the almost weekly changes left them disoriented, to the extent of occasionally getting lost in familiar neighbourhoods. Others talked about the city as an organic being, growing and metamorphosing almost like a character with its own will. In this context, it’s interesting to consider both the immense changes to the sonic environment, but also how more stable and familiar sounds – the azan, birds, water in the joob – mediate the experience of such change.

I was delighted to discover that I am not the only person interested in the sounds of Tehran. The Iranian Anthropology Association’s ‘Anthropology and Culture’ group includes a project documenting Tehran sounds and conducting ‘sound walks’ around the city. It is led by Mohsen Shahrnazdar who writes about Tehran’s ‘unique and special sound’, the result of juxtaposition of the traditional and modern, with all the sounds present in industrial metropolises existing alongside what has been heard for centuries, such as the sound of peddlers, mosques, traditional bazaars, etc. In many locations, trendy cafes and restaurants where the modern and fashionable youth go can be five hundred steps away from a religious shrine or a traditional place that is mainly used by the older generations. I encountered a particularly interesting sonic juxtaposition during a visit to the old Qasr Prison, now a museum and park which during the summer evenings of 2015 hosted a festival of ‘Old Tehran’. In the block where political prisoners were previously held, the sounds of inmates and visitors shouting across the wide corridor that kept them physically separated, trying desperately to communicate with one another, have been reconstructed and broadcast to museum visitors. It was a disturbing experience from which I emerged into the festive outdoor sounds, with food stalls playing loud music and people enjoying performances of traditional street theatre: the sharp disjuncture between the sonic reconstruction of the prison’s dark history and the present-day evening entertainment was quite unsettling.

A more peaceful experience was a visit to the shrine of Emamzadeh Saleh in north Tehran. With the sunset-tinted mountains in the background, worshippers moved in and out of the shrine, picnickers sat in the courtyard, an electronic screen broadcast religious songs and images, and visitors prayed and wept at the graves of the assassinated nuclear scientists, lending this space national as well as religious significance. Here I felt a strong sense of what Martin Stokes has termed ‘public intimacy’, mediated through the various sounds which seemed to bind people together in an intense and immediate way.

The ‘Sounds of Tehran’ project has only just begun, but I hope that by exploring some of the questions above, it will be possible to learn more about individuals’ engagement with the sensory sound-worlds that they inhabit and the central role of sound in enabling them to make sense of the world around them.

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Female presence on stage has been a matter of controversy in many societies especially when this presence is perceived to conflict with the ‘duties’ of a woman as a ‘faithful wife’ or ‘sacrificing mother’, or is likely to distort her image of propriety as a ‘decent lady’. Female singing in particular has encountered restrictions and bans in various parts of the world and at different times. In Europe, until the end of the 17th century boys and castrati sang the female vocals in choruses and operas.

The situation of female performers in the Middle East has also been a direct consequence of the socio-political, cultural and religious priorities of the governing systems. In Iran, prior to the Constitutional Revolution (1906-9) – a major turning point in the history of Iranian modernisation – female performers were mostly bound to court and indoor, female-only performances. A decade after the Constitutional Revolution women began to appear in semi-public theatres and concerts. A few years later in 1924 the first public concert with a female singer took place, and in 1925 the first female singer travelled outside Iran to record her voice. This was not an easy transition as nearly all of these performers faced social, familial or religious pressures and limitations despite Reza Khan’s supportive policies for such activities (1921-25), which later became the official Pahlavi policies during his (1925-1941) and his son’s rein (Mohammad Reza Shah 1941-1979).

In time, this support paved the way for the appearance of many women as instrumentalists, singers, and dancers performing in different musical genres. The presence of female musicians – especially the stars of Persian classical music since the 1920s and then the super stars of pop music since the 1950s – transformed the music culture of the country and initiated drastic changes in the public space. This, in turn, made the restrictions imposed by the post-revolution Islamic government harder to tolerate for most people and music practitioners.

After the 1979 Revolution, pop music, dance and female solo singing were totally banned and other forms of music were limited. These restrictions have gone through a great number of changes during the last 37 years. Some forms of pop music have been legalised, some dance forms have still been banned.
Ham-khani (co-singing) was not created for its beauty, but simply as an act of resistance that generates a space for women

re-entered the public space under the name of harakat-e mozun (rhythmic movements), but female solo singing is still banned. This is due to the government’s reading of Shi’a jurisprudence which holds that the female solo singing voice must not be heard by men. The more moderate members of the regime have so far been unable to find a way to justify it within these given limits. Since the early 1990s, however, female singers have found different ways to challenge this ban and continue their work. The first attempts began when some singers tried to create new kinds of spaces for female solo singing. These included increasing the size of their private indoor (underground) performances with mixed or female-only audiences. The latter led to the creation of official female-only music festivals since November 1994. Men are banned from attending such concerts, and all the stage crew are women. Cameras and mobile phones must be handed to the female security guards upon entrance and women’s bags and bodies are searched for voice recordings and videos. The space allows women to perform freely and enjoy direct contact with their audience, but it is limited in that they cannot cooperate with male colleagues and their concerts remain marginal.

Another trend has involved holding concerts abroad. For some leading female singers this has become a regular practice, particularly in places with large Iranian diasporas such as parts of Europe and the US. The government seems to turn a blind eye to such performances or allows them to happen as a safety valve. However, most female singers do not have such opportunities, as these performances require formal invitations and external investments that only famous singers may have access to.

The last method of resistance, which is quite recent, is the recording of music and even music videos and posting them on the Internet. There have been instances of actions being taken by the government against this method, but none of the performers have faced serious problems and many continue posting their songs. This is a very simple and affordable way for any singer to push the boundaries, and one can find online numerous simple or professional voice recordings and videos. The reader can see examples of these by searching for ‘a Persian girl sings Hayedeh’s bahar song’ on YouTube, or ‘Solmaz Badri Rooze Azal’ on SoundCloud. Nevertheless, many singers avoid this as no one can predict the state’s reactions.

Since the 1979 Revolution, music, in general, has had a liminal position within Iranian political culture; so long as it does not break its political bounds, its transgressions may be tolerated and hushed. The case of female solo singing inside the country, however, is more political than cultural or religious. This became clear during the late 1990s when the reformists managed to authorise different forms of performances, but failed to legalise female solo singing. The line of argument for this is very straightforward. Firstly, as Shi’a jurisprudence has been the major source of legitimacy for Iranian government, anything that goes against it is political. Secondly, given the debates that are circulated in the country, it seems there is no way to legitimise female solo singing within Shi’a jurisprudence – for the time being. Thus the state cannot authorise female solo singing because such an act breaks the aura of religiosity that has been used to claim legitimacy for Iran’s political system. Yet the demands of the Iranian middle class, who have been changing the patterns of bans since the 1980s via their transgressions, is also a formidable force that cannot be suppressed.

Parmis Mozafari is an Ethnomusicologist who has taught and published on music, dance, and female performers in Iran. She is also a santour player and is currently a fellow at the University of St Andrews
Mohammadamin Hashemi traces the origins of the traditionalist vs modernist debate within Persian musical discourses

A discursive study of music in Iran during the 1960s

The standard way of studying music is to examine its history, genre, form and aesthetics. Posing essential questions – such as how and why each musical movement or genre emerged – might be just as interesting. Like all human endeavours, music is ‘created’ within a particular social and cultural context; the process of ‘creation’ is not isolated or independent, but is a blend of elimination, absorption, assimilation, and projection of socially constructed concepts. By situating music within its unique social context, one may gain a better understanding of why different musical movements, such as the innovations introduced by Ali-Naqi Vaziri’s Superior School of Music (Madreseh-ye Ali-ye Musiqi) on the one hand, or the traditionalist school of music on the other, waxed or waned in Iran during the 1960s.

In the wider historical context, it is clear that several different strands of theory and practice influenced the development of music in Iran over the past 200 years.

The dastgah system was codified by the Persian musicians of the 19th century. Prior to that time the standardised Persian musical repertoire known as radif had been passed down by way of oral transmission from master to student. The radif and dastgah systems became the foundation for the popular music of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. It also formed the basis for the ‘traditional versus modern’ musical discourse of the 1960s that will be dealt with below.

Classical Western music was introduced to Iran in 1868 when Alfred Jean-Baptiste Lemaire, a French military musician and composer, was invited to Iran by the Qajar monarch Naser al-Din Shah to train musicians at the Dar al-Funun music school and form a military band. By 1908, the foundations of the Tehran Symphonic Orchestra, which introduced 18th century European classical music to Iranians, were in place. The prevalence of Western classical music greatly accelerated with the rise of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 and its promotion of Western-style modernisation. In 1924, Ali-Naqi Vaziri (often referred to as the father of modern Persian music) returned from studying in Europe and introduced alternative elements into the traditional Iranian musical discourse. Although Vaziri believed that Western musical theory was more ‘developed and evolved’, his aim was to ‘develop’ the traditional Iranian dastgah as an alternative to the Europhile musical discourse that was being officially promoted. To this end he applied Western musical theory and techniques to the


Ali-Naqi Vaziri applied Western musical theory and techniques to the Persian musical radif in order to create a ‘modern Iranian music’
Persian musical *radif*, reintroducing the *dastgah* system, which had been virtually abandoned, in order to create a ‘modern Iranian music’.

As in many other countries in the Middle East, the opposing discourses of ‘traditionalism versus modernism’ came to dominate Iranian music during the 1960s. Traditionalists distanced themselves from Vaziri’s discourse by discarding what they saw as unnecessary musical ornamentation; they rejected the notion that Western music theory represented any real musical ‘evolution’, focusing only on the *dastgah* and *radif* as incarnating the precious, ‘traditional’ national heritage of Iran. They aspired to ‘return’ to ‘authentic’ artistic and cultural values and forms, so as to become ‘purely Iranian’. There was a general trend towards rejection of Western cultural dominance in Iran at this time among intellectuals.

Two important events served as catalysts to this traditionalist musical discourse. The first was the UNESCO International Music Council’s Congress of 1961 on the Preservation of Traditional Forms of the Learned Music of the Orient and the Occident, held at Tehran University in April of that year. This congress, with its emphasis on preservation of traditional forms of world music, brought together traditional music specialists from all over the world. It inspired the musicians and cultural authorities in favour of preserving the traditional heritage of Iranian music and those who were opposed to the introduction of more modern methods and what they considered an ‘artificial’ hybrid of Western-Eastern forms pioneered by the likes of Vaziri.

The second was the foundation of the Centre for the Preservation of Iranian Traditional Music (*Markaz-i hifz o ishay-yi musiqi-yi sunnati-yi Iran*) in 1968 by Dr Dariush Safwat with the help of Reza Ghotbi, the Director of National Iranian Radio-Television. This centre is often credited with saving traditional Persian music from extinction. Nur Ali Borumand, a colleague of Dr Safwat at The Centre, was also passionate about preserving and promoting the Persian *dastgah* and the *radif*. In 1965, at the invitation of Medhi Barkishly, Head of the Music Department at Tehran University, he began teaching classical Persian *radif* to his students there. Some of his students went on to be the most prominent Iranian musicians of the era, including the likes of Mohammad Reza Shajarian, Dariush ‘Tala’, Mohammad Reza Lotfi, and Hossein Alizadeh, to name but a few. In 1972 when the famous poet Hushang Ebtehaj (‘Sayeh’) became head of the music section at the Iranian Radio, he supported this ‘return to the roots’ of Persian music advocated by Buromand and Safwat’s students.

The famous *Golha* (Flowers) radio programmes are an interesting example of these discourses. These programmes were conceived, and produced by Davoud Pirnia in 1956 until his retirement in 1967. They were then continued by a series of other producers until 1972, when Hushang Ebtehaj began producing the *Golchin-e hafteh* (Weekly Bouquet) programmes until 1979 when they were taken off the air. The Iranian music featured in the *Golha* programmes – which incorporated both classical and modern poetry and music – was broadcast to a national audience and became extremely popular throughout Iran. These programmes were broadcast during the midst of the Cold War, when both nationalistic and anti-communist sentiments were riding high, and were familiar and reassuring. Their great popularity was in part due to the fact that 1960s Iran was an era of return to traditional cultural values. At the same time, the newly-formed National Iranian Radio and Television began organising arts festivals, such as the Shiraz Arts and Culture Festival (1967–1978) in which masters and students from The Centre were featured.

In conclusion, it was during the 1960s that traditionalist musical discourses, those which aspired to return to the ‘authentic’ and ‘purely Iranian’ musical roots, came to dominate much of the musical discourse in Iran. This traditionalist discourse marginalised ‘modernised’ Iranian music, without affecting the position of Western classical music in Iran. The reasons underlying this were largely related to issues of identity. Western classical music was always separate and isolated from traditional Iranian music, whereas ‘modernised’ Iranian music had tried to incorporate Western elements into Iranian music and so created a confusion of identities. In the end, the discourse of the return to traditional musical values excluded any compromise between modernity and tradition.

Mohammadamin Hashemi is a PhD researcher on Iranian popular music at SOAS. His MA dissertation focussed on the 1960s’ musical discourses of Iran.

*Modernised* Iranian music had tried to incorporate Western elements into Iranian music and so created a confusion of identities.
Jews have been living in Iran for over 2,700 years. Throughout this time they consistently remained the single largest community of Jews east of the Mediterranean outside of Israel and influenced many aspects of life and culture throughout greater Iran. One example of this influence can be observed in the realm of music; Iranian Jews played a role in the preservation and development of Persian music, both as masters of Persian classical music and as celebrated popular entertainers or motreb. Below is biographical information about some of the more important Jewish Iranian musicians of the 20th century whose achievements have left a lasting impact on classical Persian music.

Within this category, the kamancheh player Musa Khan Kashi (1856-1939) is one of the earliest musicians about whom we have reliable biographical information. Also admired for his singing voice, Musa Kashi was given the honorific title of Khan by Zell al-Soltan, prince governor of Isfahan and son of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848-1896), in whose court Musa Khan served for nearly 20 years. Musa Khan was famous for his innovation of the six-stringed kamancheh, a traditionally three-stringed instrument that took on its now-requisite fourth string in the mid-19th century. While Musa Khan’s six-stringed kamancheh did not prove a lasting tradition among later players, his chief pupil Bagher Khan Rameshgar was known to use one regularly.

Rahim Ghanuni Shirazi (1871-1944) is another Jewish musician from this period to hold a position of particular esteem in the history of Persian music, most notably for reintroducing the qanun (trapezoidal zither) into Iran around 1900. The instrument had not been in use there since the reign of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576). This earned him the accolade Ghanuni, which he officially adopted as his last name in 1926. During his lifetime, Rahim Ghanuni remained the sole master of the qanun in Iran, and while he had some pupils, none surpassed him. After Rahim’s death, his son Jalal Ghanuni (1900-1987) became the next most renowned qanun player in Iran.

Born in Tehran, master tar player Yahya Haroun Zarpanjeh (1897-1932), also known as Yahya Khan, was one of the most prolific Jewish recording artists of his time. His surviving records demonstrate his exceptional technical mastery on the tar with his unusually fast and strong pick and his effortlessly fluid tremolos (riz). Of particular note among these recordings are his Sorud-e melli (national anthem) in the Mahur mode with Jamal Safavi on vocals and arrangements by Mohammad-Taghi Bahar (1886-1951; Columbia record label 15038), and his sessions in 1928 with Parvaneh on vocals for His Master’s
Arguably the most renowned Jewish master of Persian classical music, and indeed one of 20th-century Iran’s leading musicians, is composer and tar player Morteza Khan Neydavoud

Voice label. Yahya Khan’s other regular collaborators were the singers Nahid Nikbakht and Ali Khan Farazi, with each of whom he recorded several albums for the Columbia label, again in 1928. Yahya Zarpanjeh died of an infection in a hospital in Tehran due to post-surgical complications, thus cutting short a promising career as a classical musician. Master tar player Nasrollah Zarrinpanjeh is Yahya Khan’s most acclaimed pupil.

Solayman Ruhafza (1900-1995) was a master of Persian classical music. He was a Skilled maestro who performed with Morteza Khan Neydavoud (1900-1990). This studio recording of his performance subsequently became the basis for the first-ever complete notation of the radif, published in 1963 by the Iranian Ministry of Fine Arts. These recordings themselves also represent the first ever recordings of the complete repertoire of Persian classical music.

Yona Dardashti (1903-1993) is the only Jewish vocalist in recorded Persian classical music history to have received wide national acclaim as a master vocalist. Dardashti learned the basics of the avaz radif from his father, a cantor, before studying with one of the most celebrated masters of his time Mirza Hosayn Sa’atsaz. A singer in the style of the Khorasan School, Dardashti was known for his powerful voice, high range and smooth yodelling. In 1947 Dardashti began singing for Radio Tehran, where, alternating with Taj Esfahani, he performed on the live weekly programme Shoma va Radio (You and the Radio) every Thursday evening and Friday morning for nearly 19 years. Despite his numerous concerts and live radio performances, very few recordings were ever made of Dardashti’s voice, with even fewer having survived. Dardashti moved to Rishon-LeTzion, Israel in 1967, where he funded the construction of the Shushan ha-Bira Synagogue, himself becoming its cantor. During one of his trips back to Tehran in the mid-1970s, Dardashti recorded selections of liturgical music including the Patakh Eliahu, and fragments of Selikhot prayers, all of which were also re-released in Los Angeles in the mid-1980s.

Arguably the most renowned Jewish master of Persian classical music, and indeed one of 20th-century Iran’s leading musicians, is composer and tar player Morteza Khan Neydavoud (1900-1990). Neydavoud is among the very few Iranian master musicians to have created a style of tar-playing so distinctly his own that it bears his name. Alongside this technical blueprint, he is credited with the discovery and training of a number of Iranian master musicians; most notably Qamar-al-Moluk Vaziri and Gholam-Hosayn Banan, two of Iran’s greatest recorded vocalists. Neydavoud first met Qamar around 1920, and after a few years of training he organised her first concert held in 1924 at Tehran’s Grand Hotel. From 1926 until the end of their artistic collaboration, Neydavoud and Qamar would become the most recorded artists of their time, producing over 100 albums for His Master’s Voice and Polyphon Records. These albums represent that period’s first methodical recording of the complete radif of music and song combined. In addition to his collaboration with Qamar, Neydavoud regularly worked with at least three other legendary female figures of Persian classical music, namely Ruhangiz, Ezat Rouhbakhsh and Molouk Zarabi.

Morteza Khan was exceptionally gifted in composing pish-daramads, chaharmezeubs, and tasnifs, most of which he wrote between 1926 and 1950. In addition to his exceptional skills as a composer, Morteza Khan’s unparalleled mastery of the complete repertoire of Persian classical music ranks him among such late 19th-century pillars as Mirza Abdollah by having his own signature radif. Known as the Neydavoud radif, this arrangement of 297 gushehs of the seven dastgahs and five avazes, each identified by name prior to performance, was recorded in its entirety over the course of 18 months with Morteza Khan on tar in the studios of Radio Iran starting in 1969. These recordings contained 57 more gushehs than Mirza Abdollah’s canon radif, and as such remain the most expansive radif recorded to date.

Houman M. Sarshar is an independent scholar of modern Persian literature and Jewish Iranian history and culture. He has published widely on the history of Jews in Iran, and his current project about the role of Iranian Jews in Persian classical and minstrel music is due to appear soon.
Maryam Farshadfar describes the introduction and the evolution of piano practice in Iran

The introduction of piano practice in Iran

Piano, a Western musical instrument, has a unique historical position in Persian music. Iran has its own music as part of its culture, a classical canon with an enduring repertoire and characteristic techniques handed down from generation to generation with some improvements made along the way. When the first keys were played on a piano in Tehran in the 1870s, the members of the imperial court were the exclusive audience. At the time, Sorourolmolk, the master musician of the Qajar palace during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1848-1896), attempted to change the tuning of piano and play traditional Persian tunes in a way which was inspired by santour and tar techniques. Thus, the practice of piano in Iran was immediately associated with the music that had already existed for generations. This would eventually become known as ‘Persian piano’. Later, the educated elite of the society and students of the first military music school in Tehran (Sho’beh-ye Music-e Darolfonoun) were among the first practitioners of Persian piano.

Around the time of the Persian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1907), piano was performed in private concerts and at garden parties (Anjoman-e Okhovat) as a solo instrument, or as an accompaniment for vocalists in small ensembles. During this period, Persian piano practice gradually matured, culminating in the compositions and performances of Morteza Mahjoubi (1900-1965). Mahjoubi is considered the most prominent composer and performer who established the traditional Persian piano (Piano-ye Sonnati) as a distinctive art form. The most notable element in traditional Persian piano is that the piano must be tuned in accord with Persian microtone intervals and not to the equal temperament system that is typically used in Western music. This means that each piano, depending on the set of songs to be played, will be tuned exclusively for the different set of intervals found in the various native modes in those songs. Morteza Mahjoubi’s music for the Persian piano expresses aesthetic elements of Persian classical music including typical embellishments and

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Javad Ma’roufi’s innovative style of Persian piano became widespread and enjoyed great popularity for many years.

improvisational components characteristic of original techniques played on local musical instruments. Moreover, because of the monophonic character of Persian music, Mahjoubi’s left hand mostly doubles the melodies in the right hand, echoing the treble voice in the lower register, or it plays single base notes. Mahjoubi’s audio recordings and manuscripts are the main educational resource for the new generation of traditional-style Persian pianists who want to sustain this practice in the modern world.

During the reign of the Pahlavis (1925-1979), a vast modernisation movement took place in Iran. Music schools were founded, many more pianos were imported, Radio Tehran established music programmes, and several performance venues were constructed – all of which lent support to the formation of a piano culture in society and made the piano more accessible to the general public. In the early 1920s, Colonel Ali-Naqi Vaziri shaped modern methods of music education in Iran, founding a private music school to train interested students. In 1923, with the establishment of Vaziri’s Superior School of Music in Tehran (Madreseh-ye Ali-ye Musiqi), young musicians began to learn Western music pedagogy such as solfeggio, aural skills, harmony, and classical piano. Javad Ma’roufi (1915-1993) was among the graduates of Vaziri’s school. Trained as a classical pianist, Ma’roufi was also an expert in Persian music and thus was able to transform the field of Persian piano by employing Western harmonies within the Persian melodies. The result was an entirely new trend in Persian piano practice, totally different from Mahjoubi’s traditional style, one that conformed instead to Western tuning, and required no tuning adjustments. Ma’roufi’s innovative style of Persian piano became widespread and enjoyed great popularity for many years.

In 20th-century Tehran, with the rapid expansion of Western classical music, the practice of Persian piano based almost entirely on indigenous Persian instrumental techniques, forms, and melodies, no longer held an exclusive place in piano performance in Iran. Western classical piano co-existed with the Persian style. With the inauguration of the Tehran Conservatory (Honarestan Ali-ye Musiqi), renowned European and Russian pianists were invited to teach the Western classical repertoire to the most promising students. Other Persians pursued their piano studies in European conservatories and became known the world over, such as Emanuel Melik-Aslanian an alumnus of the Hamburger Konservatorium (1937), and Tania Achet, third place winner in the sixth International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw (1960).

Classical piano is, in fact, the only field of official pianistic study in Iran today. As popular as the practice of Persian piano has become in Iran, it has never been taught in the conservatories and universities there. Mahjoubi taught his traditional piano style only in private lessons. His teaching materials were manuscripts that he created on his own, based on the Persian radif. He geared each lesson differently according to each individual student’s needs. Ma’roufi, a classically trained pianist, also taught his own innovative style of Persian piano in private lessons in Tehran. Currently, his style of Persian piano music is the more prevalent, in large part because he published his compositions with fewer tuning constraints and made them available to a broader circle of interested students.

Today, promising attempts to revitalise the art of Persian piano are on the rise. This is especially true for Mahjoubi’s style whose outstanding legacy marks a milestone in the evolution of Persian piano practice. Presently, Mahjoubi’s best student, Fakhri Malekpour, is teaching the traditional style of Persian piano in private lessons in Tehran. The effort to awaken interest and to train a new generation of practitioners might just mean that this unique form of piano art will become more widely known and practised alongside other pianistic trends in the future.

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You beat the drum of separation; You play the flute of Iraq; You mix the gusha of Busalek with the gusha of Hijaz! (Rumi, Diwan-i Shams)

The relationship between Sufism and music in the lands of Islam has been very much that of a marital partnership, with its full share of harmony and dissonance. While classical music was cultivated in the Sufi khanaqah or zawiya (lodge), it was also given a boost by the patronage of princes – first the Arab caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty, followed by the Persianised caliphs of the succeeding Abbasids.

The palace provided a secular environment for development of the genre, ‘rising above’ the religious law, as it were, while the khanaqah provided the spiritual base, the wellspring which constantly fed the musical tradition, keeping it vital and rich and preventing it from becoming stagnant or pretentious. What had once been the court music of the Sasanian Shahs of the second Persian Empire (224-649 CE) was retained by Zoroastrian converts to Islam and blended with the Arabic language of the Islamic revelation, effectively the new ‘court’ language of the caliphs.

Indeed, musically a Sasanian courtier would have been at home hearing the strains of an Abbasid period (751-1258 CE) court orchestra. What would have struck him as a little strange would have been the new cadences, matched to the metres of the new Arabic poetry, which it was composed to fit. However, if he travelled east to the Samanid capitals of Tus and Nishapur in Khurasan on the Iranian plateau, by the 11th century he would have encountered the old familiar Persian language being sung, though considerably modified and intoned in rhythms shaped to the Arabic metrical system.

Consistent with both pre-Islamic traditions – the Jahiliyya poetry of the Arabs and the court minstrelsy of the Persians – it was the dictates of poetry which led the way to musical formulation. On the other hand, it was the ancient tradition of modal complexity which governed the choice of mode and melody. Given this base, Arabic melodies could be grafted onto the Persian trunk of the musical tree, as easily as those of successive Turkish, Indian and other ethnic traditions – as reflected in such names in the traditional nomenclature as hijaz for one of the gushas, or melodies, of Iranian traditional music; Bayat-i Turk for one of the modes; and Rak-i Hindi (literally, ‘Indian Raga’) for another gusha.

However, if the caliphs and princes with their courtly retinues took the lead in cultivating the traditional classical music in the Islamic context, it was left to the emerging Sufis to give the new music a spiritual grounding...
Traditional music is, in fact, so marked by Sufi values that many of the very terms that it employs are inspired by Sufism.

a spiritual grounding. While the work of technical re-creation was undertaken by Persian musicians/composers under the Persian Barmakid viziers in Abbasid Baghdad, it was up to the Sufis to make it a vehicle for spiritual expression – even more, of spiritual liberation. In contrast with the Christians and Jews, whose liturgical chanting provided a sacred canon which could inspire the mystic along with the ordinary worshipper, Islam’s sacred music went no further into liturgy than the chanting of the Qur’an, the call to prayer five times a day from the minarets, and invocatory prayers (du’a or munajat) offered publicly on particular occasions.

The Sufis came to create a middle-ground music – neither sacred nor profane, yet partaking of both domains. They followed the same procedure as the court musicians/composers, building their music initially around poetry, except that they spiritualised the process. Where the Abbasid court music would be woven around worldly Arabic poetry by the likes of the court laureate Abu Nuwas, the Sufis took the courtly themes of love and wine and turned them into transmutatory symbols. In the process one of the two greatest names in Arabic mystical thought emerged, that of the Egyptian Dhu’n-Nun (d. 859 CE), himself a Sufi master. The other great figure was his countryman four centuries later, the poet Ibn Farid (d. 1235 CE), whose Qasidat al khamriyya (‘Ode to Wine’) is the classic work in the genre, while Dhu’n-Nun is noted for his innovation in forms of short poems of complaint to the Beloved.

The line of transmission from pre-Islamic Persian tradition involved a Sasanian musical master teaching his art to Ibrahim al-Mawsel (d. 804 CE), who passed it on to his son, Ishaq (d. 850 CE). A pupil of the latter, Zeryab, carried the music to the court of the Umayyad Amir, Abdu’Rahman II, in Cordoba, Spain, in 821 CE. After a period of incubation – during which Andalusian Arabic poetry enjoyed one of the richest expressions of any poetic tradition, along with a brilliant flowering of Sufism in the region – the two traditions produced the mystical poetry and music of the likes of al-Shushtari (d. 1269 CE) and the renowned Ibn Arabi (1165-1240 CE), the last of the seminal Arabic-language Sufi poets.

With the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258, the hub of culture moved further east and Persian came to take over from Arabic as the prime language of Sufi poetry. The Sufi, Qutb al-Din Shirazi (d. 1310 CE), was the first to expound in Persian on music theory, devoting an important part of his treatise Durrat at-taj (‘Pearl of the Crown’) to the ‘science of music.’

In contrast to Western music, which enjoys horizontal freedom for exploration, Islamic traditional music is afforded the vertical freedom of liberation. The traditional musicians – whether Sufi or not – use a Sufi term to express the success of a musical performance. There needs to be a heart-to-heart rapport between performer and listener. If it succeeds, it is said to give state (hal).

Traditional music is, in fact, so marked by Sufi values that many of the very terms that it employs are inspired by Sufism.

Terry Graham is an independent scholar specialising in Sufism and Persian poetry. He spent 12 years in Iran, working for Iranian television and English-language newspapers.
As we reach the five-year anniversary of the events that launched the Arab Spring, the Arab world and the Western press are revisiting the causes and outcomes of uprisings that have profoundly changed the region. The borders of states and the balance of power across the Arab world (including the rise of Iran) have dramatically altered the terms of musical life and cultural production from Morocco to Oman, with the movement of people giving rise to new Middle Eastern artistic cores and peripheries. The historic centres of Baghdad, Aleppo and Cairo as powerhouses of musical influence have given way to two major trends in Middle Eastern cultural production as each of those cities has undergone political turmoil. First, we see the bottom-up emergence of a generation of musicians on the move, often involved in electronica or hip-hop, cropping up in Beirut or Europe. And second, one can no longer ignore the top-down cultural initiatives of the resource-rich Gulf states. In either case, the grand schools of oud education, transmission of maqam knowledge, and vibrant practices of the sammiya (virtuosic listeners) have been replaced rapidly by youth culture and corporate sponsorship of multimedia performance practices.

For the connoisseur who treasures the public concert and experience of tarab (ecstasy), the news sounds grim. Musicians censored, tortured, driven into exile, or simply put out of business by ongoing war seem to dominate the headlines of arts magazines. Whether musicians are targeted by the Syrian regime, displaced by Islamists who disapprove of music, or lose their audience to floods of exile, the great schools of Middle Eastern music are suffering a loss of livelihood from the political situation across the region. Meanwhile, musical production in northern Syria continues apace, as polished videos of the nasheed genre, the vocal music deemed halal by conservative clerics, multiply across social media as a propaganda component of militant recruiters. Sung in literary Arabic, evoking violent imagery, and often incorporating visuals from Western cinema or video games, these songs meant to inspire would-be militants abroad dominate a production landscape in places where long-standing musical traditions have been shut down.

Yet the young people of Beirut or Casablanca continue to create and produce despite the hardships. Electronica has never been more innovative than in Beirut today; it happens underground, in clubs and away from the media spotlight. Many of the musicians responsible for the burst of creativity spend half the year in Europe, while others collaborate with the flood of Syrians now constituting a fifth of Lebanon's resident population. Hip-hop,
of course, has been sold as the soundtrack of the Arab Spring, ascribing it substantial imagined political clout. To music lovers, it is heartening to think that music might make such a difference – such as the calls to release El General from prison in winter 2010, the heartfelt singing of 'Biladi, biladi' from Tahrir Square in 2011, or the ongoing role of rap groups like DAM in advocating for Palestinian self-determination. However, the hope of actual influence of musicians is cut down by the images of brutality against those musicians, such as Ibrahim Qashoush's alleged assassination in 2011, or even the covering of Umm Kulthum’s face on the iconic statue in Cairo by Salafis. That music plays an important role in the mobilisation of the ‘people’ during popular protest is evident from these events, but the rapid crackdown on the rights of musicians and their audiences also demonstrates the precarity of fighting powerful government or militant forces with song.

Perhaps the greatest irony of the past five years is the reconfiguration of cultural prestige away from the historic centres of Cairo and Damascus and towards Doha and Abu Dhabi, or the other non-democratic Gulf mega-cities looked down upon as cultural backwaters only a few decades ago. Long considered musically relevant only for its vast repertoire of the pearl divers, the Gulf has emerged in the past decade as a major patron of the arts. Fuelled by anxiety over how to remain sustainable once the oil runs out, the petro-states of Abu Dhabi (plus neighbouring Dubai and Sharjah), Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, as well as Oman, have embarked on a set of projects unmatched anywhere in the world to build arts infrastructure. Their museum projects are well known, as are the Qatari royal family’s heavy investment in the contemporary art market (as well as European real estate, to say nothing of the controversial funding, along with Saudi Arabia of some of the militants causing the turmoil in Iraq and Syria). Less well-known are the musical endeavours such as the Muscat Opera House, whose guards are under direct instructions from Sultan Qaboos to protect the building. Projects like the Katara complex in Doha or the new performing arts centres on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi promise to bring talent from all over the world to these emerging cities, but they also provide support to Arab artists from the more troubled regions of the Arab world (the former boasting a residency with Marcel Khalife).

These Gulf mega-projects earn criticism across the Middle East, whether from secularists accusing them of attempting to ‘buy culture’, or from purists who find the glitziness distasteful. Scholars, too, have questioned the expansion of Gulf and Wahhabi interests across the region, with experts like Kristina Nelson identifying the increasing popularity of austere Saudi (Qur’anic) recitation styles across the Muslim world, threatening to eclipse the virtuosic Cairo style that has long been

With the upheaval in the Middle East and North Africa, and the large-scale displacement of people, Europe has arisen as a major hub for Arab music. No doubt, Paris has always been an important centre for Rai production and performance, and Berlin a de facto capital for Turkish hip-hop, but London and Scandinavia have become crucial nodes for Arab performers promoting their work and selling albums. The Barbican hosted Lebanese pop band Mashrou’ Leila in November (following a Marcel Khalife festival), and the Palestinian rap groups from Ramallah, Amman, Beirut and Israel usually make London their first stop on an international tour. The representation of SOAS students at these concerts is never anything short of staggering; our students remain committed to learning about Middle Eastern music whether through formal courses, or through our many ensembles run by the Student Union or through supporting the flourishing of Middle Eastern artists under intense pressure.

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London has a thriving live music scene, and Persian and Middle Eastern music is not left out: it is facilitated by a host of musical venues and festivals spread across the city, various societies, institutions and concert organisers. Together they serve an international audience living, visiting and studying in London. A major part is played by the educational institutions teaching, disseminating and providing a performance platform, such as SOAS which acts as a major venue for visiting artists and students to perform, as well as other ethnomusicological courses being taught across London (at City University, Goldsmiths, Kings College and Royal Holloway) which also play their part in spreading the region’s music.

For Persian and Middle Eastern music London accommodates both classical and modern, young and old, although in my humble opinion not all with the same frequency or indeed quality. A cursory overview on the Internet of musical events that took place across London since the start of 2015 shows the wide range in age, styles and venues used for musical events. From many restaurants with popular Persian and Middle Eastern music to smaller gig venues and large concert halls sharing popular and classical music, there is always something going on musically in London. The annual Nour Festival has a cornucopia of the region’s cultural offerings which are presented at various venues across Kensington and Chelsea, whilst Shubbak shares Arab culture biennially across London.

When looking at the creation, performance and consumption of Persian and Middle Eastern music, one must also consider the impact from the unprecedented spread of people from these regions in the modern world.

The exponential growth of diaspora communities over the past 40 years has created a mélange of artistic styles, manners, forms and expressions.

Roya Arab gives a brief tour of the Persian and Middle Eastern music scene in London

Across London in any given month Persian and Middle Eastern music is performed by native artists, sometimes alongside their Western colleagues.

With an exponential growth of diaspora communities over the past 40 years. A survey of demographics looking at Iranian and Middle Eastern people residing outside the region shows an uphill spike in the scale and spread of these peoples across Europe and America since the late 1970s. This has created a mélange of artistic styles, manners, forms and expressions within the diaspora community, including those born in the region, those born outside the Middle East sometimes to both Middle Eastern and mixed parentage and not least the Western students, teachers and consumers of the region’s music. Together these groups provide fertile grounds for continuation, preservation and experimentation of old and new musical traditions.

On the experiential front, last September there was a night of Iranian music to illustrate the huge range of Iranian musical life produced by Iranians of different ages, genres and varying connections with Iran. This was co-curated by myself and Arts Canteen – which promotes the region’s culture – to coincide with the Inside Out Iran art exhibition 4-27 Sept 2015 showcasing young Iranian urban art. It began with Adib Rostami on kamancheh (Iranian spiked fiddle) and Pouya Mahmoodi on a specially adapted guitar with moveable frets – allowing quarter and semi-tones – improvising on ancient Persian themes. Then it was the turn of the deeply electronic instrumental composer Pouya Ehsaie who took the audience on an audio/visual electronic Odyssey. All three musicians were born in Iran and reside in the UK. Next, it was the author of this article – who writes and records English songs – who performed with a nod to the nostalgic state of exile by singing an old Iranian song ‘Sultan Ghalbha’ from the eponymous movie made in 1968, which the audience gustily joined with some absorbing the music in immovable silence. Next came an Egyptian Iranian musician Lafwandah, who had never been to Iran, accompanied by her producer on CDJ (Compact Disc Jockey). The night ended with one of the first highly-acclaimed, Western female electronic producers Leila, who at one point mixed a live santour (dulcimer) into her electronic world. Leila was born in Iran and has not returned since leaving with her family in 1979. This wide spectrum of musical styles and genres is not just the story of the Iranian musical experience in Europe and America, it also reflects large swathes of the Middle East that have seen their peoples dispersed with some unable to return.

When sitting in the University College London’s Logan Hall listening to the Persian maestro Alizadeh (one of Iran’s leading composers and musicians, a virtuoso tar and setar player who has invented two new musical instruments: sallaneh and shurangiz from the ancient Iranian lute) and his ensemble, I was struck by the reverential silence and the numerous ways in which the audience was absorbing the music. I spent more than half of the concert studying the audience: different ages and social classes, the hall was packed, some nodding to the poems that moved them, some swaying, some absorbing the music in immovable silence. It had the feeling of a Western classical musical concert listening to an eminent conductor, soloist or a rarely-heard, much-loved composition performed by a renowned ensemble or orchestra. It was, however, tinged with sad political realities that separated many of these people from their countries of origin. There was a melancholic wistfulness amidst the joyous aural celebration that was palpable in the audience’s warm and attentive embrace of the musicians on stage.

Across London in any given month Persian and Middle Eastern music is performed by native artists, sometimes alongside their Western colleagues, playing both traditional Middle Eastern and Persian repertoires, Western classical repertoires as well as fusions of Middle Eastern, world music and modern Western-style popular music. In spite and perhaps because of the socio-political context of Persian and Middle Eastern musical performances in London, the range and quality of music performed here competes well with any other metropolis.

Roya Arab is a musician and archaeologist. She is currently Honorary Research Assistant at IoA, UCL and PhD candidate at City University researching music in Iranian film.
Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Persia [Iran] in 1979, women have not been allowed to sing solos in public. This issue has had an adverse effect on the presence of women singers in the country. Sepideh Raissadat, who studied Persian vocal music in Tehran and ethnomusicology in Toronto, is one of very few women singers from Iran who has been able to perform actively outside her homeland. She has been cited as a ‘new female hope for Persian vocal music’.

In *Rhapsody of Roses*, one of her latest albums, Sepideh has turned to Persian songs from the 1950s, works which were performed originally in the Radio Tehran programme called *Golha* (Flowers) that was broadcast for more than three decades. Composers who wrote for the *Golha* Orchestra were masters in Persian music, most of whom had a basic knowledge of Western harmony and orchestration. In spite of their simple orchestration and harmony, many of the *Golha* songs remained Persian favourites because of their rich melodies and emotional impact. After the 1979 Revolution, the cultural authorities banned those composers from the Persian music scene as they believed that music had to be revolutionary or religious, not romantic or poetic.

Even though they belong to the post-revolutionary generation, Sepideh Raissadat and Iman Vaziri are keen to show their appreciation for the beauty of the works of pre-revolutionary Persian musicians. Sepideh and her ensemble have been quite faithful to the original song structure, but surprisingly their versions are almost completely unison without even the basic harmonies of the 1950s’ performances and can be boring for today’s listeners. Given the extraordinary skill of Iman Vaziri as a performer and composer, it is puzzling that the arrangements in *Rhapsody of Roses* are even simpler than those of *Golha*.

The CD contains six songs by Morteza Mahjoubi (1900-1965), Ali Tajvidi (1919-2006) and Parviz Yahaghi (1936-2007), three iconic Persian music masters and songwriters from the 1950s. While the album’s goal is introducing the Persian songs from that era, one work by Iman Vaziri (b. 1970) is also included in this collection.

The old pieces were originally performed with a chamber orchestra of around 25 musicians playing Western and Persian instruments. But in the current performance eight Western instruments have been used with only one Persian percussion instrument, the *tombak*.

Although the instrumental part of the album is not noteworthy, Sepideh Raissadat may attract new listeners to the beauty of Persian songs from the 1950s through her warm voice.

*Pejman Akbarzadeh is a Persian-Dutch pianist, journalist and music historian. He is the author of a four-volume book about 20th-century musicians of Iran. Currently he works with the BBC Persian Service.*
The central creative role of the performer in Iranian classical music has led to an emphasis on the role of ‘improvisation’ in describing the tradition. Drawing on years of in-depth research with Iranian musicians, Nooshin challenges such a description by questioning the dichotomy between notions of ‘improvisation’ and ‘composition’, suggesting such a binary has served to mark essentialised differences between Western art and Other music.

Nooshin provides a detailed analysis and examination of the practices, discourses and social life of the radif, the repertoire which has been at the centre of the performance of Iranian classical music over the past century. The radif is a collection of pieces organised according to the mode which is studied and memorised by students and forms the basis for creative performance. Despite only becoming standardised fairly recently through the advent of notation, sound recording and the institutionalisation of musical education in Iran, the radif has become the marker and framework of authenticity and tradition within the performance of Iranian classical music.

The book makes important contributions towards understanding musical creativity and the creative process through the lens of Iranian classical music. Chapter two provides the wider context to the study in hand, summarising the historical and social developments which have led to changes in musical discourse in Iran over the last century. Here, Nooshin outlines how Iranian classical music has been shaped significantly by the processes of modernisation and Westernisation, and by the introduction of new ideas about ‘authenticity’ and nationalism in the post-revolution period. She argues that there has been an emergence in binary thinking in relation to creative practice in Iranian music, between the act of composition and improvisation. Building on the work of other ethnomusicologists, she goes on to challenge this strict division by focussing on the limits of improvisation and the authority of the radif. Nooshin sees the ways in which musicians vary the material of the radif as central to keeping the balance between creative freedom and respecting the demands of tradition. This balance leads to a constant negotiation through performance.

Chapter three focusses on the radif, outlining more specifically the repertoire and its transmission. Chapter four, perhaps impenetrable to the non-musicologist, turns to the music ‘itself’, examining more traditional forms of performance practice by comparing a number of musicians playing a range of instruments spanning a period of more than 30 years. Here the focus is on one particular section of repertoire, dastgah Segah, to examine how musicians use the learnt repertoire to create new material in performance.

The final chapter turns away from this musicological focus through a portrait of a contemporary music project between nei player Amir Eslami and pianist Hooshyar Khayam. Their album All of You sought to challenge the constraints of the radif through the development of a musical voice which is both rooted in tradition and responsive to the contemporary moment. Drawing on extensive interviews with the artists, Nooshin gives space to the musicians’ own articulations on their approaches to the creative process in making the album. The final focus on this project not only hints towards the future direction of creative performance in Iranian music but also sums up many of the key themes of the book.

Nooshin successfully incorporates elements of postcolonial theory in a way which has long been absent in ethnomusicology. A particular strength of the book is the attention given to local discourses and terms used by the musicians themselves. This book is clearly aimed towards ethnomusicologists and is not an introductory guide to Iranian classical music. However, by combining musical analysis, social and cultural context and ethnographic insights it provides a broad and in-depth overview of Iranian classical music which will appeal to a wider audience.

Stefan Williamson Fa is a PhD candidate in social anthropology at UCL whose research looks at the role of sound in Shi’i ritual in Eastern Turkey. He is co-founder of ‘Mountains of Tongues’ a project working to preserve and promote the musical traditions of the Caucasus region.
Cycle of Fear: 
Syria’s Alawites in War and Peace

By Leon T. Goldsmith

In early 2011 an elderly Alawite sheikh lamented the long history of ‘oppression and aggression’ against his people. Against such collective memories, the Syrian uprising was viewed by many Alawites and observers as a revanchist Sunni Muslim movement and the gravest threat yet to the unorthodox Shia sub-sect. But was Alawite history really a constant tale of oppression and the Syrian uprising of 2011 an existential threat to the Alawites? This book surveys Alawite history from the sect’s inception in Abbasid Iraq up to the start of the uprising in 2011. Goldsmith shows how Alawite identity and political behaviour have been shaped by a cycle of insecurity that has prevented the group from achieving either genuine social integration or long-term security. Rather than being the gravest threat yet to the sect, the Syrian uprising, in the context of the Arab Spring, was quite possibly a historic opportunity for the Alawites finally to break free from their cycle of fear.

May 2015, Hurst, £25.00

Light from the East: 
How the Science of Medieval Islam Helped to Shape the Western World

By John Freely

Long before the European Renaissance, while the Western world was languishing in what was once called the ‘Dark Ages’, the Arab world was ablaze with the creativity of its Golden Age. This is the story of how Islamic science, which began in 8th-century Baghdad, enhanced the knowledge acquired from Greece, Mesopotamia, India and China. Through the astrologers, physicians, philosophers, mathematicians and alchemists of the Muslim world, this knowledge influenced Western thinkers – from Thomas Aquinas and Copernicus – and helped inspire the Renaissance and give birth to modern science.

March 2015, IB Tauris, £12.99

Performing al-Andalus: 
Music and Nostalgia across the Mediterranean

By Jonathan Holt Shannon

Performing al-Andalus explores three musical cultures that claim a connection to the music of medieval Iberia, the Islamic kingdom of al-Andalus, known for its complex mix of Arab, North African, Christian and Jewish influences. Jonathan Holt Shannon shows that the idea of a shared Andalusian heritage animates performers and aficionados in modern-day Syria, Morocco and Spain, but with varying and sometimes contradictory meanings in different social and political contexts. As he traces the movements of musicians, songs, histories and memories circulating around the Mediterranean, he argues that attention to such flows offers new insights into the complexities of culture and the nuances of selfhood.

July 2015, Indiana University Press, £52.00
Oman Reborn: Balancing Tradition and Modernization
By Linda Pappas Funsch

The Sultanate of Oman is one of the few 'good news' stories to have emerged from the Middle East in recent memory. This book traces the narrative of a little-known and relatively stable Arab country whose history of independence, legacy of interaction with diverse cultures, and enlightened modern leadership have transformed it in less than 50 years from an isolated medieval-style potentate to a stable, dynamic and largely optimistic country. At the heart of this fascinating story is Oman’s sultan, Taboos bin Said, friend to both East and West, whose unique leadership style has resulted in both domestic and foreign policy achievements during more than four decades in office. Exploring Oman from a historical perspective, Funsch examines how the country’s unique blend of tradition and modernisation has enabled it to succeed while others in the region have failed. Accounts of the author’s own experiences with Oman’s transformation add rich layers of depth, texture and personality to the narrative.

September 2015, Palgrave Macmillan, £62.50

The Penguin State of the Middle East Atlas
By Dan Smith

The Middle East is in a constant state of change, and understanding it has never been more important. In this guide to the region and its politics, Dan Smith unravels the history of the Middle East from the Ottoman Empire to the present day. With the acute and fair-minded analysis readers have come to expect from him, Smith highlights key issues and maps their global implications to explain why the Middle East has become, and will remain, the focal point of foreign policy. There can be no one-line summary of the Middle East, but in The Penguin State of the Middle East Atlas, Smith gives readers the primer they need to understand the ongoing conflicts in the region.

January 2015, Penguin Books, £25.00

Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment: From Motrebi to Losanjelesi and Beyond
By GJ Breyley and Sasan Fatemi

In Persian Music and Popular Entertainment, GJ Breyley and Sasan Fatemi examine the historically overlooked motrebi milieu, with its marginalised characters, from luti to gardan kolof and mashiti, as well as the tenacity of motrebi who continued their careers against all odds. They then turn to losanjelesi, the most pervasive form of Iranian popular music that developed as motrebi declined, and related musical forms in Iran and its diasporic popular cultural centre, Los Angeles. This book makes available musical transcriptions, analysis and lyrics that illustrate the complexities of this history, and it reveals parallels between the decline of motrebi and the rise of ‘modernity’.

November 2015, Routledge, £90.00
**BOOKS IN BRIEF**

**The Iranian Political Language:**
*From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*

By Yadullah Shahibzadeh

In this study of modern Iran, Yadullah Shahibzadeh examines changes in people’s understanding of politics and democracy. He analyses the way Iranian intellectuals and ordinary people talk about politics and democracy, individually and collectively, and the ways they rationalise their political postures and actions. He also investigates the historiographies of socio-political structures and cultural constructions in Iran. This challenges the monopoly of intellectuals’ and political elites’ perspectives on historical events and by demonstrating the intellectual and political agency of ordinary people.

October 2015, Palgrave Macmillan, £65.00

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**Desert Songs of the Night:**
*1500 Years of Arabic Literature*

Edited by Suheil Bushrui and James M. Malarkey

*Desert Songs of the Night* presents some of the finest poetry and prose by Arab writers, from the Arab East to Andalusia, over the last 1,500 years. From the mystical imagery of the Qur’an and the colourful stories of *The Thousand and One Nights*, to the powerful verses of longing of Mahmoud Darwish and Nazik al-Mala’ika, this captivating collection includes translated excerpts of works by the major authors of the period, as well as by lesser known writers of equal significance. The collection showcases the vibrant and distinctive literary heritage of the Arabs.

August 2015, Saqi Books, £12.99

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**The Syria-Iran Axis:**
*Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations in the Middle East*

By Nadia von Maltzahn

Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the close alliance between Syria and Iran has endured for over three decades, based on geopolitical interests between the two states and often framed in the language of resistance. In view of their strong relationship at a state-level, what have Syria and Iran each been doing to foster popular exchange and employ cultural tools to build an image in the other country? *The Syria-Iran Axis* examines the motivations, content and reach of cultural diplomacy between Syria and Iran to determine to what degree the two partners have been successful in bridging their worldviews and political outlooks. By analysing the extent to which a state-directed cultural exchange can foster bilateral relations in the Middle East, Nadia von Maltzahn offers an analysis of the formation of foreign policy and diplomacy in the region.

April 2015, IB Tauris, £16.99
Homa Nategh, an eminent historian of Iran's Qajar period and Constitutional Revolution, passed away on 1 January 2016 in the village of Arrou south of Paris. With her death Iranian studies has lost a renowned pioneer of political and social history.

Nategh was born in the town of Urmia in Iran's West Azarbaijan Province in 1934 to a highly cultivated family. She attended primary school and high school in Tehran.

In 1957 Nategh left for Paris to study literature at Sorbonne University, but soon took up the discipline of history instead. She finished her PhD in 1967 under the supervision of Marcel Colombe on Jamal Djamal-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Aghani (Ses sejour, son action et son influence en Perse). The young scholar dedicated her thesis to her grandfather Mirza Javad Nategh 'who was an advocate of the Constitutional Movement, and to all those who fought for Iran's democracy and progress.' Two years after its completion, the thesis was published in 1969 by the French National Centre for Scientific Research with a foreword by the famous Marxist scholar of Islam and the Middle East, Maxime Rodinson.

In 1968 Nategh returned to Iran, joining the Faculty of Literature at the University of Tehran, where she began to teach history. Her first research following her return to Iran produced articles for contemporary literary journals. A number of these were collated and published in a book entitled Az mast keh bar mast (We Reap What We Sow). Moreover, in 1976 Nategh wrote an introduction for a new edition of the famous newspaper Qanun, published by the modernist intellectual Mulkum Khan. Her other research, a product of her first decade of teaching and research inside Iran, covered the social history of the Qajar period and was published in 1979.

Also noteworthy are Nategh's translation into Persian of Albert Memmi's The Coloniser and the Colonised (1970) and The Last Days of Loft Ali Khan Zand with John Gurney of Oxford University published in 1977. It was during this decade that Nategh's decisive encounter with the British-educated historian, Fereydun Adamiyat, took place. It was an acquaintance that would result in longstanding friendship and collaboration until 1982. The volume that resulted from this intellectual partnership was the important, Afkar-e ejtema'i, siyasi va eqtesadi dar asar-e montasher-nashodeh-e doran-e Qajar (Social, Political and Economic Thought in Unpublished Works of the Qajar Period, 1977).

Nategh's social and political activism began when she was a student in Paris. She was one of the first women to join the Confederation of Iranian Students. She was also active in the Iranian Writers Association on the cusp of the Revolution. Later she became associated with the People's Fada'i Guerrillas of Iran, and she played an important role in the establishment of the National Union of Iranian Women. Following the Revolution of 1979, when the Fada'is split, Nategh continued her association with the 'minority' faction of the organisation that adopted an uncompromising stand against the newly-established hierocratic regime. During the 'Cultural Revolution' years she was removed from her teaching position and was subsequently persecuted because of her political ideals. This was followed by her inevitable exile to France, where her political activism began to gradually fade.

In exile, Nategh continued her profession by joining the Sorbonne nouvelle. During her teaching and later the retirement period, she published her most seminal research including: Karnameh va zaman-e Mirza Reza Kermani (The Life and Times of Mirza Reza Kermani, 1984), Bazarganan dar dad va setad ba Bank-e Shahi va Rezhi Tanbakou (The Merchants in Trade With the Imperial Bank and Tobacco Regime, 1992), Karnameh-e farhangi-ye farangi dar Iran (The Record of European Culture in Iran, 1996), as well as two books on the great medieval poet Hafiz. Her final work was Rohaniyat-e Shi'eh-e Iran, az parakandegi ta qodrat, 1828-1909 (The Iranian Shi'ite Clergy: From Dispersion to Power, 1828-1909). Although completed, the latter was regrettably not published in her lifetime.

Touraj Atabaki is the Senior Research Fellow at the International Institute of Social History and holds the chair of the Social History of the Middle East and Central Asia at the School of the Middle East Studies of the Leiden University; Nasser Mohajer is an independent historian of Modern Iran.
Iran's rapid economic growth in the 1960s is one of the interesting, but often neglected, development success stories of the Cold War era. This economic 'miracle', like the ones that followed later in South Korea, Taiwan and Brazil, was instigated at least in part by an elite group of competent technocrats, who were fervently committed to Iran's economic modernisation.

Khodadad Farmanfarmaian, who recently passed away in London at the age of 87, was a prominent member of that elite group. As a central banker and a planner, he played a major role in propelling Iran's economy towards an impressive industrial transformation in the 1960s. With average annual growth rates of 9 per cent, it was comparable with China's recent growth record. However, this great success story ended in the early 1970s, when oil prices quadrupled and the inflowing petrodollars ‘made the Shah drunk’, to use Farmanfarmaian's words.

Farmanfarmaian’s career changing moment came in the mid-1950s, when he met Hassan Ebtehaaj, the charismatic and influential Director of the Iranian Plan and Budget Organisation (PBO), in the US. Ebtehaaj persuaded Khodadad to come back to Iran to help him build a strong planning institution. Seeing himself as part of a ‘modernising vanguard’, Khodadad returned home with a zeal for economic reform. He assisted Ebtehaaj in turning the PBO into a competent technocratic institution in little time by hiring like-minded, Western-educated Iranian economists. This led to the gradual rise of a new technocratic elite within the Pahlavi regime. The turning point for these technocrats came in the early 1960s, when the Shah embarked on an ambitious modernisation project by empowering technocrats like Farmanfarmaian. Khodadad took the helm at the Central Bank, and together with experts in the Ministry of Economy and PBO, he drove the economy towards rapid industrialisation, which resulted in the doubling of Iran's income per capita in ten years. Impressively, this period of industrialisation was accompanied with low inflation rates (below 2 per cent on average), thanks to the effective monetary policies of the Central Bank.

Farmanfarmaian and many other technocrats mistakenly believed that this economic miracle would gradually lead to political liberalisation in Iran. On the contrary, the Shah became more autocratic and after a while stopped listening to his economic experts altogether. This led to the alienation of many technocrats, including Khodadad. He resigned from his post in 1972 and joined the private sector as the Chairman of the Industries Bank of Iran, a position he held until the 1979 Revolution, after which he was forced to flee the country to finally settle in London.

His legacy goes beyond the economic successes of the 1960s. At the Central Bank, he made great efforts to promote higher education in economics among younger generations. Together with Mehdi Samiee, he created a scholarship programme to send Iranian students to be trained as accountants and economists in the UK. This programme produced a generation of economists such as Hashem Pesaran, Massoud Karshenas, Hassan Hakimian and Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, who are now training the next generation of Iranian economists.

At the personal level, too, Khoddad Farmanfarmaian was highly supportive of young scholars; he kindly helped me in my PhD research with great passion and patience. I believe he would consider his contribution to promoting economics education among the younger generations of Iranians as his most enduring legacy.

Ramin Nassehi is a PhD candidate in business management at Queen Mary University of London and a Senior Teaching Fellow at the Department of Economics at SOAS
Events in London

The Events and organisations listed below are not necessarily endorsed or supported by The Middle East in London. The accompanying texts and images are based primarily on information provided by the organisers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the compilers or publishers. While every possible effort is made to ascertain the accuracy of these listings, readers are advised to seek confirmation of all events using the contact details provided for each event.

Submitting entries and updates: please send all updates and submissions for entries related to future events via e-mail to mepub@soas.ac.uk

BM – British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG
SOAS – SOAS, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG
LSE – London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London WC2 2AE

February Events

Monday 1 February

5:15 pm | L’Aiguière de Saint-Denis: The Life and Travels of a Fatimid Luxury Object (Seminar) Jeremy Johns (University of Oxford). Organised by: Department of History, SOAS. SOAS Near and Middle Eastern History Seminar. Convener: Derek Mancini-Lander (SOAS). Admission free. Room B104, SOAS. E dm40@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/history/events/


Tuesday 2 February

5:00 pm | The Rise and Fall of Orientalism in Travel, Tourism and Cultural Production: Report from Palestine/Israel (Seminar) Tom Selwyn (SOAS). (Seminar) Organised by: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, SOAS. Anthropology of Tourism and Travel Seminar Series. Admission free. Room 4426, SOAS. E nl15@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/anthropology/events/

5:15 pm | Beyond the “Tunisian Exception”: (Un)changing Politics and Social Movements (Lecture) Choukri Hmed (Paris Dauphine University). Organised by: LSE Middle East Centre. Based on an ongoing fieldwork, Hmed presents his paper which proposes an analysis of the (un)changing frames and issues in both social movements and the political field in the country. Chair: John Chalcraft (LSE). Admission free. Pre-booking required. Room 9.04, Tower 2, Clement’s Inn, LSE. T 020 7955 6198 E s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/

5:45 pm | Between Radical Islam and Kurdishishness: Hizbullah in Eastern Turkey (Lecture) Mehmet Kurt (Bingöl University). Organised by: LSE Middle East Centre. Kurt’s talk will explore the personal, political and ideological motivations of radicalised Islamists and will contextualise these dynamics in terms of the Turkish state’s ongoing conflict with the PKK. Chair: Nadje Al-Ali (SOAS). Part of the LMEI’s Tuesday Evening Lecture Programme on the Contemporary Middle East. Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

6:00 pm | Report Launch: Narratives of Conversion to Islam – Male Perspectives (Talk) Organised by: Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge. Report launch to discuss and reflect on a report focused on the experiences of nearly 50 British men of all ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and faiths (or no faith) – who have all converted to Islam. Admission free. DLT, SOAS. T 01223 335103 W www.cis.cam.ac.uk

Wednesday 3 February

5:00 pm | Report Launch: The Middle East in London – SOAS, University of London, 6:00 pm | Israel/Palestine: Africa: From Terra Nullius to Terra Incognita and Back (Book Launch) Organised by: Centre for Palestine Studies, SOAS. Haim Ya’cobi (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel) Event to mark the UK launch of Haim Ya’cobi’s newest book, Israel and Africa: A Genealogy of Moral Geography (Routledge, 2015) which examines the ways in which Africa – as a geopolitical entity – is socially manufactured, collectively imagined but also culturally denied in Israeli politics, and how in turn such construction has relevance to the spatio-politics of Palestine. Discussants: Camillo Boano (UCL) and Sharri Plonski (SOAS). Chair: Gilbert Achcar (SOAS). Admission free. SOAS Near East. Ancient Near East Seminar. Admission free. L67, SOAS. E ag5@soas.ac.uk W http://banelcane.org/icane/

6:00 pm | Seminar. Admission free. L67, SOAS. E nl15@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/anthropology/events/

6:30 pm | Sir Alfred Bilotti and the End of Ottoman Crète, 1885–1899 (Lecture) Organised by: The British Institute at Ankara. The end of Ottoman Crete was marked by a bloody conflict between its Christian and Muslim populations, David Barchard looks at the role of the key diplomat on Crete during this period, a humanitarian administrator caught between great power politics and the conflicting nationalisms of Greece and Turkey. Barchard has worked as journalist, consultant, and university teacher in Turkey. Tickets: £10. British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. T 20 7969 5204 E biaa@britac.ac.uk W www.biaa.ac.uk

7:00 pm | Kamran Djam Annual Lectures at SOAS (2016): “Büyę-e jü-yé Mülimân”: Some Considerations on Exile, Desire and Poetry from Rudaki to Jâmi (Lecture) Organised by: Centre for Iranian Studies, SOAS. Lelli Anvar (Institut des Langues et des Civilisations Orientales, Paris). First of two lectures by Anvar on the subject of Poetry as the Language of Desire, the second will take place on Thursday 4 February 2016. In her first lecture she will try to show that there is a deep thematic and aesthetic continuity that unites the first poems composed in modern Persian in a courtly context to the verses composed in a more spiritual atmosphere. Lecture preceded by a reception in the Brunei Suite at 6:00pm. Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/cpis/events/
In the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution, relations between states in the Middle East were reconfigured and reassessed overnight. Amongst the most-affected was the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The existence of a new regime in Tehran led to increasingly vitriolic confrontations between these two states, often manifesting themselves in conflicts across the region, such as those in Lebanon and Iraq, and more recently in Bahrain and Syria. In order to shed light upon this rivalry, Simon Mabon examines the different identity groups (religious, ethnic and tribal) within Saudi Arabia and Iran, proposing that internal insecurity has an enormous impact on the wider ideological and geopolitical competition between the two.

‘...thoughtful and perceptive... essential reading for any informed understanding of a relationship whose scope and dynamic will likely shape the political and strategic landscape of the Middle East in the years ahead.’

- Professor Clive Jones, Chair in Regional Security, School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University
Centre. Voltolini presents her paper investigating lobbying and framing in EU foreign policy towards the Middle East and North Africa. Chair: Federica Bicchi (LSE). Admission free. Pre-booking required. Room B.07, 32 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, LSE. T 020 7955 6198 E s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre

Tuesday 16 February

5:45 pm | Money and Value: From Qur'an to Contemporary Islamic Economics (Lecture) Ersilia Francesca (University of Naples “L'Orientale”). Organised by: London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI). Francesca’s presentation will aim to investigate the way that Islamic economic ethics – as derived from the Qur’an and Prophetic sunna – can influence the believer’s attitude toward earning money and entrepreneurial activities in contemporary times. Part of the LMEI’s Tuesday Evening Lecture Programme. Chair: Scott Redford (SOAS). Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E v6p6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

6:30 pm | C.R. Ashbee’s Vision of Jerusalem, the English Arts and Crafts Movement in the Middle East (Lecture) Benedict Leigh (UCL, Qatar, BM). Organised by: Royal Asiatic Society. Admission free. Royal Asiatic Society, 14 Stephenson Way, London N1 2HD. E ar@royalasiaticsoc.org W http://royalasiaticsoc.org/ Wednesday 17 February

6:45 pm | Monir (Film) Organised by: Asia House and the Iran Heritage Foundation (IHF). Dir Bahman Kiarostami (2014), Iran, 54 mins. Documentary looking at the life and work of Iranian artist Monir Shahroury Farmanfarmaian, who first garnered attention in the 1970s when she pioneered contemporary forms of geometric mirror works. In Persian and English with English subtitles. Followed by Q&A with the producer of the documentary, Leyla Fakhr. Tickets: £8/£6 conc. Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 7LP. T 020 7307 5454 W www.asiahouse.org

7:00 pm | Insight with Janine di Giovanni - Dispatches from Syria (Talk) Organised by: Frontline Club. In May 2012, di Giovanni travelled to Syria to cover the peaceful demonstrations. It would mark the beginning of a relationship with the country that would continue to draw her back. In this talk she shares the stories of the people she has encountered in Syria and her experience of covering the country. Tickets: £12.50/£10 conc. (students & 65+). Frontline Club, 13 Norfolk Place, W2 1QJ. T 020 7479 8940 E events@frontlineclub.com W www.frontlineclub.com

Thursday 11 November

7:00 pm | Possible and Imaginary Lives (Talk) Organised by: The Mosaic Rooms. Yasmine Eidi-Sahabgh discusses the exhibition and book project that traces the lives of four Palestinian-Lebanese sisters who are exiled in different places across the globe. Admission free. Pre-booking required. E rsvp@mosaicrooms.org The Mosaic Rooms, AM Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W http://mosaicrooms.org/

Monday 15 February

5:15 pm | The Use of Law as an Instrument of Power in Sudan and South Sudan (Lecture) Ali Agab (Sudanese Human Rights Lawyer). Organised by: Centre of African Studies, SOAS (CAS). Sudan-South Sudan Series. Agab examines the nature, underlying rationale and impact of the use of law as an instrument of power in Sudan since 1989 and considers emerging parallels in South Sudan, such as the broad National Security Services Law adopted in 2015. Discussant: Mashood Baderin (CAS/SoAS). Chair: Lutz Oette (Centre for Human Rights Law, SOAS). Admission free. Room 4429, SOAS. E cas@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/cas/events/

Kamran Djam Annual Lectures at SOAS (2016)

Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 February 2016
Centre for Iranian Studies, London Middle East Institute
Two Lectures by Professor Leili Anvar
Institut des Langues et des Civilisations Orientales, Paris

Poetry as the Language of Desire

Lecture One: “Bûy-e jû-ye Mûlîyân”: Some considerations on desire, exile and poetry from Rûdakî to Rûmî, Wednesday: 7.00pm
Preceded by a reception at 6.00pm in the Brunei Suite

Lecture Two: The quest of Majnûn: tribulations of a lover, Thursday: 7.00pm

Khalili Lecture Theatre
SOAS, University of London, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

Admission Free - All Welcome

Enquiries
Tel. No. 020 7898 4330 E-mail vp6@soas.ac.uk
Website www.soas.ac.uk/lmei-cis/events/
TUESDAY LECTURE PROGRAMME ON THE CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST SPRING 2016

2 February
*Between Radical Islam and Kurdishness: Hizbullah in Eastern Turkey*
Mehmet Kurt, Bingol University
Chair: Nadje Al-Ali

9 February
*Reading Week*

16 February
*Money and Value: From Qur'an to Contemporary Islamic Economics*
Ersilia Francesca, University of Naples “L’Orientale”

23 February
*Lebanon and the 21st Century: Everyday Life in Times of Permanent Crisis*
Andrew Arsan, University of Cambridge

1 March
*Civil Resistance in North Africa since 2010*
Panel Discussion with Adam Roberts, University of Oxford
Chair: Charles Tripp, SOAS

8 March
*Decoding ISIS: A Contextual-Conjunctural Analysis of Sectarian Conflict in Iraq*
Kamran Matin, University of Sussex

15 March
*Violence and the City in the Modern Middle East*
Nelida Fuccaro, SOAS
Chair: Charles Tripp, SOAS

TUESDAYS 5:45 PM
KHALILI LECTURE THEATRE, MAIN BUILDING, SOAS

The Lectures are free and open to all. Tea and biscuits are available from 5:15 pm

For further information contact:
The London Middle East Institute at SOAS, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H OXG, T: 020 7898 4330; E: lmei@soas.ac.uk, W: www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/
Early Modern Period (Seminar) 
Marianna Shreve Simpson (University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University Art Museum) Organised by: The Courtauld Institute of Art. Various Persian manuscripts dating from the 15th and 16th centuries contain illustrations and illuminations signed by their artists in minute script. Shreve Simpson will speculate on the motivations for and significance of these hidden signatures within Persian artistic practices and the image and self-image of the artist in early modern Iran. Admission free. Research Forum Seminar Room, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN. E researchforum@courtauld.ac.uk W http://courtauld.ac.uk/research/research-forum/events


8:00 pm | Gaza as Metaphor (Panel Discussion) Helga Tawil-Souri (NYU), Dina Matar (SOAS), Nimer Sullany (SOAS), Khaled Hroub (Northwestern), Atef Nimer Sultany (SOAS), Khaled Kabul), Bernard O’Kane (American University in Cairo), Julia Rubanovich (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Marianna Shreve Simpson (University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University Art Museum). Organised by: Centre for Iranian Studies, SOAS and The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. Sponsored by: Soudavar Memorial Foundation. The twelfth programme in The Idea of Iran annual series. The symposium will explore the 14th century in its own right as the time of the emergence of local Iranian dynasties in the face of continuing Mongol prestige after the collapse of the Ilkhhanid dynasty. Convener: Sussan Babaie (The Courtauld Institute of Art). Tickets: £15/£10 conc. & LMEI Affiliates/students free. Pre-booking required. Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei-cis/events/

7:00 pm | The Voice of the daf (Kurdish frame drum) (Concert) Tickets: £15/£10 conc./£6 SOAS students. DET, SOAS. T 0780 1998 193 E moonlight_culture@yahoo.com W www.thesantur.com

8:00 pm | Egyptian Project (Concert) Organised by: Marsm and sponsored by Alaraby TV Network. The sounds of the Nile Delta and Cairo with the ambiances of trip-hop, electro, hip-hop, and even classical music. Tickets: £15/£12 (advance booking). Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA. E info@marsm.co.uk W http://marsm.co.uk/

Saturday 20 February

Renewal in the Age of Post-Mongol Prestige (Symposium) Dick Davis (Ohio State University), Leonard Lewisohn (Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter), Shivam Mahendararajah (American Institute of Afghanistan Studies, Kabul), Bernard O’Kane (American University in Cairo), Julia Rubanovich (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Marianna Shreve Simpson (University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University Art Museum). Organised by: Centre for Iranian Studies, SOAS and The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. Sponsored by: Soudavar Memorial Foundation. The twelfth programme in The Idea of Iran annual series. The symposium will explore the 14th century in its own right as the time of the emergence of local Iranian dynasties in the face of continuing Mongol prestige after the collapse of the Ilkhhanid dynasty. Convener: Sussan Babaie (The Courtauld Institute of Art). Tickets: £15/£10 conc. & LMEI Affiliates/students free. Pre-booking required. Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei-cis/events/

5:00 pm | When They Broke Down the Door (Book Launch & Reading) Fatemeh Shams and Dick Davis. Event to mark the publication of Sham’s When They Broke Down the Door which as described by Davis ‘The power of poetry to map the human heart has been a hallmark of Persian culture for at least a thousand years, and Fatemeh Shams wields it unforgettably.’ Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. E faatemeh.shams@gmail.com

Monday 22 February

5:15 pm | The Making of an Egyptian Middle Class Society: Change and Contestation in an Age of Oil Boom and Open Door Policy (Seminar) Reili Schecter (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev). Organised by: Department of History, SOAS. SOAS Near and Middle Eastern History Seminar. Social commentators across the political spectrum and secular-religious divide commented on 1970s and 1980s Egypt as a period riddled with crises of all sorts, Schecter looks at the family crisis at the centre of which was inflation in marriage costs. Convener: Derek Mancini-Lander (SOAS). Admission free. Room B104, SOAS. E dm40@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/history/events/

Tuesday 23 February

5:45 pm | Lebanon and the 21st century: Everyday Life in Times of Permanent Crisis (Lecture) Andrew Arsan (University of California). Organised by: London Middle East Institute (LMEI). Drawing on his current research, Arsan’s talk will provide a brief overview of some of the tactics ordinary Lebanese have devised to make do with instability and to find a way to live with the enervating, exhausting realities of everyday life - from electricity shortages to traffic jams and trash crises. Part of the LMEI’s Tuesday Evening Lecture Programme on the Contemporary Middle East. Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

Wednesday 24 February

1:00 pm | Queens of Syria + Boya

Boya (Shine Shine) (Film) Yasmin Fedda, Karen Boswall, Ruba Al Akash. Organised by: Department of Anthropology and Sociology, SOAS. Ethnographic Film Series. Queens of Syria (2014), 70 mins. Fifty women from Syria, all forced into exile in Jordan, come together to create and perform their own version of the Trojan Women, the Ancient Greek tragedy about the plight of women in war. Boya Boya (2014), 18 mins. Portrait of Syrian refugee Mohammed, a 12 year-old shoe shine boy, ‘Boya Boya’ (shine, shine) looks at the reality of the growing population of urban refugees from the point of view of a child. Convener: Stephen Hughes, SOAS. Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. E sh37@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/anthropology/events/

6:00 pm | Walking in Woolley's footsteps: Ur Brought to Life for the Digital Age (Lecture) Birger EKornåsvåg Helgestad (BM) and Jon Taylor (BM). Organised by: The British Institute for the Study of Iraq. Sir Leonard Woolley’s excavations (1922–1934) at the ancient city of Ur captured the world’s imagination. Helgestad and Taylor will give a talk on the Ur Project which will digitally reunify all the objects found by Woolley at Ur in a new online resource. Admission free. Pre-booking required. The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. T 020 7969 5274 E bisi@britac.ac.uk W www.bisi.ac.uk

6:00 pm | The Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Challenge to the Arab State (Lecture) Filippo Dionigi (LSE). Organised by: LSE Middle East Centre. Dionigi discusses how states such as Lebanon and Jordan have coped with the challenges of mass displacement within their borders and looks at the future prospects and implications of forced mass displacement in the Middle East for states in the region. Admission free. Pre-booking required. Room 2.04, Clement House, LSE. T 020 7955 6198 E s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/
on the carpet production of the Mamluk Empire (1250-1517). Special attention will be dedicated on the patterns, the carpet trade between Egypt and Italy and the representation of Mamluk carpets on Italian Renaissance paintings. Tickets: £7/£5 students. £20 for membership of one year for 11 events. St James Conference Room, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL.


**Thursday 25 February**

7:30 pm | The Moment (Performance) Organised by: The Mosaic Rooms. Solo dance performance by dancer, performer and choreographer Salah El Brogy created during a month-long residency in Morocco. Followed by a Q&A with Salah El Brogy. Tickets: £10. Pre-booking required. E rsvp@mosaicrooms.org The Mosaic Rooms, A.M. Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W http://mosaicrooms.org/

**Friday 26 February**

12:00 pm | History in the Making or False Dawn? How Close are we to a Cyprus Agreement? (Seminar) Ioannis Grigoriadis (Bilkent University) Organised by: Organised by the SOAS Modern Turkish Studies Programme (London MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE), Admission free. Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4840/4830 E cisd@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/cisd/events/

**Monday 29 February**

5:15 pm | The Bunian Corpus and the Materiality of Invisible Worlds (Seminar) Noah Gardiner (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn). Organised by: Department of History, SOAS. Admission free. Room B104, SOAS. E dm40@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/history/events/

**EVENTS OUTSIDE LONDON**

**Thursday 4 February**

5:15 pm | The Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Impact on the Arab State: A Preliminary Assessment (Lecture) Filippo Dionigi (LSE). Organised by: Centre of Islamic Studies and the Centre for the study of the International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa in Cambridge, University of Cambridge. Admission free. Thomas Gray Room, Pembroke College, Cambridge CB2 1RF. T 01223 335103 W www.cis.cam.ac.uk

**Arabic Immersion Course 19-24 March 2016**

This intensive language training is designed and will be delivered by an experienced team of tertiary-level language teachers. In addition to simulating the environment of studying in the Middle East, the course will also offer several one-off lectures delivered by academics and visiting scholars at SOAS.

**Beginners Arabic**

This course offers an interactive Modern Standard Arabic course for complete beginners with an understanding of the differences between the spoken languages of the Arabic-speaking countries. A balance of receptive (listening, learning) and productive (speaking, writing) skills are developed through communicative classes and self-study. The aim of the course is to enable students to function at a basic everyday survival level.

**Intermediate Arabic**

Students will continue to develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing at an intermediate level which will involve describing events and feelings, expressing opinions and plans while being able to enter unprepared into conversation. The course includes a wide range of topics relating to everyday life (family, hobbies, work, travel, and current events). This course is for students who have previously completed a Beginners level.

Fees:

£400 (£300 for early bird before 1 March 2016)

SOAS students, alumni and LMEI affiliates have 10% discount.

For further information contact: Louise Hosking E: lh2@soas.ac.uk T: 020 7898 4330
Friday 5 February

6:30 pm | Report Launch: Narratives of Conversion to Islam – Male Perspectives (Talk) Organised by: Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge. Report launch to discuss and reflect on a report focused on the experiences of nearly 50 British men of all ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and faiths (or no faith) – who have all converted to Islam. Admission free. Room 3, Mill Lane Lecture Rooms, University of Cambridge CB21. T 01223 335103 W www.cis.cam.ac.uk

Thursday 18 February


MARCH EVENTS

Tuesday 1 March

4:30 pm | The Notion of Salaﬁyya: Between Saudi Arabia and Turkey (Seminar) Andrew Hammond (University of Oxford). Organised by: LSE Kuwait Programme. Salaﬁsm, with its semantic confusions, is finding its way from Arabic and the Saudi sphere into Turkey and the Turkish language. How did it happen? What are its consequences? Admission free. 9.04, Tower 1, Clement’s Inn, LSE. T 020 7955 6639 E i.sinclair@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/kw/event/Home.aspx


Wednesday 2 March

6:00 pm | Alternative Universalisms: Contemporary Turkish Discourses on Culture in International Relations (Lecture) Katerina Dalacoura (LSE). Organised by: LSE Middle East Centre. Drawing on the findings of a research project funded by the British Academy, the lecture, and the project, aim to enrich the theoretical study of culture in the discipline of International Relations and contribute to the current public debate on the role of culture in world politics. Admission free. Pre-booking required. Wolfson Theatre, New Academic Building, LSE. T 020 7955 6198 E s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre

Thursday 3 March


7:30 pm | Akhhaten (Performance) Until Friday 18 March (various dates and times). The last of Philip Glass’s trilogy of ‘portrait’ operas. Divine ruler of Egypt, husband to Nefertiti, father of a new religion. Akhhaten decrees that the sun god rules supreme, and the old gods must be banished from their temples. But instead, his people turn upon their Pharaoh as a traitor. Akhhaten must die. Will his new faith live on? Sung in his native language. How did it happen? Admission free. Pre-booking required. Wolfson Theatre, New Academic Building, LSE. T 020 7955 6198 E s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre

Friday 4 March

7:00 pm | Diasporas of the Modern Middle East – Contextualising Community (Panel Discussion) Organised by: Armenian Institute and the London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI). Panel discussion on the book, Diasporas of the Modern Middle East – Contextualising Community (Edinburgh University Press, 2015) with the editors, Anthony Gorman (University of Edinburgh) and Sossie Kassarian (Lancaster University), and contributors May Farah (America University of Beirut), Maria Holt (University of Westminster) and Haris Theodorelis-Rigas (Istanbul). Approaching the Middle East through the lens of Diaspora Studies, the 11 detailed case studies in this volume explore the experiences of different diasporic communities in and of the region, and look at the changing conceptions and practice of diaspora in the modern Middle East. Followed by a reception in the Brunei Suite. Admission free. Room B102, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

3:45 pm | Civil Resistance in Civil Resistance in Civil Resistance in Civil Resistance Against the West (Lecture) David Jacobson (UCL) Organised by: Department of History, SOAS. Admission free. Room 5EA.

Saturday 5 March

8:00 pm | Alsarah and The Nubatoness (Concert) Organised by: Marsm and sponsored by Alaraby TV Network. Alsarah’s sound has evolved tremendously from one album to the next, reflecting their goals and continuous ambition to sing along with Cairo. Tickets: £15/£12.50 (advance booking). Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA. E info@marsm.co.uk W http://marsm.co.uk/

Monday 7 March

5:00 pm | The ‘Right’ Education in Israel Versus the Counter-Knowledge of the Palestinian Teachers: The Case of Citizenship Education (Lecture) Ayman K Agbaria (Centre for Research and Evaluation in Muslim Education, UCL Institute of Education). Organised by: Centre for Palestine Studies, SOAS. Agbaria sheds light on the influence of the Israeli right-wing politics on the education system, focusing on citizenship education and explains how these politics have moulded the parameters of the Israeli educational regime. Chair: Nimer Sultany (SOAS). Admission free. MBI Al Jaber Conference Room, London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI), University of London, MBI Al Jaber Building, 21 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EA. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/cps/events/

5:15 pm | Objects of Devotion: Palestinian Migrants and Their Prayer Beads, 1850-1948 (Seminar) Jacob Norris (University of Sussex). Organised by: Department of History, SOAS. Admission free. Room 5EA. Norris revisits the early history of the Palestinian diaspora: a period of Palestinian migration marked by choice and opportunity rather than enforced exile. But he approaches these pre-1948 movements through a peculiar lens: that of the prayer beads that Palestinian migrants commonly carried in their suitcases. Convener: Derek Mancini-Lander (SOAS). W www.soas.ac.uk/history/events/

6:15 pm | Finding the Philistines: Ceramic Evidence of the Northern Sea Peoples at Tell
Tuesday 8 March

5:45 pm | Decoding ISIS: A Contextual-Conjunctural Analysis of Sectarian Conflict in Iraq (Lecture) Kamran Matin (University of Sussex). Organised by: London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI). Matin will seek to provide a holistic account of ISIS through a historical materialist form of contextual and conjunctural analysis and argues that central to understanding ISIS’s success is explaining Sunni Arab support-base in Iraq, ISIS’s birthplace and geopolitical centre of gravity. Part of the LMEI’s Tuesday Evening Lecture Programme on the Contemporary Middle East. Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

Wednesday 9 March

5:00 pm | Knowledge Production in the Arab World (Lecture) Sari Hanafi (American University of Beirut). Organised by: Centre for Palestine Studies, SOAS. Lecture by Hanafi to mark the publication of Knowledge Production in the Arab World: The Impossible Promise (Hanafi, S and Arvanitis, R, Routledge, 2015) in which the authors investigate research practices in the Arab world, using multiple case studies from the region with particular focus on Lebanon and Jordan. Admission free. MBI Al Jaber Conference Room, London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI), University of London, MBI Al Jaber Building, 21 Russell Square, London WC1B SEA. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei-cps/events/

6:00 pm | Sexual and Gender Diversity in the Muslim World: History, Law and Vernacular Knowledge (Book Launch & Reception) Rahul Rao (SOAS) and Ziba Mir-Hosseini (SOAS). Organised by: SOAS School of Law. Event to mark the publication of Vanja Hamzić’s (SOAS) new book on sexual and gender diversity in the Muslim world Sexual and Gender Diversity in the Muslim World: History, Law and Vernacular Knowledge (IB Tauris, 2015). Admission free. Brunei Suite, SOAS. E bb29@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/law/events/

Thursday 10 March

6:00 pm | Caravans, Conquests, and Crossings: Aesthetics of African, Arab, and Mediterranean Movement in Algerian Sufi Music (Lecture) Tamara Turner (King’s College London). Organised by: Society for Algerian Studies in conjunction with LSE. Presentation by Turner in which she analyses the complex ways in which musical aesthetics in Algeria negotiate and perform politicized identities. Chair: John King (Society for Algerian Studies). Admission free. Pre-booking required. Wolfson Theatre, New Academic Building, LSE. E info@algerianstudies.org.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/

Friday 11 March

1:00 pm | Culture Now: Hajra Waheed (Talk) Organised by: Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). Artist Hajra Waheed discusses her practice on the occasion of her first UK presentation of the ‘first chapter’ from her work Sea Change at The Mosaic Rooms (see Exhibitions pp...). Tickets: £5.00 + £1.00 (Booking Fee). Studio, ICA, 12 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. T 020 7930 3647 W www.ica.org.uk

6:00 pm | The Law of Denial: Periççek v. Switzerland (Seminar) Başak Ertür (Birkbeck College) Organised by: Organised by the SOAS Modern Turkish Studies Programme (London Middle East Institute, SOAS). Sponsored by Nurol Bank. Admission free. Conveners: Gamon McLellan (SOAS) and Yorgos Dedes (SOAS). Room 116, SOAS. E gd5@soas.ac.uk / gm29@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

6:30 pm | The Hundred Year War in Palestine (Lecture) Organised by: Centre for Palestine Studies, SOAS. Rashid Khalidi (Columbia University). Centre for Palestine Studies Annual Lecture. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 launched what amounted to a hundred years of war against the Palestinians. A much distorted and maligned feature of this long war has been the Palestinians’ continuing resistance, against heavy odds, to what amounts to one of the last ongoing attempts at colonial subjugation in the modern world. Admission free. Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei-cps/events/

Saturday 12 March

7:00 pm | A Musical Celebration of Nowruz with Persian, Kurdish and Azeri Music (Concert) Tickets: £15/£10 concs./£6 SOAS students. DLT, SOAS. T 07808 1998 193 E moonlight_culture@yahoo.com W www.thesantur.com

Monday 14 March

5:15 pm | Portrait of the Martyr as a Young Man: The Social Life of Photographs in Revolutionary Egypt (Seminar) Lucie RyzoVA (University of Birmingham). Organised by: Department of History, SOAS. SOAS Near and Middle Eastern History Seminar. RyzoVA looks at the social lives of photographs of young Egyptians who died in the revolution’s many events over the past (almost) 5 years and who have become martyrs: their ordinary ID photographs or private snapshots have been elevated to the status of public icons. Convenor: Derek Mancini-Lander, SOAS. Admission free. Room B104, SOAS. E dm40@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/history/events/

Tuesday 15 March

5:45 pm | Civil Resistance in North Africa since 2010 (Book Launch) Nélida Fuccaro (SOAS). Organised by: London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI). Event with the editor, Fuccaro, to mark the publication of her latest book Violence and the City in the Middle Eastern Middle East (Stanford University Press, 2016) which explores violence in the public lives of modern Middle Eastern cities, approaching violence as an individual and collective experience, a historical event, and an urban process. Chair: Charles Tripp (SOAS). Part of the LMEI’s Tuesday Evening Lecture Programme on the Contemporary Middle East. Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4330/4490 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

5:15 pm | Why Some Contentious Movements Fail: The Case of the Syrian Opposition (Lecture) Jasmine Gani (University of St Andrews). Organised by: LSE Middle East Centre. Gani presents her paper, drawing upon a contentious politics framework to assess the successes and failures of the Syrian external opposition, represented by the Syrian National Coalition (SNC). Chair: John Chalcraft (LSE). Admission free. Pre-booking required. Room 9.04, Tower 2, Clement’s Inn, LSE. T 020 7955 6198 E s.sfeir@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/

Wednesday 16 March

5:00 pm | On the Threshold of Statelessness: Palestinian Narratives of Loss and Erasure
The Idea of Iran: Renewal in the Age of Post-Mongol Prestige

9.30 - 18.00, Saturday 20 February 2016 Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS, University of London
Organised by The Centre for Iranian Studies, SOAS and The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London

The Mongol invasions of the first half of the thirteenth century set in motion profound transformations in the historical trajectory of Islamic West Asia. The previous symposium in this series on the Idea of Iran investigated the immediate effects of Mongol rule during the Ilkhanid period, which had sponsored the reinstatement of Iranian cultural identities in Greater Iran, Iraq, Anatolia, and the Caucasus.

Rather than moving immediately to the next major dynasty in the region, the present symposium, the twelfth in the series, will explore the fourteenth century in its own right as the time of the emergence of local Iranian dynasties in the face of continuing Mongol prestige following the collapse of the Ilkhanid dynasty and the development of alternative models of authority.

Sponsored by the Soudavar Memorial Foundation
Convened by Dr Sussan Babaie, The Courtauld Institute of Art

Admission: £15; Conc. & LMEI Affiliates: £10; Students: Free. Pre-registration required: www.soas.ac.uk/lmei-cis/events/ Enquiries: Tel. 020 898 4330 E-mail: vp6@soas.ac.uk
Alexander (Lecture) Organised by: Iran Heritage Foundation (IHF). A lecture by Professor Sir John Boardman who was Professor of Classical Archaeology at Oxford until retirement in 1994. Tickets: £10. Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 7LP. T 020 7673 8403 E london@piartworks.com W www.piartworks.com

Until 7 February | Egypt: Faith after the Pharaohs Discover Egypt’s journey over 12 centuries, as Jews, Christians and Muslims transformed this ancient land, from a world of many gods to the worship of one God. The exhibition begins in 30 BC, when Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire after the death of Cleopatra and Mark Antony, and continues until AD 1171 when the rule of the Islamic Fatimid dynasty came to an end. Tickets: Various. BM. T 020 7323 8181 W www.britishmuseum.org

Until 20 February | Jerusalem// Home Group exhibition bringing together the photographic works of three young photographers from Jerusalem, ceramic works by two London-based artists, and digital artworks by a Palestinian American artist based in the US which aims to highlight the danger of dispossession that exists in every square inch of Palestinian life and property in the metropolitan Jerusalem area. Admission free. P21 Gallery, 21 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. T 020 7121 6190 E info@p21.org.uk W www.p21.org.uk

Until 27 February | Suspended Accounts: Young Artist of the Year Award 2014 (YAYA14) A selection of work from the 2014 AM Qattan Foundation’s Young Artist of the Year Award (YAYA14). The biennial award – organised by the Foundation’s Culture and Arts Programme in the Occupied West Bank city of Ramallah – is open to young artists under 30 of Palestinian descent, from any part of the world. Admission free. The Mosaic Rooms, AM Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W http://mosaicrooms.org/

Until 19 March | Sand in My Eyes: Sudanese Moments by Enikő Nagy Presenting very different images to those one might expect from Sudan photographer and author Enikő Nagy has spent several years collecting everyday moments from over 45 tribes and ethnic groups across Sudan to produce the poetic picture book Sand in My Eyes: Sudanese Moments that the exhibition is drawn from. Admission free. Brunei Gallery, SOAS. T 020 7898 4046 (recorded information) E gallery@soa.ac.uk W www.soa.ac.uk/gallery/

 Until 19 March | In Search of Lost Time Exhibition of works by 13 artists who seek to reframe conventional interpretations of time in the Gulf. Employing the strategies of archivists, time-travellers, explorers and storytellers, the artists explore the complex relationship between image, speed and time in the Gulf, questioning the chronological and territorial notion of the region and the paradigms of its underlying identity. Admission free. Brunei Gallery, SOAS. T 020 7898 4046 (recorded information) E gallery@soa.ac.uk W www.soa.ac.uk/gallery/

Until 31 March | Last Of The Dictionary Men: Stories From The South Shields Yemeni Sailors Over the course of 100 years, thousands of seamen from Yemen settled in the small town of South Shields and made it their home. A series of thirteen hand-coloured portraits by the internationally renowned photographer, Yousef Nabil, captures the first generation of Yemeni sailors with the pride they embody as individuals and as a community. Admission free. The Street Gallery, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4ND. T 01392 724040 W http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/iais/events/exhibitions/

Friday 19 February


Until 26 March | Nancy Atakan: Sporting Chances Solo exhibition by the American born Istanbul based artist, Nancy Atakan, which brings together new embroidered works and drawings. Atakan’s practice investigates the relationship between the orient and occident, the meaning of belonging, gender politics, and different concepts of femininity. Artist Talk with Stephanie Bailey at 6:00pm on Thursday 18 February. Admission free. Pi Artworks London, 55 Eastcastle Street, London W11 8EJ. T 020 7673 8403 E london@piartworks.com W www.piartworks.com

Tuesday 23 February

Until 30 June | Akhnenaten: Heretic, Visionary and Icon Exhibition exploring the ambiguous and contentious figure of Akhnenaten. Displayed in conjunction with Philip Glass’ Akhnenaten at the English National Opera (See March Events, Friday 4 March, March Events, p35). Admission free. UCL Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, Malet Place, London WC1E 6B. T 020 7679 2884 E petrie.museum@ucl.ac.uk W www.ucl.ac.uk/museums/petrie

Friday 11 March

Until 21 May | Sea Change – Chapter: 1: Chapter 1, In the Rough First UK presentation of the ‘first chapter’ from Hajra Waheed’s Sea Change – an ongoing visual novel and multimedia archive, commenced in 2011, which revolves around the journey and disappearance of nine persons in the name of salvation, a better life or new one. See talk by Waheed at the ICA, Friday 11 March, March Events, p36 Admission free. The Mosaic Rooms, A.M. Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W http://mosaicrooms.org/
An intensive five-week programme which includes a choice of two courses: a language one (Persian or Arabic, the latter at two levels) and another on the 'Government and Politics of the Middle East' or 'Culture and Society in the Middle East'.

**Beginners Persian (Level 1)**
This is an introductory course which aims to give the students a reasonable grounding in the basics of Persian grammar and syntax as well as to enable them to understand simple and frequently used expressions related to basic language use. They will be able to hold uncomplicated conversations on topics such as personal and family information, shopping, hobbies, employment as well as simple and direct exchanges of information related to familiar topics. By the end of the course they will also progress to read simple short texts.

**Beginners Arabic (Level 1)**
This is an introductory course in Modern Standard Arabic. It teaches students the Arabic script and provides basic grounding in Arabic grammar and syntax. On completing the course, students should be able to read, write, listen to and understand simple Arabic sentences and passages. This course is for complete beginners and does not require any prior knowledge or study of Arabic.

**Beginners Arabic (Level 2)**
This course is a continuation of Beginners Arabic Level 1. It completes the coverage of the grammar and syntax of Modern Standard Arabic and trains students in reading, comprehending and writing with the help of a dictionary more complex Arabic sentences and passages.

To qualify for entry into this course, students should have already completed at least one introductory course in Arabic.

**Government and Politics of the Middle East**
This course provides an introduction to the politics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It gives on a country by country basis, an overview of the major political issues and developments in the region since the end of the First World War and addresses key themes in the study of contemporary Middle East politics, including: the role of the military, social and economic development, political Islam, and the recent uprisings (the ‘Arab Spring’).

**Culture and Society in the Middle East**
This course examines the major cultural patterns and institutions of the MENA region. It is taught through a study of some lively topics such as religious and ethnic diversity, impact of the West, stereotyping, the role of tradition, education (traditional and modern), family structure and value, gender politics, media, life in city, town and village, labour and labour migration, the Palestinian refugee problem and Arab exile communities, culinary cultures, music and media, etc.

**Timetable**
Courses are taught Mon-Thu each week. Language courses are taught in the morning (10am-1pm) and the Politics and Culture Courses are taught in two slots in the afternoon (2:00-3:20 and 3:40-5:00pm).

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**FEES**

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<th>Session (5 weeks)</th>
<th>Programme fee*</th>
<th>Accommodation fee**</th>
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<td>20 June–21 July 2016 (two courses)</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
<td>from £300/week</td>
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* An early bird discount of 10% applies to course fees before 30 April 2016.

** Rooms can be booked at the Intercollegiate Halls which are located in the heart of Bloomsbury: www.halls.london.ac.uk.

For more information, please contact Louise Hosking on LH2@soas.ac.uk. Or check our website www.soas.ac.uk/lmei
THE HUNDRED YEAR WAR IN PALESTINE

PROFESSOR
RASHID KHALIDI

EDWARD SAID PROFESSOR OF ARAB STUDIES
CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

6.30PM, FRIDAY 11 MARCH 2016
BRUNEI GALLERY LECTURE THEATRE
ADMISSION FREE
ALL WELCOME

Enquiries:
tel No. 020 7898 4330
e-mail vp6@soas.ac.uk
www.soas.ac.uk/lmei-cps/events
Soas, University of London,
London WC1H 0XG