



Zafir: Musical Winds from North Africa to Andalucía

Simon Shaheen / *Musical Director, Oud, and Violin*

Nidal Ibourk / *Vocals*

Juan Pérez Rodríguez / *Guitar, Vocals, and Piano*

Auxi Fernandez / *Flamenco Dancer*

with

Qantara

Bassam Saba / *Flutes*

Najib Shaheen / *Oud*

Tareq Rantisi / *Percussion*

Naseem Alatrash / *Cello*

Ali Amr / *Qanun*

Friday Evening, April 15, 2016 at 8:00

Michigan Theater

Ann Arbor

Tonight's performance is supported by Mohamad Issa and the Issa Foundation.

Media partnership provided by Michigan Radio 91.7 FM and WEMU 89.1 FM.

Zafir: Musical Winds from North Africa to Andalusia appears by arrangement with Alma Artist Booking.

PROGRAM

Muhammad Fawzi

Fatafit Al Sukkar (Sugar Crumbles)

Khamis Al Tirnan

Al Nawba Al Khadra (The Green Suite)

Ayyuhal-Muwla'u (You Who are Passionate)

Yammim Riyadal-Wurud (Head for the Rose Garden)

Bi Marsa al-Tharif (The Port of al-Tharif)

Thughuru Ayyamikum Bawasim (Your Joyful Days)

Simon Shaheen

Al Qantara (The Arch)

Ahmad Fuad Hassan

Samba Sikah (Dance in Sikah Style)

INTERMISSION

Traditional Flamenco

Canastera (Basket Weaver)

Muhammad A. Wahhab

Ya Msafer Wahdak (You Who Travel Alone)

Shaheen

Zafir (The Eastern Winds)

Sonia M'barek / Lorca

Al Wadi Al Kabir (The Three Rivers)

Traditional

Ya Lor Hubbuki (My Love to You, Laura)

ZAFIR

Simon Shaheen brings to life the Arab music of Al-Andalus and blends it with the ubiquitous art of flamenco in his newest production, *Zafir*, a program of instrumental and vocal music and dance. This program does not pretend to recreate the music of a bygone era, but rather to renew a relationship that began more than 1,000 years ago. It reveals the commonalities of a music born in cultural centers of Iraq and Syria, blew like the wind (*zafir*) across the waters of the Mediterranean to Al-Andalus, blended with elements of Spanish music, and was brought back across the sea to North Africa where it flourished in the cities of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

The links between Arab culture and that of Andalucía are deeply imbedded in history. For more than 600 years the Moors held sway over a large part of the Iberian Peninsula which they called Al-Andalus and the courts of Cordoba, Seville, and Granada flourished as centers

of Arab-Iberian culture until the surrender of Granada in 1492. *Zafir*, which translates to “wind” or “breath,” (from which the English word “zephyr” is derived,) describes the creative breath that blew across two continents during this very pivotal time when music and the arts took a huge leap forward. Music flourished in Al-Andalus, especially after the arrival of master musician Ziryab from Baghdad in Córdoba around 825 CE. He introduced original Arab musical forms and instruments to the city that would later compose the roots of flamenco. While the origins of flamenco remain shrouded in mystery, the imprint of the Moors is undeniable. The aim of both Arab classical music and flamenco is to achieve a heightened state of emotion, a feeling of ecstasy, known by the Arab musicians as *tarab* and by flamenco performers and enthusiasts as *duende*. This transcendent feeling is essential to both traditions.



Interested in more? Learn about legendary singer Umm Kulthum, one of Simon Shaheen’s lifelong inspirations, at UMSLobby.org.

ARTISTS

Simon Shaheen (*musical director, oud, violin*) is one of the most significant Arab musicians, performers, and composers of his generation. His work incorporates and reflects a legacy of Arabic music, while it forges ahead to new frontiers, embracing many different styles in the process. With his ensemble, Qantara, he has made important musical contributions both in the studio and in the concert hall. He currently teaches at Berklee College of Music and is a recipient of the National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts. He is prolific as a composer, performer, and recording artist, and is widely considered one of the most influential artists of his generation.

Nidal Ibourk (*vocals*) is an exceptional singer and scholar. Ms. Ibourk was born in Rabat, Morocco and moved to the US in 2006. Upon graduating with her bachelor's degree in English studies in Morocco, Ms. Ibourk received a full scholarship from the US State Department to complete her postgraduate studies at Kent State University. In 2008, she earned her second bachelor's in organizational communications and completed a master's degree in human resources training and development.

Her musical talent and interpretation of much of the Arab traditional music repertoire led to her collaboration with internationally renowned violin and oud master Simon Shaheen. Through her collaborations with Mr. Shaheen, Ms. Ibourk revived the Arab music repertoire of the 1950s and '60s and successfully presented authentic interpretations of this music to audiences across the US.

One of Ms. Ibourk's distinguishing traits is her commitment to preserve her

cultural heritage through a presentation of classical Arabic and Moroccan repertoire. Her sophisticated stage presence is not only reflected in her fine selection of songs, but also expressed through her traditional wardrobe that communicates pride in her cultural roots. As an active speaker at universities and community events, Ms. Ibourk has reached a wide range of youth on her experiences in America as a Muslim artist.

Juan Pérez Rodríguez (*guitar, vocals, piano*) is a flamenco musician from Andalucía, Spain. He comes from a family of gypsy flamenco musicians: his father is the singer Juan Sombra and his uncle is a legend of flamenco guitar, Niño Miguel. Mr. Rodríguez began the study of classical piano at the age of eight in Spain and completed his master's degree at the Boulogne Billancourt Conservatoire in Paris.

Auxi Fernandez (*flamenco dancer*) is an international flamenco dancer from Andalucía, southern Spain. She has toured the world collaborating with top musicians and dancers including Chick Corea, Carles Benavent, Jorge Pardo, Buika, and Sara Baras.

Qantara, whose name translates to "arch" in Arabic, brings to life Simon Shaheen's vision for the unbridled fusion of Arabic, jazz, Western classical, and Latin American music: a perfect alchemy for music to transcend the boundaries of genre and geography. The members of Qantara are all virtuosos in their own musical forms and their collective expertise and knowledge raises the music created during the ensemble's performances to spectacular heights.

UMS ARCHIVES

Tonight's performance marks **Simon Shaheen's** third appearance under UMS auspices. Mr. Shaheen made his UMS debut in January 2004 at the Michigan Theater with Qantara, and most recently appeared at UMS in March 2009 with the Aswat Orchestra at Hill Auditorium as part of UMS's Performing Arts of the Arab World Festival. This evening marks **Qantara's** second appearance under UMS auspices, following their debut with Mr. Shaheen in 2004. UMS welcomes **Nidal Ibourk, Juan Pérez Rodríguez, and Auxí Fernández** in their UMS debuts this evening.

TONIGHT'S VICTORS FOR UMS



Mohamad Issa and the Issa Foundation

*Supporters of this evening's performance of Zafir: Musical Winds
from North Africa to Andalucía.*

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

4/16 Bavarian Radio Orchestra
4/23 The Bad Plus Joshua Redman

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE HORIZON...

4/16 2016-17 Season Launch Party
(Rackham Graduate Building, 4th Floor, 915 E. Washington St.,
5:30-7:30 pm)

Free and open to the public; no registration is required.