



World of Music

stories from the world of music

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OUD

by John Bilezikjian

Al-Farabi, born Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi (c. 870-950), a Persian philosopher, stated that the origin of the Oud was invented by Lamak, the sixth grandson of Adam. The legend states that the grieving Lamak hung the body of his dead son on a tree. The bleached shaped skeleton of his son's body on the tree inspired the first Oud. Such is the origin of this ancient musical instrument. The Oud is the predecessor of many present day stringed instruments. It is the Father of the Lute and the Grandfather of the Guitar. The Oud is an ancient musical stringed instrument dating back some 2500+ years to Persia having in its present form 11 strings, no frets and it is played with an eagle's quill.

The Oud is the Queen of musical instruments in the Middle-East. It is to the East what the Guitar is to the West.

The Oud is played in Armenia, Turkey, Greece, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, Morocco, Algiers, Bahrain, The Arab Gulf area, Israel, Persia and America to name a few countries. It migrated into Europe and is played in France and Spain as well.

Each country has their own great players and to each country the Oud has a unique style of it's own.

By the 9th Century a freed African slave became whom I feel to be the most important and prominent Oud player of his time. His name was Ziryab, Abu I-Hasan (Ali Ibn Nafi) in Persian and Arabic. He was born in 789 and died in 857. His birthplace was Baghdad, Iraq. He was active at the Umayyad court of Cordoba in Islamic Iberia. He first achieved notoriety at the Abbasid court in Baghdad and was the student of the great musician and composer, Ishaq al-Mawsili.

Ziryab is credited with inventing the use of the eagle's feather as the desired plectrum for the Oud instead of the plectrum that was used up to his time which was a piece of wood. The wood chip plectrum would break the strings and the eagle's feather quill that he introduced allowed the strings to last longer and not break.

He also added a 5th course of strings to the then 4 course set of strings that was on the instrument. He



Ziryab, a 9th Century freed African slave, became an important and prominent Oud player of his time.

dyed the 5 course set of strings, colors to symbolize the Aristotelian humors and the 5th course set to represent the soul.

Those colors, Persian/Arabic name and the Humors were:

String 1-Yellow	Zir	Bile
String 2-Red	Mathna	Blood
String 3-Red	Hadd	Soul
String 4-White	Mathlath	Phlegm
String 5-Black	Bamm	Melancholy

He wrote songs, he created a unique and influential style of musical performance for generations to come. He had a great influence on Spanish music and is considered the founder of the Andalusian music traditions of North Africa and the Middle-East.

He founded one of the first schools of music in Cordoba. He was considered a virtuoso on the Oud and a great singer of songs. He introduced the Oud to the Spanish Guitar which eventually became present day Flamenco music.

Ziryab had 8 sons and two daughters and all of his children became musicians of some prominence. The children kept the memory of Ziryab alive and through his children they spread his music throughout Europe.

Some of the most important and prominent Oud makers were:

Manolis Venios (Emmanuel Manol) (1845-1915) who lived in Turkey and was of Greek ancestry. I believe that he was the most important Oud maker of his time.

Onnik Karibyan who died in 1976 was born in Thesoloniki Greece and lived in Turkey. Onnik Karibyan was of Armenian ancestry and the most important Armenian maker of the Oud.

Nariman (Nariman Abnossian) (1923-1982) was of Persian ancestry, lived in Iran and was the most prominent Oud maker in Iran.

The Nahat Dynasty started in the early 19th Century. The Nahat Dynasty of Oud makers were of Syrian origin and the most important Syrian makers.

Mohammad Fadil Hussein from Iraq was the most important Iraqi maker of Ouds.



World of Music *continued*

stories from the world of music

You read about the Oud in the article by John Bilezikjian on the previous page. Now read about John himself in this article by Carolyn Harper. Carolyn has been active for more than 40 years in the performing arts of the Middle East. Her association with John stems from membership in a national Middle Eastern arts association. She has been a friend of the Bilezikjian family for more than 35 years.

FROM CABARET TO CONCERT HALL – FIFTY YEARS OF MAKING MUSIC

From the day he found his grandfather's instrument to today, John Bilezikjian has devoted his life to music. He took an ancient folk instrument, the oud, and expanded its range into areas never before explored.

In this country, most people are only aware of the oud as the strange looking instrument that often backs up a belly dancer. Bilezikjian's talent expanded far beyond smoky cabarets onto concert stages worldwide making him the most distinguished oudist of his generation. His hard work has earned him the title of "America's Oud Virtuoso".

The oud is an ancient eleven-stringed, fretless Persian instrument dating back more than 2000 years. It is played with an eagle's feather. It is the precursor of the lute, guitar and other western stringed instruments, having been brought back to Europe by returning crusaders.



Bilezikjian has given command performances for heads of state, appeared on concert tours with Leonard Cohen, performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Pacific Symphony, the Pasadena Pops Orchestra, and the Los Angeles

Mandolin orchestra, among others. In June 2005, he debuted with the Boston Pops Orchestra as featured soloist, marking the first time the oud was presented in a solo capacity in a classical concert setting.

Although they weren't aware of it, movie lovers have heard his music for many years. Bilezikjian has recorded sound tracks for more than fifty films, including "Prince of Egypt", "Spy Game", "Siriana", "Must Love Dogs", and "Beowulf". His music can be heard on many PBS documentaries. His first job for the film industry was for the sound track of the "Mission Impossible"

series on television when was 19 years old.

Bilezikjian's record company, Dantz Records, located in Laguna Hills, has produced more than 25 recordings encompassing folk, pop and classical genres. They are available through his website www.DantzRecords.com.

On August 21, 2011 John Bilezikjian appeared in concert at the La Mirada Performing Arts Center. In celebration of the fifty years he has dedicated to a career in music, the concert included musical friends with whom he has performed over the years, including members of his first band "The Halehs" formed when he was 11 years old.

For information on an upcoming concert or any of John's recordings, please visit www.DantzRecords.com or call 855-OD-DIST.

Contributed by Carolyn Harper



Earth...

It has been a long time since I have tasted a real tomato.....The kind that has a beautiful reddish color and a smell that taste so delicious...you can slice it and have it with mozzarella cheese some fresh mint, olive oil and a little salt and paper...or in "Shirazi Salad" (chopped tomato, onion and cucumber).

So, my mission was to find a tomato that has a real taste, not so plastic...I started to go to every market, from our little neighborhood ones to the big markets, cheap and expensive or even to the Farmers market...Well, it became like a mission impossible!!... but there is a saying in Iran : *the seeker is finder !!*

One night at family gathering, the subject of our conversation led to the organic food and vegetables...I started with my complain about tomatoes

My cousin heard me from the other side of the room and said, if you are so eager, why don't you go to our little farm and plant it yourself..

The idea of my own vegetable garden was spinning in my head...I became interested right there. With a big smile on my face, I committed myself to it...totally ignorant about the hard work ahead...The farm has been sitting there for almost a year without being taken care of but for the love of tomatoes, I'll do anything ! ... So I set a day and I got the keys ...

Here comes Monday morning and how comfortable I was in my bed. I started to visualize the farm and got up right away to get ready. Fortunately

in this process my 19 year old niece, Lili, who is an artist and is here for her summer break from Vancouver, showed interest to go with me...

We were given tools and big bags to take out all the weeds that have been growing for the last 12 months...

Here we are, and we found ourselves totally clueless...

Without having gloves to pick the weeds and hat to protect us from the sun, we started to work ! ... picked up the tools and did not know how to work with them. "Oh Well," we chimed. We looked at each other "how do we start, where do we begin?" Well, we decided it's better to start from the middle so we can see some progress at the end of the day. So we did. We started to pick up all the weeds by hand and bagged them.

Meanwhile, there were other people working in their own farms and I guess they could tell that we were such beginners ... So we got some visitors. They came to help and gave us great tips ... We found ourselves in a little nice Organic Community that everyone helps each other. Looking at all their successful farms motivated us. Especially when Senor Alberto brought us some fresh onions from his farm, Lili and I started to work harder.

Little did I know that I had to teach my dance class that night, playing my castanets and rolling my fingers on it was the most painful movement ... forget the sunburn on face and keep my back straight ... but the show must go on :-). Not to mention Lili being an incredible artist, she also work with her hands.....so, OUCH.

Lilli and I kept going back to the farm almost every other day and worked on it to prepare for the tilling.

After a few weeks, my partner and more family members volunteered to go with us and help to prepare the soil.

Today, I noticed how much we have done. The soil is ready to plant seeds ... It is an incredible feeling ... Ole'

EARTH—How beautiful is to be in touch with it ... How peaceful it was while we were digging the weeds out ... There were some dogs barking some birds and roosters singing Y Nada Mas only the silence of nature ... Lilli and I, from time to time, were talking and coming up with an ideas of how to live life simply and enjoy it ... There were moments that I found myself singing some folk songs I remembered from Mazandaran (area by Caspian sea in Iran) and Lilli was whistling her own songs ...

I stopped and looked at us, we were in most colorful clothing in this beautiful farm singing and whistling and digging earth to prepare it to feed us, then I thought " Aren't all the folk songs and dances created this way: in the nature by the nature and what is it that when you go to the mountains you always wear bright colored clothes"? The blend of us and earth made a great impression on me ... What a momentous experience I had.

Back to the title of "Earth Cultures Project ... Let's keep in touch with it before they turn it all into some shopping malls and high-rises ... Let's get out there end enjoy the nature.

I will post pictures from our progress and my first organic tomatoes ...

contributed by Assieh "La Mora"

As always, don't forget the hungry.

www.freerice.com

**Play a free game
and rice will be donated
to those who need it!**

*FreeRice is a non-profit website run by the
United Nations World Food Programme.*

Have a good (or bad) food memory, recipe or restaurant? Write to us (200 words or less) and you may see it published.

**culturallyspeaking@
earthculturesproject.org**



UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



JOHN BILEZIKJIAN

John Bilezikjian is "America's Oud Virtuoso." Mr. Bilezikjian may be the most prominent Oudist of his generation. He is a master Oudist who has elevated this instrument to the concert stage as well as continues to perform as a folk musician. He has performed for some 51 years on this ancient eleven stringed Persian fretless instrument dating back some 2,000 years. The Oud is performed with an eagle's quill. See below for John's performance schedule.

Olympus Greek Tavern,
6304 Laurel Canyon, North Hollywood, (818) 766-4100
Call John, (949) 581-5664, for show dates and times.
Monthly Armenian, Greek and International Folk Dance Music, reservations required, \$15 minimum charge
Food and drink available

Friday – Sunday
June 22, 23 and 24, 2012
St. Paul's Greek Festival
4749 Alton Pkwy., Irvine, CA.
(949) 733-2366-Church Office
Call John, (949) 581-5664, to get performance times, Greek & Armenian Folk Dance Music

Third Thursday, Every other Month
8:30 PM to 11:30 PM
Tango Del Rey, 3567 Del Rey St., San Diego, CA. 92109
(858) 794-2687, With featured and guest belly dancers and Frank Lazzaro and Dave Dhillon

<http://dantzrecords.com>

ANITA AND THE YANKS



Anita and the Yanks broke into the Celtic rock music scene in 2008 and have built an impressive fan base in and around the Los Angeles area. Lead singer, guitarist Anita Mansfield and Bryan Dobbs mandolin player started out as a duo and they picked up Ryan Dean (drums) Damon Stout (bass) and Pat D'Arcy (uilleann pipes) along the way, featuring special guests Rachel Grace and Chris Loken on violin.

FINN MC COOL'S IRISH PUB

Fri, Jun 1 and Fri, Jul 27

10 PM - 1:30 AM

2702 Main St

Santa Monica, CA 90405

MULDOONS IRISH PUB

Sun, Jun 3 2 PM - 4 PM

202 Newport Center Drive

Newport Beach, CA 92660

(949) 640-4110

THE BIG IRISH FAIR

Sat, Jun 16 10 AM - 6 PM

Sun, Jun 17 10AM - 7 PM

5305 Santiago Canyon Road

Orange County CA 92676

ATRIUM HOTEL

Sat Jun 16 8:30 PM

18700 MacArthur Blvd

Irvine, CA 92612

IRELAND'S 32

9:30 PM - 1:30 AM

Fri, Jul 20

13721 Burbank Blvd

Van Nuys, CA 91401

FULL MOON SATURDAY

Sat, Aug 04 4:00 PM

Pasadena, CA

THE FORD AMPHITHEATRE

Sun, Sep 16

2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East,

Los Angeles, CA 90068

www.anitaandtheyanks.com



ASSIEH "LA MORA"

Assieh was born and raised in Iran. She started her Flamenco dance training at early age in Los Angeles and later in Spain at Amor de Dios Flamenco Dance Academy in Madrid with master teachers like; La Tati, Ciro, Carmela Greco, La Truco, Manolete and in Sevilla at Manolo Marin Dance Academy.

She has also studied under private training of Angelita Vargas and Pepa Montes.

She teaches at Gypsy Camp near Motor and National in Los Angeles. Call for class schedule: (310) 558-0746.



Always check with venues to confirm dates, times, and locations.

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

NATIVE VOICES AT THE AUTRY

Devoted to developing and producing new works for the stage by Native American playwrights

The Hummingbirds

By Elizabeth Frances (Cherokee)
Kimberly Norris Guerrero (Colville,
Salish-Kootenai, Cherokee),
and Shyla Marlin (Choctaw)
Friday, June 1, 7:30 p.m.

The Bird House

By Diane Glancy (Cherokee)
Saturday, June 2, 2:00 p.m.

Distant Thunder

A Native American Musical
Book by Shaun Taylor-Corbett
(Blackfoot) and Lynne Taylor-Corbett
Music and Lyrics by Shaun Taylor-
Corbett (Blackfoot) and Chris
Wiseman
Saturday, June 2, 7:30 p.m.

4700 Western Heritage Way, Los
Angeles, CA 90027
NativeVoicesAtTheAutry.org

Saturday & Sunday, June 2-3, 2012 PACIFIC ISLANDER FESTIVAL

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Discover the rich and diverse cultures of the Pacific Islands through traditional craft demonstrations, ethnic cuisine, educational programs, storytelling, and an ocean of entertainment, including music and dance performances. Watch hula performances, listen to Tahitian drumming, try out ancient Hawaiian games, enjoy island cuisine, and admire artisans as they create traditional weavings. The ninth annual Pacific Islander Festival will feature various cultures, including Hawaiian, Fijian, Marshallese, Chamoru, Tahitian, Samoan, Tokelau, and Maori. Cost: General Admission--\$24.95 adult (12+), \$21.95 senior (62+), \$13.95 child (3-11), and free for children under age 3 and Aquarium members.

Aquarium of the Pacific

100 Aquarium Way Long Beach, CA
562-590-3100
www.aquariumofpacific.org

1st Annual Open SPIRITUAL ART EVENT

All spiritual artists are invited to join the Spritual Art Festival presenting their work to the world, via the SpiritualArtFestival.com event on:

June 2, 2012, 10am-10pm.

The venue is a 29,000 sq. ft. Spirituality in Business Incubator, the Avante Center, located at 2233 El Segundo Blvd., near LAX.

Message from event coordinators:

"All spiritual artists are invited to register online at our website, and help us get the word out to the community, friends and family.

Our featured spiritual artist, Syamarani Didi, will give a presentation and her vedic art and knowledge, and will be available to mentor all during the event.

Srimati Syamarani is a treasure that is waiting to be shared with other Spiritual Artists and with the world. It is time to open up to all forms of spiritual art, whether it be Vedic, Islam, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, and/or any and all pure love and appreciation of the Divine in any and all forms of Interfaith and Culture Spiritual Art.

We hope you will join us, and help us get the word out, so these spiritual artists can have a way to get their spirit driven and inspired art out into the world."

www.spiritualartfestival.com



GYPSY FOLK ENSEMBLE

The Gypsy Folk Ensemble is a world dance performing company based in Los Angeles, California which was formed in 1978 to preserve, perform and teach traditional folk dances from countries around the world. See website for workshops and assemblies available.

See below for upcoming library shows, free and open to the public.

Wed, Jun 6 "Dream Big"

dances of Estonia & Scandinavia
Grandview Library – 3pm
1535 5th St, Glendale, CA 91201
(818) 548-2049

Thu, Jun 28 "Dream Big"

dances of Estonia & Scandinavia
El Rio-Soliz Library – 4pm
2820 Jourdan St, Oxnard, CA 93036
(805) 485-4515

Wed, Jul 11 "Dream Big"

dances of Estonia & Scandinavia
South El Monte Library – 2pm
1430 N. Central Av,
South El Monte, CA 91733
(626) 443-4158

Thu, Jul 12 "Dream Big"

dances of Estonia & Scandinavia
John C. Fremont Library – 6:30pm
6121 Melrose Ave, LA 90038
(323) 962-3521

Mon, Jul 16 "Echoes of Polynesia"

dances of Hawaii, New Zealand
and Tahiti
Big Bear Lake Library – 3pm
41930 Garstin, Suite D
Big Bear, CA 92315 (909) 866-5571

Tue, Jul 24 "Dream Big"

dances of Estonia & Scandinavia
Charter Oaks Library – 3pm
20540 E. Arrow Hwy, Suite K
Covina, CA 91724 (626) 339-2151

www.gypsyfolkensemble.com

Always check with venues to confirm dates, times, and locations.

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Katselas Theatre Company presents the WORLD PREMIERE of **A CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

The stunning truth comes to light in this WORLD PREMIERE original piece developed at Katselas INKubator series. A dramatic response to the LA Times "value-added" teacher ratings, the performance looks at the ironies and heartbreak of our educational system. Written and Performed by Alan Aymie and directed by Paul Stein.

Beverly Hills Playhouse

254 South Robertson Blvd.

Beverly Hills 90211

Fridays & Saturdays

through June 9, 2012 8pm

Tickets \$20- \$25

Reservations: 702 KTC-TKTS (702-582-8587) or online at
www.ktctickets.com

June 27, 2012 Los Angeles, CA

Join an international group of climate change leaders

The Mediterranean City: A Conference on Climate Change Adaptation

Water - The United Nations has identified issues related to water as a critical area in which climate change adaptation may occur.

Energy - With a natural supply of abundant solar energy and the potential for tidal and off-shore wind power, the Mediterranean climate zones have great potential to harness existing local renewable energy supplies.

Biodiversity and Open Space -

Mediterranean ecosystems are nutrient-poor, seasonally-stressed, yet species-rich ecosystems that provide unique services to urban centers while mitigating both drought and floods, cleaning polluted urban runoff and providing open space.

The Built Environment - In the face of rapid development and population growth, redefining the built environment to include parkland and open space promotes the preservation of regionally-unique habitat while also ensuring access opportunities to individuals of all income levels.

Public Health - Dependent on clean air and water, natural geophysical processes, and biological diversity - a healthy human population must respect and tend natural resources.

Governance - Cities are now the engines of the world economy and social structure and must, therefore, work as a network across national boundaries to bring more resources and knowledge to building solutions.

sponsorship opportunities: info@medcityconference.org

www.medcityconference.org

LOOMING ELECTION: WOVEN WORKS

Works by Tanya Aguiñiga,
Connie Lippert, Michael F. Rohde,
Cameron Taylor-Brown,
and Consuelo Jimenez Underwood

On view at the
Craft in America Study Center
June 16 - September 1, 2012
Opening reception and artist talk on
Saturday **June 16, 2012**
5-7 PM, talk at 6PM

(Los Angeles, CA) In light of the imminent 2012 election, Craft in America proudly gathers together politically charged work by five contemporary textile innovators. This is a vast and varied group of exceptionally skilled artists who push the medium of fiber, and the traditional technique of weaving, into new realms. Their work redefines what weaving can be, in terms of method, material and meaning. Visually engulfing, boldly crafted, their messages speak loud and clear, causing us to reconsider the road our nation has paved and where we are heading.

www.craftinamerica.org

The Craft in America Study Center
8415 West Third Street
2 blocks East of La Cienega

The Study Center is open
Thursday - Saturday
from 12:00 - 6:00 pm.
For more information and to RSVP:
info@craftinamerica.org
or (323) 951-0610.

Hawaiian Inter-Club Council of So Cal HO'OLAULE'A 2012

ALONDRA PARK
LAWNDALE, CALIFORNIA
(Between Redondo Beach Blvd/
Manhattan Beach Blvd and
Prairie Avenue/Crenshaw Blvd)

Iulai (July) 21- 22, 2012
9:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M

Entertainment, Boutiques, Games, Food



**Dances from Estonia, that
will be featured
in the
Gypsy Folk Ensemble's
Library Program for the
Summer of 2012**



Always check with venues to confirm dates, times, and locations.

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES OF INTEREST

MUSEUMS

The Autry National Center
www.theautry.org

Bowers Museum
www.bowers.org

Craft & Folk Art Museum
www.cafam.org

The Getty
www.getty.edu

Metropolitan Museum of Art
(search the database for works of art, costumes & more)
www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/

Museum of Latin American Art
www.molaa.org

Museum of Tolerance
www.museumoftolerance.com

Pacific Asia Museum
www.pacificasiamuseum.org

ONGOING ACTIVITIES IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA

Current Cultural Happenings Around Los Angeles
groups.yahoo.com/group/caltechfolkdance

Olvera Street in Los Angeles
<http://olvera-street.com>

Folkworks (click on "calendar")
www.folkworks.org/

FOLK DANCE & FOLK MUSIC INFORMATION

Dick Oakes' Folk Dance Pages
www.phantomranch.net/folkdanc/folkdanc.htm

Folkways (ethnic music)
www.folkways.si.edu/index.aspx

ARC Music (ethnic music CDs)
www.arcmusic.co.uk

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

BYKI
 Free language software downloads
www.byki.com/

FREELANG
 Free bilingual dictionary downloads
www.freelang.net/

ARTS AND CULTURES

Smithsonian Magazine Arts & Cultures
www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
www.folklife.si.edu/

BBC - Holidays Around the World and so much more!
www.bbc.co.uk/naturehumanplanetexplorer/events_and_festivals

Pulse of the Planet
www.pulseplanet.com

CULTURAL CENTERS

(a small sampling, list growing every month)

Acadian Cultural Center
www.nps.gov/jela/new-acadian-cultural-center.htm

Croatian Cultural Center
www.croatianamericanweb.org/index.php

Hibulb Cultural Center
<http://www.hibulbculturalcenter.org/>

Ilanka Cultural Center
www.ilankacenter.org/

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
www.indianpueblo.org/

Polynesian Cultural Center
<http://www.polynesia.com/>

Skirball Cultural Center
<http://www.skirball.org/>

West Virginia Division of Culture and History
www.wvculture.org/

FOR KIDS

Yahoo's site for kids to learn about the world's countries
www.kids.yahoo.com/reference/world-factbook

CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY DK PUBLISHING
www.us.dk.com

Complete Flags of the World
My World, My Story:
Life Stories from Teens from Around the World
Homes Around the World
Children Just Like Me
A Life Like Mine

CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS

<http://kidspacemuseum.org>
<http://www.bowers.org/kidseum.php/>

(These links are for reference only and are not necessarily endorsed by Educational Communications)

Support the Arts & Education!



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Your donation will help bring the arts back to education under the Earth Cultures Project, or help fund other projects of Educational Communications. Volunteers are always needed in the office. If you are interested in volunteering please call (310) 559-9160.

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EARTH CULTURES PROJECT

www.earthculturesproject.org

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(310) 559-9160

or by email at

info@earthculturesproject.org

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Los Angeles, CA 90035-9119

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@earthculturesproject.org

Email regarding design or content, please write to designer/editor:
nickieh@earthculturesproject.org