



نور
NOUR

Ensemble

A project through
Persian, Kurdish
and Medieval Music

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The project

9 artists, French and Persian, singers and instrumentalists, are combining their own musical tradition to reinterpret traditional Kurdish, Persian and European repertoire.

Medieval pieces, Gregorian plain song and Spanish cantigas from a repertoire situated between 9th and 15th centuries are dialoguing and are mixed with Persian and Kurdish folk and traditional melodies.



Kurdish and Persian Music

Iran is a country with an amazing cultural ethnic and musical diversity between North and South and East and West.

From the Turkmenís chant so close from central Asian music, to the African rhythm of the Persian Gulf and from the music of Sistan and Baloutchistan, so similar to Afghanis and Pakistanis music, to the folk and mystic music of the Kurdish Sufis, all of those music have a common point: They are all alive, still having a social function in the life of those people.

The Kurdistan is a region between Iraq, Turkey and Iran. The music of the Iranian Kurdistan is quietly different from the 2 others region.

Music of dance, to rejoice, to cry or mystic, it reflects a tradition which is still alive. This music is coming from a pure Kurdish ancestral tradition and is even inspired by the other music from different region of Iran. Modal, this music is also from an oral tradition.

Persian traditional music is a huge and complex repertoire. Sources of it inspiration are coming from folk and popular music from the different region of Iran. Its melismatic horizontality and its refined ornaments make this music probably the quintessence of all of those regional music.

Based on modalities (Dastgah) with specific characters, some precise rules are managing the passage between different melodies. This music is still kept and orally transmitted by “Masters” which preserve this tradition.



European Music

European music from the 9th to the 15th centuries (Gregorian plainsong and Spanish cantigas) is a music situated before the conceptual and intellectual revolution of the invention of the written music (score writing, written codification of the music). So we can imagine that the music of that time is still an oral tradition.

Its inspiration, for the religious and profane music, is also coming from the popular and folk tradition. An other interesting point of view is that this music is essentially modal.

At an historical point of view, it was a time when artists, commercial travelers from East to West, from Orient and Occident were in frequent contact and exchange. Alive testimony of those exchanges are nowadays: The lute instrument whose ancestor is the Ud still alive in East, “Tympanum” and “Psalterion”, two medieval instruments coming from the “Santur” and the “ghanun”, still practiced in different countries. Perhaps some Persian musicians like “Kanz al Tuhaf” or “Abdul Ghader e Maraghi” have crossed the court of king “Alfonso X el Sabio” ?



NOUR's Ensemble Music

NOUR ensemble is trying to discover or to recreate this common expression, this common key which had probably existed in this period of music's history. For this its repertoire is based on sources issued from the 2 traditions, Persian and European:

“Conductus” from the 13th century and melody in “Nava” mode, ...psalmodic Gregorian plain song mixed with psalmodic melody from the Uraman region of Kurdistan,... counter point created with melodies using Koran and Bible text sung together in their own style,... “Choir competition” between Kurdish and Spanish choir singing the “cantigas” of “Alfonso X el Sabio”.

The musicians and singers are playing with colors, styles, diversity and even similarity of each musical tradition.

The music of Nour is a rejuvenation of that tradition and the creation of a contemporaneous repertoire interpreted by artists of the 21st century using ancient music.



NOUR Ensemble

NOUR means Light

- NOUR ensemble was founded in year 2000 around the project of ALBA piece. It was the first experience on combining Iranian and European Vocal music.
- In 2002 the Nour's vocal quintet has worked on the Occidental polyphonic repertoire from the 15th to the 17th century. The ensemble has performed in ancient churches of the Azerbaijan province in Iran. A documentary has been made in collaboration with ARTE TV Channel about this musical travel.
- In 2003, NOUR ensemble decided to focus even more and deeper on this musical experience between Occident and Persia. Some Iranian instruments joined the European and Iranian singers. This new repertoire has been performed for the first time in October 2003 in "forum des Halles" of Paris.
- In January 2004, 3 concerts have been organized in Tehran in the Niavaran royal palace. The profit of those concerts was dedicated to the victims of the Bam earthquake.

Contact Us:

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The musicians



Christophe REZAI

Tenor, Indian's harmonium,
arrangements, composition and direction

French-Iranian born in 1966 in Toulouse, he studied singing and composition alongside engineering and marketing studies. Living in Tehran since 1994, he is composing music for film or theater and has founded 'Aria Musica ensemble dedicated to baroque music and NOUR ensemble.



Mostafa MAHMOUDI

Kurdish and Persian singer

born in Mahabad in 1972, he studied singing and the Kurdish repertoire with several Masters. He has given already concerts in France, Italy and Turkey with different Persian ensembles. Mostafa is at the origin of the creation of Nour Ensemble.



Pierre BARANGER

Tenor

Born in Orleans in 1964, he is also professor of flute in the conservatoire of this city. Pierre was at the origin of Nour's adventure in churches of the Iranian Azerbaijan province.



Pierre-Yves BINARD

Baritone and percussions

Born in 1979, he is studying in conservatoire of Toulouse and he is a member of Nour since October 2003. The color of his voice and his musical sense bring an essential touch for the interpretation of this music.



Hamid KHOSROSHAHI

Bass

Born in Tehran in 1977, licensed from Tehran musical university he succeeds in 2002 to integrate the vocal class of professor Jasmin Martorell in Toulouse's conservatoire. He is also one of the first member of the ensemble.



The musicians



Ali BOUSTAN

Oud, shourangiz and Persian vocal

Born in Tehran in 1968, graphist, he studied setar and Persian music with several master like Hossein Alizadeh. He has participated in many concerts. In September 2003 he played in the ensemble of Hossein Alizadeh with Djivan Gasparyan.



Reza ASGARZADEH

Duduk, recorder, baritone and dohol

Born in Tehran in 1968, licensed in economy, he studied recorder, duduk, and percussion as an autodidact. In 2001 he attended the recorder for 3 months, in France, with Professor Pierre Boragno. He is at the origin of Aria Musica ensemble and Nour ensemble.



Saba ALIZADEH

Kamantche, Vocal

Born in Tehran in 1983, he is studying photography but has studied kamantche with masters like Ardeshir Kamkar, Keyhan Kalhor and Said Faradjpouri. He is the youngest member of Nour Ensemble.



Ali RAHIMI

Daf, tombak and vocal

Born in Tehran in 1979, he is percussionist for several ensembles of different styles. He won the first prize for the best soloist in an Italian festival in 2001. He has performed in numerous concerts in Great Britain and India.



Jasmin MARTORELL

Vocal advisor

Without him nothing would have exist. He is the preparator of the vocal color of this ensemble with singers from different countries. His knowledge makes the link between the two vocal techniques: the Iranian and the European.



The Repertoire

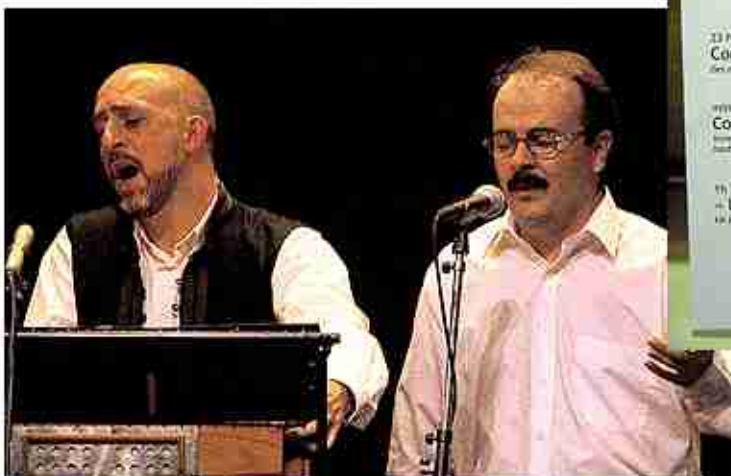
Duration of NOUR's repertoire is more than 80 minutes.

- “Alleluia” from “Graduale Romanum” (p.480) in the 1st mode and Kurdish story from the Uraman part of Kurdistan. Vocal and Choir.
- “Gloria Patri et filio...” from “Graduale Romanum” (p.824) in the 6th and 7th mode, and “Sourate” from the Koran. Vocal and choir.
- “Alleluia” from “Graduale Romanum” (p.825) and “Sourate” or praying from the Koran. Vocal and choir.
- “Novus annus”: piece from “Ecole Saint Martial de Limoges” (XIIth cent.) and Kurdish Magham. Vocal sextet.
- “Uterus Hodie”: piece from “Ecole Saint Martial de Limoges” (XIIth cent.) and poems of Baba Taher sung in Mahour mode. Vocal et instrumental with choir.
- “Pange melos lacrimosum”: French “Conductus” from the XIIIth cent. Vocal et instrumental.
- “Santa Maria Amar”: Cantigas espagnol from XIIIth cent. And Kurdish folk melodies in “shour” and “nava” mode. Vocal, choir and instrumental.
- “Cunctissimus concanentes”: piece from “Llibre Vermell de Montserrat” (XIVth cent.) and Persian poems (Mowlana Rumi) in “nava” mode. Vocal, choir et instrumental.
- “Miragres fremosos...”: Spanish Cantigas from the XIIIth cent. and Kurdish melody on an Ourami's poem in “shour” and “nava” modes. Vocal, choir et instrumental.
- “ALBA”: composed by C. Rezaï for 5 voices. European quartet on poems from the “troubadours” and the Iranian singer on Hafez Poetry.
- “Kurdish Lullaby”: arrangements for 6 voices by C. Rezaï.
- Instrumental pieces in different Persian modalities (dastgah).



Album Photos

Paris Concert - 4/10/2003 - Forum des halles





Album Photos

Tehran Concert - 7, 8, 9/01/2004 - Niavaran Palace



Maestro Hossein Alizadeh



Maestro Keyhan Kalhor





Album Photos

Album Recording Firouz Abad - 09/2004 - Ardeshir Babakan Palace





Album Photos

France Concert Tour - Oct. & Nov. 2005



Olivet / Eglise de St. Benoit



Toulouse / Eglise Saint Jérôme



Olivet / Eglise de St. Benoit



Toulouse / Eglise Saint Jérôme



Toulouse / Saint Pierre-Quint



Orléans / Eglise de Saint Pierre Puellier



Rennes au liberté



Notredame