ṢAUT IN BAHRAIN AND KUWAIT:
History and Creativity in Concept and Practice

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or award in any other university or educational institution.

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September 2016

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an academic study of the practice of the *ṣaut* music genre in
Bahrain and Kuwait. Most of the questions and resources discussed in this work
have not been examined previously in an academic study. By comparing the style of
performance that is currently prevalent with that of early recordings, the dissertation
offers a diachronic study of the development and practice of the *ṣaut* genre over
different historical stages. It traces the structural development of the genre as it
relates to the elements that have disappeared or emerged and the influence of key
figures in *ṣaut*. In addition, the study offers a close analysis of the practices of
variation and improvisation to understand how *ṣaut* performers developed the genre
from within a shared community practice.

The introduction of the dissertation brings to light the researcher's position and
experience in the *ṣaut* community, as both practitioner and researcher. Chapter I
aims to understand the *ṣaut* genre by studying different types of recording, especially
78rpm records, which are the only really tangible trace of *ṣaut* before the Second
World War. Chapter II is concerned with the history of *ṣaut* and approaches this in
two ways. Firstly, it traces the history of the term *ṣaut*, in its literal, metaphorical,
and musical manifestations. Secondly, the Chapter highlights the history of *ṣaut* as it
relates to questions of origins and influence. Chapter III examines the development
of the key structural elements (rhythms, forms, and *maqām* system) that are
particular to *ṣaut* as a genre. Chapter IV discusses the music and percussion
instruments that used in *ṣaut*.

Chapter V presents a definition and description of improvisation in *ṣaut*. It considers

a number of aspects that surround the practice of improvisation and variation, such

as why, how and when the performer learns to improvise in *ṣaut*. Chapter VI

continues on from the previous Chapter by examining the tools and technique of

creativity in *ṣaut*. In sum, by offering ethnographic, historical and analytical

approaches to the *ṣaut* genre, this thesis is intended to invigorate debates about

music of the Gulf and Arab traditions more broadly in several related, but often

disconnected fields. On a theoretical level, its contribution is to renegotiate the

borders between concepts of repertoire, composition, and improvisation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

When addressing the subject of Gulf music, English language sources tend to mention the vocal music genre known as *ṣaut* in passing, usually within a list, and with limited information about it as a genre. For example, according to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), the music genres of Kuwait include *ṣaut*, pearl divers' music, and the bagpipe music (*jirba*) of the ethnic Iranian minority (Sadie, 2001, pp. 757-795). The discussion in the *Garland Encyclopaedia* (2002) is general and not detailed, because it includes Kuwait within the Arabian Peninsula region. Writing for that volume, Jean Lambert generalised about the different types of music that are known in Kuwait, understanding them as music of the Gulf region: "two main musical styles are characteristic of the Gulf: pearl divers' songs and traditional urban music" (Lambert, 2002, pp. 649-650). That "traditional urban music" is essentially *ṣaut*, and my fundamental aim in this dissertation is to move beyond these basic outlines through an in-depth study of the genre, focusing on the changing styles of singing and elaboration.

There are considerable challenges in introducing *ṣaut* into the academic field because of the paucity of existing studies and sources relating to this genre. Most of the studies that do exist, in both English and Arabic, concentrate on specific and limited aspects, mostly about the history or the forms. Other sources that are available, such as interviews with performers and music historians, and the *ṣaut* discourse that can be traced among *ṣaut* performers and listeners, are therefore particularly useful, if limited in certain ways. This dissertation will build on them, but more fundamentally on my own experience with personal observations that are a

result of my experience as a violin player and *ṣaut* singer over more than twenty years in the *ṣaut* circle in Kuwait. These enable me to engage with many aspects that have not been previously considered in the sources, such as the processes involved in composing a classical *ṣaut* melody, and the variation and improvisation practices of *ṣaut* performers. In addition, I will present many other aspects of *ṣaut* in order to offer a clearer image of my own place within the practices of *ṣaut*, including terminology, sources, and history.

It is helpful at this stage to consider studies that theorise such participant observation, and consider theorisations regarding preservation and transmission of the music of a social group. Kay Kaufman Shelemay (2008) suggests that transmission is a three-way process involving preserving, memorialising and mediating traditions, all of which can be part of ethnomusicologists' practices. The preservation of traditional music can happen by studying, playing, and teaching others' musical traditions; such practices constitute part of the responsibility of ethnomusicologists for keeping a musical tradition both alive and constant (Shelemay, 2008, p. 150).

Indeed my relationship with the *ṣaut* circle or community began in this way. As a student inside the community of *ṣaut* I played the violin, which I had learned prior to joining the community. But the members of the community encouraged me to use a particular violin technique that is appropriate for accompanying *ṣaut* singing. The *ṣaut* performers use certain types of creative strategies in singing *ṣaut* and playing *mirwās* which influenced me and gradually allowed me to improve my skills. In addition, I was able to listen to the *ṣaut* musicians, talk with them about the genre,

and observe how they interacted and use various terms relating to all aspects of *ṣaut* performance, including the instruments, types of melodies and dancing techniques. I could never have known these terms and the ways to use and pronounce them simply by listening to recordings or watching *ṣaut* performances on television. This personal interaction has proved crucial to my work since I have found most of the terms I have learned as a result are not found in studies of *ṣaut*. Thus, the only way to listen to and to learn these terms is to live within the *ṣaut* community and learn from its members.

I gradually became more involved with the community, not only by listening and learning from others, but also by playing with them as a violin player and later singing them. In line with Shelemay's thinking, I tried to contribute to the preservation of the *ṣaut* genre by accompanying others in *ṣaut* performances, providing a better quality of playing, and finding uncommon or forgotten materials in the *ṣaut* repertoire. In addition, I succeeded in persuading a performer called Ibrāhīm al-Khashram, who enjoys a wide popularity among both performers and listeners, to sing and record number of *ṣaut* melodies that had been forgotten and abandoned by *ṣaut* performers for some decades. The project contributed to reviving many neglected, abandoned, and unknown *ṣaut* melodies, and resulted in them becoming part of the current *ṣaut* repertoire.

The practice of "teaching" as it is understood in Shelemay's article was not reflected clearly in my experience, however, since the term "teaching" appears in the *ṣaut* community in a different form. Teaching in the community does not involve giving lessons to others, but rather it happens when musicians attend the performances of

distinguished *ṣaut* musicians, they may then refer to them as their teachers, because they imitate them. Therefore, I never taught others or gave them lectures on how to play *ṣaut*. However, I did give advice about the melodies, their history, playing in the *ṣaut* style, and many other aspects. Thus, "teaching" in this context consists of a distinguished performer giving advice and, in effect, "teaching" others by having them attend his musical gathering (*samra*), listening to his performance and being influenced by him.

Shelemay suggests that the memorialising of tradition ensures that we remember the informants, and even dedicate written material to them, as seen in the work of Bruno Nettl's song for his teacher (Shelemay, 2008, pp.150-151). As a performer or a member of the *ṣaut* community over a twenty year period, many of the observations and explications presented in this dissertation are essentially a kind of memorialising of others. A large proportion of knowledge that I have gained about *ṣaut* has been drawn from their experiences. In fact, I cannot think of others in the community as informants alone, but also as friends, colleagues, teachers, students, influencers, performers, and listeners in the *ṣaut* field.

Shelemay proposes that when ethnomusicologists use any quotation or part of a conversation or details of an interview with an informant, they themselves become part of the mediating tradition. A particular aspect of mediation contributes to increasing the awareness of tradition inside the community itself (Shelemay, 2008, p.151). As I have clarified, my experience in *ṣaut* is made up of knowledge that I gained over many years from the members of the *ṣaut* community and their repertoire. This means that all musicians are my informants, because they are

present in each section in the dissertation, directly or indirectly. However, I also gathered information from historical sources such as recordings as well, and shared these with the community, thus mediating within it. At the same time, by documenting and communicating my work with *ṣaut* performers and listeners beyond the community, I am trying to act as a mediator between the *ṣaut* community, of which I am a part, and western academic circles, which I am also beginning to join. I am also a mediator between the *ṣaut* community (which has been perceived as a closed one) and the mass media audiences in Kuwait, through radio and television broadcasts.

In his article "Theories Forged in the Crucible of Action", Anthony Seeger approaches the subject of the transmission of music from different angles. He suggests that ethnomusicologists should merge with the community to win the trust of people. He also emphasises as a respect for the community's own values, and critical self-awareness (Seeger, 2008, p. 278). As a performer and a friend of most of the prominent performers, my understanding of the practices of *ṣaut* and my position inside the community has afforded me the opportunity to undertake successful interviews with *ṣaut* performers. Members of the *ṣaut* community now deal with me as a *ṣaut* performer, a friend, and sometimes as a rival, but seldom as a scholar. Yet my experience in the field of *ṣaut,* and my distinctive relationship with the community, do not always protect me from risk, especially when community members misunderstand the aim of my investigation and questions. I once noticed that when I was interviewing a *ṣaut* singer he seemed uncomfortable and annoyed during the conversation, and his answers were incomplete and brief. The informant surprised me at one point when he asked me sharply; "are you trying to test me about

ṣaut? are you trying to mock me?" I was concerned because he was dealing with me as a *ṣaut* performer, while I was trying to deal with him as an informant. I tried to explain that my reasons for asking him questions was the fact that he is a prominent performer, with a wealth of experience exceeding my own. I also needed to stress his centrality to my work as an informant.

Seeger also observes that researching and collecting data from a community can be wider or more comprehensive than any research plan, because it may yield (positive) results that were not expected prior to the research that will become more important later (Seeger, 2008, p. 283). I find in my work a resemblance to Seeger's suggestion. Since the late 1990s, during a time where I did not foresee a career as a scholar, I collected information from all the older singers I met. One example is Ḥamad Khalīfa who stopped performing *ṣaut* in 1980; I had the opportunity to talk to him at a friend's house in 1997. Furthermore, I have recorded most of the gatherings that I attended since around 2004 and continue to do so at the time of this writing. I also took photos and videos of many performers. During this period I was collecting these documents as a personal interest, since I did not have any specific project in mind. However, now having returned to these documents as a scholar I realise they have been indispensible for my academic work during my MA and PhD studies.

In the main part of this introduction below, I will present my own journey into *ṣaut* in more detail, and introduce the aims of the dissertation.

A Brief History of Kuwait

Kuwait is a state in the Arabian Peninsula on the Arabian (Persian) Gulf adjacent to Iraq (to the north and west), and to Saudi Arabia (to the south). Its first settlers were the al-'Atūb nomads, a number of allied families including al-Ṣabāḥ, al-Jalāhma, and al-Khalīfa, who migrated from Najd to Iḥsā' in Saudi Arabia, then to Zebāra in Qatar before finally settling in Kuwait. Both historical sources and scholars disagree on the year in which they arrived in Kuwait however, a commonly cited estimate is 1713 (al-Shamlān, 1986). In around 1716, the al-Ṣabāḥ family produced the first Emir of the country, Sheikh Ṣabāḥ Bin Jāber, and they remain the ruling family of present day Kuwait. In 1899, Sheikh Mubārak al-Ṣabāḥ signed the Anglo-Kuwaiti treaty, rendering Kuwait a British protectorate until its termination in 1961. The independence of Kuwait from the British Empire encouraged Abdulkarīm Qāsim, the president of Iraq, to declare Kuwait part of Iraqi territory and threaten to invade. However, no attack transpired until the 1990 invasion by subsequent president, Saddam Hussain. It would be seven months before the Iraqi army was expelled and the merger with Iraq broken.

The primary sources of income in Kuwait until 1940s were pearl diving and trade with the Gulf, India, Pakistan, and east Africa. Therefore, the majority of workers in Kuwait were sailors while the rest were skilled in different crafts including shipbuilding (*qallāf*), blacksmither (*ḥaddād*), and tailoring of male cloak (*bisht*). In 1937, the first oil well was discovered in Kuwait but the outbreak of the Second World War delayed export of its first shipment until 1946. This was a pivotal moment in Kuwaiti history as the country experienced rapid economic growth and

the nation enjoyed a better standard of living. The dramatic change in socio-economic conditions in turn led to a phase of cultural modernity. Gradually, Kuwaiti workers abandoned maritime professions and crafts, and instead worked on land for oil Companies or in the Kuwaiti ministries. Therefore, the history of Kuwait, and indeed other oil-rich Gulf countries is clearly demarcated by the discovery of oil and the oil boom that followed.

Within the modern day Kuwaiti community, there are two primary categories. The first is urban (Ḥaḍar), which is derived of migrants from surrounding areas, from Saudi Arabia, especially Najd and Iḥsā', from Iraq, especially Zubair, and from Iran. The second is Bedouin (Badū), which comprises all tribes, for example the al-'Awāzim, al-'Ajmān, and al-Duwāser. The main religion in Kuwait is Islam, with a Sunni majority and minority Shia population. The customs and traditions of the state are a product of the mixing of these various migrant cultures. The influence of Indian culture however was present in Kuwait before the oil boom as the trade industry with the Indian subcontinent was substantial in size and extremely well-established. Furthermore, many Kuwaiti families were based in different areas in India, especially in Bombay (now called Mumbai), and Karachi (now part of Pakistan). Present day Kuwaiti society is increasingly multicultural cosmopolitan due to the presence of professionals from different nationalities who work and reside in different areas in Kuwait and who participate with Kuwaitis to shape cultural life in Kuwait.

Music in Kuwait

Music before the oil boom

As discussed earlier, the Kuwaiti community can be divided into two main groups, Bedouin and urban. Up until the oil boom, each had their particular musical styles, instruments, and melodies. The most prominent instrument amongst Bedouins is the *rabāba*, which is a single string bowed instrument. Various song forms (*ṭarq*) can be performed on this instrument, such as *hujainī* and *masḥūb*. Some tribes in Kuwait possess songs that cannot be found in others, such as the *daḥḥa* songs which are mainly found in the repertoire of the 'Anūz tribe. However, it is possible to hear Bedouin music being performed by urban musicians. 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti, for example, is a performer from the urban community, and has recorded a number of *hujainī* songs.

By comparison, the music of the urban community is more diverse and should be divided according to work, occasion or life event, entertainment, and ethnicity, to be better categorised and understood. For example, a number of maritime songs (*baḥrī*) are considered work songs; most tasks carried out on the ship have their own melodies, movements, and on occasion, a unique rhythm. Other professions like blacksmithery (*ḥdāda*) and ship-building (*qlāfa*) had their own associated songs, but these disappeared as the practice of these handcrafts diminished.

Many songs are performed during special occasions, such as weddings, which contain a number of different songs and rhythms. Religious occasions, such as the observance of the birth day of Prophet Muhammad (*mālad*), contain different forms

of music, including *qādrī*. *'Arḍa* is another occasion-related music genre associated with war in that time in the history of Kuwait, but is nowadays performed in festivals, weddings or other events like Independence Day.

In Kuwait, there are many types of music that are more associated with entertainment, as opposed to a certain kind of work. It is possible to hear one of these performed in a wedding for example, but as it is not related to any wedding-ritual and can be performed in various other contexts, it is not classified as a wedding song. Another example is that of the maritime songs which can also be considered part of the entertainment repertoire, for instance *ḥaddādī*, and *'adsānī*.

Ethnic music is a category that comprises Kuwaitis of non-Arab origin, such as Iranians known as 'ayam, and African people known as khawāl (black) or 'abīd (slaves). Iranian Kuwaitis' music features the bagpipe (*habbān*) and is generally performed during weddings. African Kuwaitis have two types of music, *ṭanbūra* and *leiwa*. Traditionally, these were both used to conjure spirits or to appease them.

The number of musical instruments that are used in traditional music in Kuwait is limited and consists of three instruments: *ṭanbūra*, *ṣurnāi*, and *'ūd*. The *ṭanbūra* is an African instrument used in the practice of a genre of the same name. It has five single courses and the music is based on the pentatonic scale. The *ṣurnāi* is a wind instrument similar to the clarinet that is most likely of either African or Indian origin. It comes in two sizes- the larger class is used in *leiwa* music, whilst the smaller is known in maritime music circles, particularly in *sanqinī* and *emyelsī* (know also *mujalsī*). The remaining instrument is the *'ūd*, which will be discussed in greater

depth in later chapters. In the early 20th century it was associated with *ṣaut* music

before later being used by *ṣaut* performers to perform other Kuwaiti genres like

sāmrī or *fonūn*.

On the other hand, percussion instruments in the music of Kuwait possess greater

diversity, taking different names, sizes, shapes and requiring different techniques in

use. The most widespread percussive instrument in Kuwait is the *ṭār* (p. *ṭīrān*), and

the second most common is the *ṭabul baḥrī*, both of which are found in *sāmrī*,

khammārī, *fonūn*, sea songs, and others. Other percussion instruments are associated

with certain music genres: *ṭabul nuṣaifī* for example is usually used in performing

'arḍa.

Music after the oil boom

A discussion about the Kuwaiti music scene after the oil boom is one about a modern

repertoire. This began taking shape in the early 1960s and was influenced by various

different cultures, to create a new Kuwaiti music scene compatible with the new or

modern Kuwait after both the boom in wealth and independence. Many traditional

musics are still performed to this day, but since the 1960s had become categorised

under the name of traditional music, while it was music of Kuwait before that. Apart

from maritime songs, which despite their decline are still live practices, most

craftsmanship music has disappeared and many without having been recorded or

documented. The music that has survived and whose presence is strongly felt in the

music scene in Kuwait is that of the entertainment genre, such as *ṣaut* and *sāmrī*.

This is possibly because it is not related to a particular occasion that might be

forgotten or a profession that has disappeared.

From the 1950s, there was a substantial influx of international professionals from various parts of the world settling in Kuwait to work in construction, education and other infrastructural sectors. During this time, Kuwaitis were mixing with a larger number of Arabs and were exposed to their music and listening practices, especially Egyptian popular music, which was the mainstream genre for Arabs during this time until the late 1960s.

Since the early 1960s, many institutes were founded to support musical culture in Kuwait. Various initiatives were started with the intention of building an awareness of music amongst the population and raising its profile as an important aspect of Kuwaiti culture. Kuwaiti schools began to teach music to its students as part of its curriculum and the main Kuwaiti radio station established its own music band in 1959 – notably, most school teachers and in-house musicians were from Egypt. Meanwhile, many Kuwaitis began to pursue higher academic qualifications in music in Egypt, returning to teach, compose or sing in Kuwait Radio. In 1972, Kuwait became the first state in the Gulf to establish a high school specialised in music to teach Arabic and Western classical tradition. In 1976, the Administration of Music school founded a new college, called the Higher Institute of Musical Arts (HIMA), offering a bachelor degree in music. Both the Arabic or Western classical tradition curriculums of the music schools and institute were imported from the Music Institute in Cairo. The faculty teachers were mostly from Egypt, and within the Arabic department, they taught *'ūd*, *qānūn*, *nāy*, classical Egyptian songs (*daur* and *muwashaḥ*), beside the Arabic theories and solfeggio. Many prominent musicians

and performers studied and graduated from HIMA, such as Rāshed al-Ḥemely, Rāshed al-Khuḍur (d. 1998), and Nawāl al-Kuwaitiyah.

The substantial presence of Egyptian music and resources in Kuwait has had a significant effect on the music scene since the 1960s. The music that developed during this period can be described as an Egyptianised Kuwaiti style. The songs feature many elements related to the music of Egypt, whether in style, rhythm, or sometimes, dialect. This new style of composing and singing was used widely until the 1970s. However, this hybrid was not the only style of new music in that period. Another style of composing in Kuwait that was popular, involved taking a part of a traditional Kuwaiti tune, and linking it with a new melody. The composers drew upon many different traditional genres- sea songs, *ṣaut*, *sāmrī*, and others. Furthermore, it is important to note that composers were interested in utilising ethnic music, like *ṭanbūra* and *leiwa*, which historically had only been performed by its ethnic group. This development made ethnic music, which had previously been unknown among Arab communities in Kuwait, far more familiar and become increasingly a part of culture in Kuwait.

During this same period of the early 1960s, a different type of music began to spread amongst teenagers and the youth of Kuwait. The origin of this music is Mukalla city in Yemen, and it was initially practiced in Kuwait amongst the South Yemeni community before it moved into Kuwaiti music practice under the name of *'adanī*. Muḥammad Jum'a Khān (d. 1963) is purported by some to be the father or the founder of this music. It is characterised by a mixing between Yemeni and Indian musical elements, and this combination is the reason for its popularity among young

Kuwaitis since the 1960s until now. Although this music has been one of the most popular music forms in Kuwait for decades, *'adanī* did not appear in official state media until the late 1970s. It is kind of underground music, as I believe, which is still active but is not featured widely in media and is largely ignored by Kuwaiti journalists and academic researchers.

'Adanī is performed by a small band that consists of different single instruments, such as the *'ūd*, violin, *qānūn*, and *nāy*. The percussion instruments are of three types: the Yemeni *dumbuk* which is known also as *fakhār* (if it is made of pottery) or *betal* (if it is made of metal), the *daff* (tambourine), and the bongos. Since the 1970s, Kuwaitis began to contribute to the composing and writing of new *'adanī* songs, such as Rāshed al-Ḥemely and Bshāra brothers (Nāṣer and 'Adnān). Their music is somewhat different from *'adanī* that were derived from Khān's songs. The main differences that can be distinguished easily are the disappearance of Indian elements in the Kuwaiti version of *'adanī*, and the use of Kuwaiti words in the text.

In the late 1970s, another new orientation of music appeared in Kuwait which was based on producing albums through cassette companies. Many of the songs in this period are derived from *'adanī* music and feature this similarity in the style of composing, the text, and rhythms. The new element within this music is the formation of the band, which consists of a large number of musicians as opposed to the more familiar small group, and the use of arrangement in music. Over a few years, this style become more independent from *'adanī* in concept, evolving its own style through composition and use of rhythms, which were also a development of those found in the music of Yemen, Egypt, and more local areas. In the beginning,

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the text tended more to the Kuwaiti colloquial dialect, but later changed to become the more Bedouin colloquial that is known across most of the Gulf region. This music was and remains the most successful genre in Kuwait and the Gulf, as is demonstrable in the terms used to describe it, *al-sūq* (market). It is also known in the wider Arab world and considered to be a representation of the culture of Kuwait and Gulf nowadays. The success of *al-sūq* songs in the Arab commercial music industry led Arabs outside the Gulf boundary, to refer to this music by the term, *khalījy* (Gulfy).

Today, the music scene in Kuwait is active and consists of several different styles of singing, and these musical styles derive from different backgrounds, Arabic, Turkish, and Western. Each type has its listeners and reflects the diversity of the community within present day Kuwait. Furthermore, there is a strong presence of traditional music in the live scene, specifically music which was once classified as part of the entertainment genre, such as *ṣaut* and *sāmrī*.

Music and society in Kuwait

In Kuwait as well as other Gulf countries, there is need for further understanding and examination, whether academic endeavour or otherwise, of music and society in the region. It is important to understand the relationship between these two elements, because music and musicians represent the culture and values of the society. In this section, I will attempt to indicate some of my findings. A deeper discussion is required however that considers many other elements not yet studied in depth including Kuwaiti religion, origin and history.

Music before the oil boom can be said to have been more directly engaged in the life-events of Kuwaitis. Its necessity ensured its presence throughout different aspects of Kuwaiti life, whether for work, worship, occasions, children's games or for recreation, as has been discussed previously. On the other hand, most Islamic clerics in the Gulf region take a strong position against music, insisting to refer to it as *ḥarām* (not allowed in Islamic Law or taboo). Thus, whilst music in Kuwaiti society holds a high level of acceptance amongst the population, it is still considered haram and rejected by most Kuwaiti clerics. It is not entirely clear why people in Kuwait have a tolerance for music but one of the reasons may have its origins in the style of Kuwaiti life before the discovery of oil which was steeped in many forms of music as per the need for melody and rhythm to help accomplish work or fulfil other requirements. There are many examples that show the tolerant perspectives of Kuwaitis towards musical activity, including some clerics, which I will demonstrate here. By the mid-1950s, the oil boom had transformed the economic climate and a resulted in a movement for modernisation within society. In 1956, a group of intellectuals, musicians and poets recognising that older musical practices were starting to disappear decided to establish a centre for the preservation of music in Kuwait. The group of founders were from different backgrounds and origins, such as Aḥmad al-ʿAdwānī, who his origin is a Bedouin, al-Muḍaf and Aḥmad al-Rūmī, who are from aristocratic and business families (al-Wugayān, 2006, p. 289). An important Islamic cleric, Sheikh Yūsuf bin ʿĪsā al-Qenāʿī, wrote a brief book about the history of Kuwait, in which he mentioned music, discussing it within the context of wider culture. I cannot find another cleric from any other Gulf country that has written about music in a positive light. The final example involves the ruling family in

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Kuwait; in 1927, when 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti had an opportunity to record his songs for the first time in Baghdad, in order to accomplish this project, he was supported financially by Sheikh Abdullah al-Sālem al-Ṣabāḥ who would later become the ruler of Kuwait in 1950 (al-'Obaid, 1975).

However, it is impossible to deny the denunciation of music from an Islamic perspective, that has influenced many clerics and people in Kuwaiti society. Many musicians are considered to be from low social class backgrounds, whether African immigrants, labourers. The origin of most of the women musicians in Kuwait were from Africa and many would have come from families that were enslaved.

By comparison to other areas in the Gulf, Kuwaitis might be considered quite liberal in their attitudes to music. 60 years ago and more, many musicians in other Gulf countries were pursued and punished by governments for playing music. In Saudi Arabia in 1950, for example, a Bahraini musician was "flogged to death at al Khobar for the heinous offence of playing a lute" (Pelly, 2017). These kinds of extreme events have never happened in Kuwait. On the other hand, many elements prove that ṣaut is a music that represents the community content of Kuwait for several reasons. While other types of music in Kuwait are usually related to a certain ethnic or work group, ṣaut performers are from all ethnicities and religions that could be found in Kuwait- Arabs, Persians, Africans, Sunni, Shia, and also Jewish Arabs. For example, Mullā Sa'ūd al-Yāqūt's family descends from Iḥsā' and 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti descends from a Najdī family, and both Iḥsā' and Najd in Saudi Arabia. It is rare to find a musician of a Najdī origin in other types of music in Kuwait. Furthermore, Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti's family belongs to a Shia sect, whilst the Kuwaiti brothers,

Ṣāleḥ and Dāwūd, were Jewish. Today, there are no more Jewish communities in Kuwait, but is still possible to find performers from different origins and sects whilst it is not easy to find such diversity in other music genres in Kuwait. The ruling family in Kuwait supports *ṣaut* through different ways; for instance, Sheikh Abdullah al-Jāber al-Ṣabāḥ was a great *ṣaut* performer and generous patron whilst Sheikh Abdullah al-Sālem al-Ṣabāḥ was a patron to ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti in 1927. Finally, Abdullah al-Faraj, who is considered the father or founder of *ṣaut* is himself from a large tribe, al-Duwāser, and also from a wealthy family.

The relationship between *ṣaut* music and the Islamic cleric is quite unique; indeed while many have used a calmer rhetoric against *ṣaut*, they are far more aggressive in their condemnation of other types of music.

Sheikh Aḥmad al-Qaṭṭān is a prominent Islamic cleric, regarded as a godfather of the Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait and the Gulf and an example of the unusual status held by *ṣaut*. In a TV interview some years prior, al-Qaṭṭān mentioned that his father was a *ʿūd* player and singer, and proceeded to sing part of a *ṣaut* to demonstrate the genre of his father's songs. Al-Qaṭṭān did not refer to the word *ṣaut*, rather he declared that there is good music, like that which he had demonstrated, (which was *ṣaut*) and bad music which, as he implied, was the new songs. It was the only occurrence to see an important cleric in the Gulf, held in as high esteem as al-Qaṭṭān, talk publicly about the value of music and singing (al-Qaṭṭān, n.d).

Ṣaut music as presented today

This section aims to discuss the notion of the musical gathering of *ṣaut* (*samra*) - how, where, and who attend and support or patronise this music. Due to a lack of sufficient reliable detail about the *samra* in the early years of *ṣaut* practice, the discussion will focus on recent practices, whilst still making comparison with some known aspects of early *samra* activity, most likely dating to the 1940s or earlier.

The musical gathering is usually held on a weekend, and always during the evening, most often after *'ishā'* prayer (usually not before 8 o'clock). Thus, the term *samra* is derived from the Arabic word *samar*, meaning to enjoy the night by talking or playing music. *Ṣaut* performances happen in different places, mainly in a *dīwāniya*, which as an annex that is separated from the other parts of a house and has its own door. The *dīwāniya* is a social phenomenon that is specific to Kuwait (compared to other states in the Gulf) and is the domain of the men of the house and their male visitors. Two centuries ago, the *dīwāniya* was used only in the houses of wealthy families in Kuwait for business purposes. Later, probably in the early 20th century, it became a more fundamental phenomenon in Kuwaiti culture, and *dīwāniya* (plural *dīwāniyāt*) began to appear for those interested in the pursuit of poetry, politics, or other subjects. In music, the *dīwāniya* has played an important role since the middle of the 19th century. In the 1860s, Abdullah al-Faraj, who was also from a wealthy family, established his own *dīwāniya* when returned to Kuwait from India, giving it a special name, *dukhaina*. Al-Faraj began to receive his friends in his *dukhaina* and played his own music for them, which we define now as *ṣaut*. The *dukhaina* is considered the first or oldest *dīwāniya* dedicated to music in Kuwaiti history. Khāled

al-Baker, who was one of al-Faraj's best pupils, had his own *dīwāniya* that was also acted as a kind of school to teach *ṣaut*. Many music figures in Kuwait learned in this *dīwāniya*, including Ṣāleḥ, Dāwūd, and 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti (al-Kuwaiti, 1963; c. 1978).

Nowadays, the *dīwāniya* still bears significance, providing a place for Kuwaitis to practice their hobbies or interests, whether in music (*ṣaut* for example) or activities like playstation games. The definition of a *dīwāniya* today is still connected with a room that is separated from the house but there are also other places that have similar functions to the *dīwāniya* and are defined as such. Examples of these include chalets or a place that has different names, such as a *mazra'a* (farm), *ḥouṭa* (walled), and stable, located usually in the suburbs of the residential areas in Kuwait. Many of the *ṣaut* gatherings happen in these places and follow the same roles of a regular *dīwāniya*, for men only and the attendance usually comprising the owner of the place and his friends. The *dīwāniya*, whether inside the house or in a different place, was and still is a central part of establishing, creating, learning, and performing *ṣaut* during Kuwait's history. Indeed the American ethnomusicologist, Gabriel Lavin, believes that the *dīwāniya* is a "vital political and cultural institution in Kuwaiti society" which has successfully kept *ṣaut* alive (Lavin, 2016).

Patron definition in ṣaut

In the field of *ṣaut*, there are different means or practices by which to support or patronise *ṣaut*. In the 1920s, many lovers of *ṣaut* were sharing money in order to be able to invite the performers. For example, Ṣāleḥ and Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti, were

known to be paid at least 10 rupees for a session, and this money was usually

collected from the attendance (al-Sudairāwī, 1964). Nowadays, the function of

patron has been changed to take a different form, as the *ṣaut* session is now mostly

held without financial remuneration. The patron still provides compensation but does

this by offering a venue (whether a *dīwāniya* or a different site), meals, and contact

with other musicians like *mirwās* players. This change in payment method seemingly

happened due to the economic circumstances of those practicing the music; most

Kuwaitis today are employees paid by the government and have their own salaries,

such that making music is solely for personal enjoyment rather than a method to

make money. Recently, a few groups of Kuwaitis have established their own

dīwāniya that is specifically for performing *ṣaut*. The groups, who are connected

through friendship and *ṣaut* practice at the same time, share all expenses to fund

holding the *samra*, and have given their *dīwāniya* a name, such as *Ahl al-mirwās*

(people of *mirwās*), and *Dār al-fonūn* (arts house).

A samra of ṣaut

The singer, who is usually the *ʿūd* player, is often sat opposite to the *dīwāniyas* door,

in the middle of the other musicians, with players of the violin and *qānūn* sat to one

side and *mirwās* players on the other. The music begins with the *ʿūd* and the

audience interacts with it by clapping, greeting the singer and musicians. Sometimes,

two dancers dance in front of the singer. On the whole in each *samra*, there is more

than one singer, therefore there is an unspoken rule or etiquette determining that each

singer perform two to three *ṣaut* pieces, give other performers a chance to play. It is

not uncommon to find one of the singers accompanying the other on *mirwās* or

violin. However, in the *samra* gathering that is described as *maḥfūfa*, the number of musicians and attendances are limited, and does not include clapping or dance. In *samra maḥfūfa*, the repertoire of *ṣaut* is wider and more varied than that of the public *samra*, which is based mostly on the tunes that are popular amongst listeners.

Ṣaut community

Ṣaut is arguably one of the most successful popular traditional music forms in the Gulf. However, the popularity of *ṣaut* has not always flourished. Indeed a few decades ago it was all but gone in the entire Gulf.

During the 1970s and 1980s, many factors contributed to the reduced popularity of the genre among Kuwaitis, but the spread of *'adanī* music is arguably the chief amongst them. Ibrāhīm al-Khashram, one of the most important *ṣaut* performers in Kuwait, declared that most young singers of his generation (since the late 1960s) were *ṣaut* performers. Later, however most of them began to perform *'adanī* songs alongside *ṣaut*, and the proportion of the latter form played in *samra* declined gradually until it was to all purposes a semi-abandoned genre. Al-Khashram indicates that in the late 1970s, he and 'Alī al-Mas'ūd became the only *ṣaut* specialists, and that all others had shifted to *'adanī* (al-Khashram, 2013).

Ironically the retreat of *ṣaut's* popularity in Kuwait contributed to the creation of what I would term a *community*. The contemporary performers and the audiences within the *ṣaut* circle, primarily those in Kuwait, aimed to isolate themselves most likely to keep their music 'pure' or authentic and to evade *'adanī* influence.

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I propose to the term *community* because I believe ṣaut circle in Kuwait possess

many features that differentiate them from the participants of other music genres and

their musicians in the area, and makes them a musical community. The meaning of

community in the ṣaut genre is not only "the condition of sharing or having certain

attitudes and interests in common" ("Community", 2016), but a number of other

elements that give it a particular identity. People of the ṣaut community or circle,

share common terms, behaviours, traditions, and ideologies related to ṣaut. They

meet not only to play ṣaut, but also to talk, analyse, and listen to ṣaut recordings. I

was involved in many discussions about the history of ṣaut, recording for current

performers and analysing old performers, which happened before I began academic

research into ṣaut. This kind of discussion cannot take place with ṣaut musicians

from outside the community, because people outside the community are mainly

interested in ṣaut music, not other intellectual or non-musical aspects, such as the

history of the genre or early singers' performances. Therefore, ṣaut performers use

phrases such as *ahal al-ṣaut* (people of ṣaut) and *ahal al-mirwās* (people of *mirwās*),

to describe themselves or others inside this community. Additionally, one of the

phrases used to salute or encourage others within the *samra* is *'ashaw ahalah*, which

means long may they live its people, and this phrase clearly refers to the performers

of ṣaut or the other members of the community. This phrase differentiates them from

others present who presumably are the musicians or listeners from outside the

community. Thus, the longstanding concept of community itself is significant to

those who are inside the ṣaut circle and they refer to it through various terms that

refer to 'people' of the genre (*ahal*).

Besides the private gatherings that are usually made up of performers and the audience, many performers prefer not to play in the media. The result is that their relationship with listeners from outside the community is not very well established. These connections are bridged if a listener from outside the community is fortunate enough to know anybody from within who may supply him with new recordings or to invite him to a *samra*, as was the case when I entered the community for the first time. Most musicians and listeners tend to know each other, because they play together or because they are already friends. Therefore, the best description of the community of *ṣaut* is that it is a closed community.

This attitude towards the media and people from outside the community, seems to be a new tradition in the *ṣaut* community which did not exist before. During the 1960s and 1970s, most prominent *ṣaut* performers such as ''Abdullaṭīf Al-Kuwaiti, Ḥamad Khalīfa, and Sālem Al-Fahhād (c. 1998) recorded their work through different interactions with public media: TV, radio, commercial recordings and interviews. In contrast, many contemporary performers refuse to appear on TV, and may even prefer not to play *ṣaut* in public.

With the increased use of the internet in the region however, some of the mystery surrounding the *ṣaut* community has started to be uncovered, albeit to a limited extent. For the last few years, though probably not over a decade, much privately recorded *ṣaut* material has been published on the internet, consisting of the work of singers who have perhaps not been heard by many listeners. One such singer is Ibrāhīm al-Khashram, one of the most prominent *ṣaut* performers active today as a *ṣaut* singer and has been since the late 1960s. I remember visiting him in late 1999 to

ask him for permission to publish his private recordings online. Al-Khashram was at first sceptical of such an act, and not convinced. After many questions, mostly about the internet and how it was not a type of TV. or radio (which would mean that it was not an official form of media), he gave me permission to publish the audio recordings of his works, and a few pictures that he had chosen himself. However, at the time of this writing it is still not easy to find video clips for singers like al-Khashram, whether in private collections or on the internet. In addition, a number of performers do not give permit theire lease of their names, whether for this dissertation or in public. They are active and influential but only inside the community.

The appearance of the internet as a new type of media, changed the degree of isolation that surrounds the community. Many people who have never attended a *ṣaut* gathering (*samra*) have now had the opportunity to listen to and see *ṣaut* singers and musicians for the first time. The paradox is that while the community is mostly still isolated and distant from the media, their recordings, audio and video, can be found widely on the internet. Furthermore, the existence of the internet might be said to have been an encouragement to a few important *ṣaut* singers such as Salmān Al-ʿAmmārī and Ṣalāḥ Ḥamad Khalīfa, or perhaps has given them with a small dose of courage to share their music on TV and perform in public during events and festivals. At the same time, other performers still refuse to appear in any media until now.

It is hard to describe the current *ṣaut* performers in Bahrain as constituting a community. It would seem that there had previously been a *ṣaut* community, which

started to disappear gradually with the death of the last Bahraini master of *ṣaut*, Muḥammad Zuwayid, in 1982. Now the number of *ṣaut* performers in Bahrain is very limited, and they do not prioritise *ṣaut* when performing in their gatherings. They have introduced many different types of songs to their sessions, such as contemporary Bahraini songs that are known as *basta* (Touma, 1996, p. 108) as well as Iraqi and Egyptian songs.

Aboabount the scholar

Background

My serious relationship with music began at the age of fourteen when I was involved in listening to, and later attending *samra*. These are musical gatherings associated mainly with two types of music, *ṣaut* and *'adanī*, and at which the attendees are usually only men. *'Adanī* is a term that refers to a musical genre known in Kuwait and enjoyed by young people, founded in Yemen by Muḥammad Jum'a Khān (d. 1963). Then in 1992, I began to teach myself both the *'ūd* and the violin playing *'adanī* songs after an occasion in which I had the opportunity to handle these instruments. Later, I decided to concentrate on the violin and in 1997, began to take private violin lessons from Ṣabrī al-Dālī, an Egyptian music teacher. Before that, by the middle of the 1990s, I was playing both *'adanī* and *ṣaut*, but I gradually began to concentrate on *ṣaut*, and later abandoned *'adanī*.

In 2003, I performed as a violin player on Kuwait radio with Salmān al-'Ammārī, who is a known performer of *ṣaut* and other Kuwaiti traditional songs. I was then interviewed about the violin, the old style of playing, Arabic technique, and the

history of the Arabic violin and violin players. Immediately after the interview, I got an offer to study music at the Higher Institute of Musical Arts (HIMA)[1]. The offer was made by one of the interviewers, Bandar ʿUbaid, who was the Dean of the HIMA at that time. As a result, I enrolled in the HIMA in September 2003, graduated in June 2008, and became a violin and viola teacher in HIMA in February 2009. There was very little in the HIMA curriculum dedicated to Kuwaiti music and it is probable that *ṣaut* had not been studied in any capacity at the HIMA. However, I gained a lot of experience during my years of study, such as transcription and extracting *maqāmāt* and tetrachords from the melodies, to study, analyse, and understand *ṣaut* on a higher level.

My encounter with ṣaut

My first encounter with *ṣaut* as a word was in early 1990, when I was in a music shop searching for *ʿadanī* recordings. There, I found a cassette that introduced each song title preceded by the word "*ṣaut*", which confused me. I asked the seller, who was from Yemen, what the word *ṣaut* meant. He answered, "*ṣaut* is voice or vocal". This answer referred to the literal meaning of *ṣaut* in the Arabic language, but did not address the meaning of *ṣaut* musically. At that time, I did not pay any attention to the word and the illogical interpretation of the Yemeni seller, probably because at that time, I was concentrating on *ʿadanī* music.

The first time I believe I was truly impressed with *ṣaut* music was in about 1992 when I read the book by Mubārak al-ʿAmmārī. This book, entitled *Muḥammad bin*

1- HIMA was founded in 1972 in Kuwait as a musical secondary school, thanks to the efforts of Aḥmad Bāqer, a Kuwaiti composer who studied music in Egypt. Later, in 1976, undergraduate studies were added to the School of Music. HIMA was the first official musical school in the Gulf and in the Arabian Peninsula regions (Murād, 2005, pp. 44-46).

Fāris (1991), was a biography about a prominent *ṣaut* performer in Bahrain. In the same period I read an interview in a Kuwaiti newspaper with *ṣaut* patron and *mirwās* player, Fāḍel Maqāmes (d. 2009). Maqāmes referred to a few key people he said would be of interest to anybody wanting to learn about *ṣaut* music. After reading the interview, I decided to listen to the performers who had been suggested, and bought three cassettes containing *ṣaut* songs by ʻAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti (d. 1975), Ḍāḥī bin Walīd (d. 1941), and Muḥammad bin Fāris (d. 1947). The recordings were made from 78rpm records that had been published in the1930s. My reaction on listening to their works was negative. At that time I could not recognise their uniqueness nor appreciate that these were great performances of *ṣaut*. Nevertheless, I continued listening to these cassettes for another purpose, which was to study the violin player who accompanied the singers in most of these recordings. From that time on, Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti (d. 1986) became one of my favourite violin players, and to the present day he still inspires me with his work. Ṣāleḥ's impressive performance was the key reason for my decision to focus on the violin, rather than the *ʻūd*. As a result, I slowly became familiar with the styles heard on these records, whether on cassettes or directly from the records, and amused myself by listening to the old *ṣaut* performers.

Entering a closed society

The first chance that I got to play *ṣaut* was in 1993 or 1994, as a violin player during a gathering of *ʻadanī*. The lead performer was ʻAbdulraḥmān al-Najdī, who is fundamentally an *ʻadanī* singer, but sometimes performs a *ṣaut* or two during *ʻadanī* gatherings. al-Najdī learned *ṣaut* from his father Aḥmad al-Najdī, who is a member of the Maʻyūf band of traditional Kuwaiti music. A few months later I had the

opportunity to become a member of the *ṣaut* community. This opportunity arose

when a friend, Sulaimān al-Mawāsh, invited me to perform as a violin player with a

ṣaut group. The invitation came at the request of my friend's brother, Hānī al-

Mawāsh, who was a member of this *ṣaut* group. There were a number of *mirwās*

(percussion instrument) players in this group, maybe four or five of them, and two

ṣaut performers, Salmān al-ʿAmmārī and Muḥammad al-Tannāk. Within a year or

so, Ibrāhīm al-Khashram, who is a figurehead within the *ṣaut* community, had joined

this group. Other singers such as ʿAlī al-Masʿūd, Ṣalāḥ Ḥamad Khalīfa, and Yūsuf

al-Jaddah were frequently invited to share their music with the group, which gave me

a great opportunity to learn and recognise the different styles that were available in

terms of *ṣaut* performance. I continued to play with this group, but I began also to be

invited by other *ṣaut* ensembles and played in different places with various

performers. In the late 1990s, the first group I worked with divided into two, and

then a third group emerged in about 2004.

From the beginning of these divisions, I decided not to be committed to any one

group of *ṣaut* and continued to play violin with many performers. I did this in order

to learn more about *ṣaut* from all involved, and to satisfy my interests in the genre.

The decision was easily accepted by others I think because the number of expert

violin players in the *ṣaut* community was limited and so the demand was high.

Furthermore, the relationship between the violin player and others in a group is

usually not close, unlike that between the singer and the *mirwās* players, or between

a *mirwās* player and his peers. I suspect this is because the role of the violin in the

ṣaut performance is not essential when it comes to performing a typical *ṣaut* song,

unlike the other roles.

I was nevertheless the only violin player who performed on the recordings of celebrated singer Ibrāhīm al-Khashram from 1996 until 2010, when I left Kuwait in order to study in the UK. This example of a close relationship with a singer is an exception in the *ṣaut* community. In 2008, I started to play *ṣaut* with performers from different areas of the Gulf, such as Rāshed and Yūsuf Zuwayid from Bahrain, and Ibrāhīm al-Haidūs and Manṣūr al-Muhannadī from Qatar. I also continued to participate in different types of sessions such as private gatherings, and those on public media such as on television, radio, and at festivals.

My interest in the performances of old singers and 78rpm records developed when I found in them many elements that are no longer used in contemporary performances, or that are used with terms that are not familiar now. Many of these elements and terms will be discussed in this thesis. I have come to prefer the *ṣaut* of 78 recordings above most contemporary performances, because they contain many components that make *ṣaut* more exciting and vital to me. My interest has led me to study and analyse these old recordings, and to compare them with contemporary *ṣaut* performances.

The world of old records

In Kuwait, the collectors of records and recordings form a closed circle. They sell and exchange records only with other collectors, and always avoid people who are from outside this circle. The reason is probably that the number of records, especially the Bahraini and Kuwaiti records, is very limited. However, I was fortunate as I had the opportunity to enter this closed circle easily, as an observer,

listener then collector. In 1996, after reading an article in a Kuwaiti magazine about the history of 78rpm records in Bahrain and Kuwait, I contacted the author 'Abdul'azīz Muḥammad Ḥassan, through the magazine. Later, I met Ḥassan, an important record collector, and had the opportunity to see a 78rpm record from his collection at the first time. From that day, Ḥassan started to teach me everything he knew about records, such as the history of companies and performers, the labels of each company, how to clean and save records, and the technique of recording the records to reels and cassettes, or to digitise them to CD.

Ḥassan became my most important source of recordings and through his collection I heard many *ṣaut* songs and singers that I would never have had the opportunity to hear, because their work is not available in shops or in the media. In his house, I met several important *ṣaut* performers such as Rāshed al-Ḥemely, Fahad al-Sa'ad and Mubārak al-Misnād. I also met many record collectors such as Fahad al-Faras, Dāwūd bu-Ṭaibān (d. 2012), and Fāḍil bu-Ḥassan. As a result of Ḥassan's help, I became an expert in 78rpm records before I possessed any.

In 2008, however, I was informed that there were more than 700 records for sale. This collection consisted mainly of disks from Kuwait, Bahrain, and Yemen. I contacted the owner of this collection, and asked him for an appointment to view. After three days of negotiation, the records were purchased and became the start of my collection. I have continued since then to collect records, catalogues, gramophone machines, and record accessories from different places such as Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. In addition, I have used the internet to contact the collectors and sellers of records. I have purchased from or exchanged records with collectors

from Iran, Yemen, Argentina and the USA. All these elements - records, expert collectors, documents, and *ṣaut* performances - acted as sources that helped me to understand *ṣaut* from new angles.

Sharing insider knowledge

The accumulation of all these experiences in *ṣaut* persuaded me to share this information with others by working in two fields - academia and the media. My activities have focused on publishing *ṣaut* material and building a relationship with others outside the community, through the media, for instance, and the internet. Many performers correctly observe that I am still learning from the *ṣaut* community. In addition, I have had the chance to lead and influence other performers inside the community. In fact, in the last few years my instrumental role inside the community has become obvious to many. I aim to expand the *ṣaut* repertoire, develop the form of *ṣaut,* and influence the performing style. Partly as a result of my work, the *ṣaut* community today is different from the community that I joined twenty years ago.

In the field of the internet I have contributed to many websites and I founded my own, namely www.zeryab.com, which provides access to classical Arabic music in general and local music genres in particular, especially *ṣaut*. I have also published articles and studies in different Kuwaiti newspapers and magazines. Most of these articles were written about aspects such as the history, structure, and creation of *ṣaut* music. As a result, I have been invited to be an interviewee and a lecturer on many radio programmes, and at universities and cultural institutions both inside and outside Kuwait, such as Kuwait University, Universit*é* Antonine in Lebanon, and SOAS in the UK. I have also presented several music programmes on Kuwaiti

television and radio. The most popular programme was specifically about the *ṣaut*
genre, and was one that I presented five times a week over ten continuous months in
Kuwait radio.

It is worth mentioning that between 2003 and 2010, I had the opportunity to make
contact with the field of ethnomusicology when I met Lisa Urkevich, an American
ethnomusicologist and lecturer in the American University of Kuwait (AUK). I
helped Urkevich meet many prominent *ṣaut* performers and translated their answers
(providing, therefore, another example of Shelemay's "mediation" discussed above).
Additionally, I shared and discussed my own perspectives on *ṣaut* with Urkevich,
regarding questions of history, the pattern of old *ṣaut* performance, and the relation
between the *ṣaut* genre and other music genres in Kuwait and the surrounding
region. The questions and methodology of Urkevich led me to observe, ponder and
discuss many aspects in *ṣaut* that I had never noticed, such as the terms that are used
only within the community of *ṣaut*. I began to record most of *ṣaut* gatherings that I
attended in order to document the sessions, which probably made me an amateur or
beginner ethnomusicologist.

This initial experience in ethnomusicology was then developed with my enrolment in
University of Durham in 2011 to train as an ethnomusicologist. In 2012, I earned a
Master's degree from the University of Durham, and wrote a dissertation entitled
Ṣaut Music in Kuwait: History and Melodic System.

Transforming the community, reviving a tradition

It is probably in the early 1960s that the scope of the *ṣaut* repertoire became
significantly smaller and more limited. Huge numbers of melodies have been
neglected or forgotten since then, and performers tend to vary pieces through the
texts rather than the melodies, choosing new poems for the *ṣaut* in the shrunken
melodic repertoire. *Khayālī* and *khitām*[2] forms in the *samra* have receded, and many
performers cannot distinguish them in rhythm, function, and melodies. Before this
decade, *istimāʿ* had already disappeared from *ṣaut* performances. The more recent
ṣaut samra mainly in fact, consists of two *ṣaut* types, *shāmī* and *ʿarabī*. At the end of
the 1990s, I began to search for these forgotten *ṣaut* pieces, forms, and other details,
through different types of practice, which will be elaborated on later in this Chapter.

The desire to perform *ṣaut* using old or uncommon melodies, details and terms, and
also my insistence in presenting forms that have been abandoned by the *ṣaut*
community, has led me to consider this effort as a revival process. It has not only
been an effort to prevent the *ṣaut* genre from disappearing, but rather to expand the
repertoire to rescue it from repetition and monotony. I compare my work with a
much broader revival, as described by Eleni Kallimopoulou, in order to illuminate
parallels, but also clarify the particularities that characterise the *ṣaut* revival.

Kallimopoulou (2009) focused on an investigation of Greek traditional music that is
historically connected with the Ottoman era. She discussed the motives and sources
that contributed to the revival, observing that the *rempetika* genre began to spread

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2 - I will explain these terms in detail in Chapter II, but here it is worth noting that the *khayālī* is a *ṣaut* form based on twelve
beats, and *khitām* is usually the last song in the *ṣaut* gathering.

and become popular in the 1970s, mainly among youths who were weary of the existing political regime, and who developed a leftist politics. The attempt to revive the *rempetika* music genre appeared in different types of activities, such as the collecting of rare recordings, the delivery of lectures and presentations of the music, and the publication of a large number of books that covered many aspects of the genre, such as collections of song lyrics and autobiographies. In addition, LPs of old 78rpm records were re-issued (Kallimopoulou, 2009, p.27).

In fact, my own motivation to contribute to a revival of *ṣaut* was and remains associated with the music only, without any desire for influence in terms of politics or social concerns. It is certainly the case that I am unsympathetic to many aspects of the highly commercial musical activities that have developed since the Gulf's oil boom, such as the pop songs known locally as *market songs* (*aghānī al-sūq*). However, I aim only to expand the *ṣaut* repertoire, and to contribute some detail to the body of the *ṣaut* repertoire with melodies that seem to have been neglected for several decades. Nevertheless, the strategies that have been used to revive styles of *ṣaut* were basically the same as those used by the Greeks to promote *rempetika* music. State and independent radio stations have been involved through programmes and interviews, and the internet has been used as well. The sources that have been used to understand or discover the forms of *ṣaut* played in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were also quite similar to those used to revive *rempetika* music. The main source was old 78rpm records, in addition to old private or radio recordings.

Kallimopoulou's work sheds light on the challenges that faced Greek musicians during the revival period. The first challenge for both musicians and *rempetika*

lovers was "…to become acquainted with the instruments, musical idioms and repertoires" (Kallimopoulou, 2009, p.28). This involved learning about the use of typical instruments which were known to be part of the Asia Minor traditions, such as the violin and the *santouri*. Furthermore, it was hard to find surviving instruments or to find makers of these instruments. Similarly, in order to recognise and understand the melodies and details found in the old 78rpm records and recordings of *ṣaut*, it was necessary to make a huge effort to begin to find the features of the old/new *ṣaut* types. There was less problem with regard to instruments, because contemporary *ṣaut* players mainly use the same instruments that were used in the past. An exception is the *'ūd hindī*, used prior to the recording era and no longer in existence (see Chapter IV). One barrier that related to the instruments was the absence of *mirwās* players who had the ability to perform using the technique that was used in the old recordings. At the start of my work, all performances involved a contemporary technique when it came to *mirwās* playing. *Mirwās* were played in a group of three or more, whereas an older practice used a single instrument.

An early milestone was when I succeeded in convincing a small number of *ṣaut* performers to present *ṣaut* in the style heard on 78rpm records, and it was a new experience for them. I did this by performing a number of forms of *ṣaut* that had been neglected probably since the 1960s. These performers adopted old melodies and parts of *ṣaut* that were unknown to others in the *ṣaut* community. Furthermore, they started to use old terms to describe the elements of *ṣaut*. The repertoire of revival, although it involved experimentation, usually contained elements that were very familiar (instruments, lyrics, melodies, dance and more). All the main elements were already in circulation in Bahrain and Kuwait, since there has been no rupture in

the history of *ṣaut* as a genre since the start of the recording era. But, the revival has involved completing or adding more detail and melodies, and performing forms that have been otherwise neglected by modern *ṣaut* performers.

The impact of my efforts was limited until Ibrāhīm al-Khashram, one of the masters of *ṣaut* in Kuwait, decided in about 1999, to perform *ṣaut* from my perspective. The result of this collaboration between al-Khashram as a *ṣaut* singer, and myself as a violin player and avid listener of the older styles, was more than six hours of recordings made between 1999 and 2006. They included all the rhythmic types of *ṣaut* (*ṣaut 'arabī*, *ṣaut shāmī*, and *ṣaut khayālī*), and pieces often included alongside *ṣaut* at a *samra* (*istimā'* and *khitām*), many unfamiliar melodies such as *Yā Ḍabiat al-Bān*, and other elements and details that were not known to other *ṣaut* performers, e.g. finale sections of *ṣaut* known as *tawshīḥa*.

The reaction of the audience, consisting mostly of those using the internet, radio, or recording copies, was and remains varied. Most listeners who accepted this new/old style of *ṣaut* were of younger generations, while the majority of the older performers and listeners were not pleased when they heard *ṣaut* with these unfamiliar elements. Some of the criticisms were aggressive and sharp. For example, they accused me of aiming to destroy or spoil *ṣaut* by using melodies and lyrics that are not from the "current" repertoire of *ṣaut*. Other critics suggested that I had faked these details and *ṣaut* melodies, stating that they had performed *ṣaut* for a long time and had not encountered this type of *ṣaut* For example, Salmān al-'Ammārī, the prominent *ṣaut* performer, indicated during an interview in Kuwait radio that he respected and appreciated my effort in *ṣaut*, but that he was not sure about the source of the *ṣaut*

melodies I performed. Al-'Ammārī continued saying, "I am wondering if alṢālḥī composes these *ṣaut* pieces …. then he claims that he found this *ṣaut* in an old 78rpm record? I always think about this question" (al-'Ammārī, 2013). In spite of these criticisms, it seems that the new/old style of *ṣaut* as I have performed it, is still slowly spreading among younger performers and listeners. More time is needed before any judgments can be made as to the effect of my attempts.

It is important to mention the procedure used to distribute the six hours of recordings by al-Khashram, as well as other *ṣaut* recordings in general. Ṣaut recordings are usually made privately. Therefore, most of these recordings have never been published in the public media. The private recordings are usually spread among listeners by making copies of cassettes, or CDs and distributing them from by hand. A few of these recordings can be found in some music shops but their sale is illegal, as they are not commercially authorised by the artists or the government. However, another recent element, the internet, has helped to publish these private recordings widely and for free[3]. There are many websites that dedicate a special section for the new recordings of *ṣaut*. This is in addition to well-known websites such as www.youtube.com and www.soundcloud.com, which host recordings that have been uploaded by some *ṣaut* enthusiasts. The recordings on the internet, which is the most accessible and cheapest source of *ṣaut* recordings, are still incomplete. These websites cannot keep up with the sheer volume of production of *ṣaut* music in Kuwait.

3- For example, page "Mrwas_Q8" on soundcloud. https://soundcloud.com/mrwas_q8.

Since 2010, I have tended to concentrate my investigations on new aspects that have not been sufficiently considered in the studies of *ṣaut*. These include exploring how *ṣaut* performers vary, improvise or modify a *ṣaut* piece to make it different from other singers. In addition, I have tried to understand the technique of variation and improvisation in *ṣaut*, and have proposed a number of rules or methods when it comes to applying them. As a result, my performances and recordings of *ṣaut* songs can be understood in connection with two main types of innovation, namely unfamiliar melodies, and older historical elements that have been neglected in the recent practice of *ṣaut*. Moreover, in my own recordings, I have used these proposed rules with regard to technique related to variation and improvisation. The result has been more tolerance on the part of audiences in their reaction, and their estimation of my work has been fairly positive. For instance, Shādī al-Khalīj, who is a leading figure in Kuwait's music scene today and has presented many *ṣaut* songs in his concerts, was impressed when he listened to this type of *ṣaut* song. Shādī al-Khalīj told me personally, as well as others, that he wishes I, meaning alṢālḥī, had been in the musical circle thirty or forty years ago when he was younger to work with him to perform these uncommon *ṣaut* melodies. In October 2011, a Kuwaiti author and the previous head of the Kuwaiti Writers Association, Ḥamad al-Ḥamad, wrote an article dedicated to the method that I use in *ṣaut*. The title of the article, *Aḥmad alṢālḥī, An Admiration and Sensation*, is a reflection of the writer's impression but also the celebratory style of his writing (al-Ḥamad, 2011).

Research context

Despite the popularity of *ṣaut* among the people of the Gulf region, studies in the *ṣaut* field are limited to elements of history, forms and instruments.

The first academic researcher in the *ṣaut* field was Poul Rovsing Olsen (d. 1982), who undertook fieldwork between 1958 and 1978 in the Gulf area in general, but mostly in Bahrain. In his book, *Music in Bahrain*, published in 2002, Olsen addressed several points about the *ṣaut* genre, rather generally, describing the history, social conditions, types and parts of musical instruments, and the forms and figures relating to *ṣaut* in Bahrain (2005, pp. 93-106).

Yūsuf Dūkhī (d. 1990) was the first researcher coming from inside the region to investigate *ṣaut,* and he discussed it in his academic thesis *Kuwaiti Songs,* published in 1984. In it, he presented a hypothesis about the appearance of *ṣaut*, and explored its relationship with old Arabic music that had been documented in books written in the Abbasid period. In addition, Dūkhī tried to interpret many terms that were known in the *ṣaut* field, and described the musical instruments, rhythms and forms of *ṣaut*.

The researcher Aḥmad ʿAlī (d. 2004) dedicated his research to proving that Kuwaiti *ṣaut* is descended from the music of the Abbasid epoch. He attempted to find a link between *ṣaut* rhythms and the rhythms that been written as symbols in the Abbasid music books. He also included brief biographical studies of the Kuwaiti performers of the late 19th century, along with notations of thirty *ṣaut* melodies with texts (ʿAlī, 1980).

The research by Mubārak al-'Ammārī (1991) is about the founder of the Bahraini pattern of *ṣaut*, Muḥammad bin Fāris. The book is divided into three volumes and offers two main aspects, namely a biographical study of Fāris, and a discussion of the kinds of lyrics that were used in *ṣaut*. The book is the first publication to present *ṣaut* from the perspective of a Bahraini. Furthermore, the book considers the social life, history, musical instruments, myths, and offers brief biographies and pictures of *ṣaut* performers in Bahrain and Kuwait. Al-'Ammārī also published an article about the role of 'Abdullah al-Faraj in *ṣaut* (2002). The article discussed two prominent themes, the life of 'Abdullah al-Faraj, and his role in the appearance of *ṣaut* in the Gulf.

The book by Ghannām al-Deikān (1998) aimed chiefly to present the notations and lyrics of *ṣaut* melodies in both Bahrain and Kuwait. The book also studied the poetic meters of *ṣaut* lyrics. Al-Deikān discussed the rhythms of *ṣaut*, the musical instruments used, the technique of clapping, and proposed a brief definition of the character of *ṣaut* in Kuwait.

The research by Ḥamad al-Habbād (2009) is an expansion of Yūsuf Dūkhī's thesis (1984). The study clarifies the songs' poetic meter in *ṣaut*. In addition, other aspects discussed in the research echo the works of Dūkhī, with further details or examples. Other researchers such as Habib Hassan Touma (1996) and Bader Kamāl (2007) have presented *ṣaut* in their research, but have incorporated limited materials and studies. In fact, they repeat some of content found in Dūkhī's thesis, and in Olsen

and al-'Ammārī's research. Similarly, the work of Laith Ulaby (2008) is essentially a translation or adaptation of others works, such as the studies of Dūkhī and Olsen.

Challenges and research aims

The thesis aims to discuss a fundamental element of *ṣaut* performance, which has never to my knowledge been addressed in previous research in the *ṣaut* field. This is the variation and improvisation techniques that are usually used during *ṣaut* singing. (My interrogation of "variation" and "improvisation" can be found in Chapters V and VI).

Although a deep and extensive analysis of the genre is desirable, the current state of scholarship makes it necessary to first devote a lot of effort to defining terms, and also to describing activities that are related to the *ṣaut* genre. Therefore, the exploration of creativity in *ṣaut* will be necessarily preceded by a consideration of other concepts and elements such as forms and history in order to give the reader a broad descriptive background. These components will be presented by drawing from *ṣaut* researchers in both Bahrain and Kuwait, in addition to the results that I obtained from my own research.

One particular methodological challenge relates to terminology. Although there are terms that are used in the *ṣaut* community to describe many musical elements (instruments, rhythms and forms), there is a paucity of words associated with the various parts of the *ṣaut* songs could that help to clarify the aspects of variation and improvisation in *ṣaut*. Consequently, there has been a need for me to find words that

can be correlated with each part of the *ṣaut* melody, in order to understand the genre's improvisation or variation practice in precise terms. The challenge has been to reveal the various variation and improvisation techniques, to divide and categorise them, and to name each category. The reader may find that the meanings of certain terms such as "melody" and "theme" are necessarily somewhat different from those in western music and thought, and even in Arabic music more generally. I thus define these terms carefully for the purpose of communicating about *ṣaut* below. The challenge has been to build something that is comprehensible in *ṣaut*, using terms that are in the English language. One of the main challenges in writing about *ṣaut* in English is the use of Western terms to explain the content of this musical genre. A number of Western terms have no equivalent in Arabic, like syncopation, or bar. Whilst some terms are known amongst musicians in Kuwait and in other Arab countries, sometimes they carry a different meaning. For example, 'quarter tone' is a Western term and is known also in Arabic music (*arbāʿ al-naghamāt*), but it does not mean necessarily that the quarters are equal temperament in Arabic music. Nonetheless, using these terms is an important tool to clarify concepts key to *ṣaut* for the Western reader even if they are not used or not directly translated from local practice.

Discussing the history or emergence of *ṣaut* is always problematic, in that there are many hypotheses and most of them are speculative and conflicting. I aim here to explore all these hypotheses, and present a new hypothesis which contains evidence from documents and from the content of *ṣaut* songs. In consequence, the dissertation will also include a short discussion about the relationship between *ṣaut* and Indian and Yemeni musics, which is a crucial but neglected subject in the literature. The

discussion about the history of *ṣaut* also contains the development process that happened through three historical stages: the 19th century, between the 1920s and 1940s, and the present day.

In conclusion, the most profound challenge that I face as an Arab musician, is to try to develop concepts from the practice, and relate them to western theories and academic understanding. This means that I have to shift my way of thinking in order to explain the terms, words and concepts that I use to theorise from an Arabic perspective towards a western academic perspective, which is a completely different angle of discussion. The result is something different from the research techniques associated with *ṣaut* or from Arabic theories so far.

Overview of the dissertation

Chapter I – Sources

Different types of audio materials are presented broadly in this Chapter. I describe the labels, dates, performers, and terms known locally to describe the types of records and recordings and the history of non-commercial and commercial recordings in both Bahrain and Kuwait. The importance of each format, the advantages and challenges of them are argued through. All ensuing Chapters refer back to this one, since audio sources can provide some answers to many of the questions emerging in the field.

Chapter II – Ṣaut historiography

This chapter discusses the definition of the term "*ṣaut*" in terms of its meaning in the Arabic language and Arab music, and the distinction in usage of this term in Bahrain and Kuwait, and other regions. It also investigates the main hypotheses about the emergence of *ṣaut* or the origin of *ṣaut*, and includes my own theory.

Chapter III – New ṣaut history: formal elements

In this Chapter, the discussion will revolve around the *ṣaut* as a practice, by exploring the *ṣaut* types and the function of each of them within the genre. In addition, it presents the rhythms system of *ṣaut*, and their development since the late 19th Century. This chapter also examines the principles and rules of *ṣaut* performance, such as type of texts, *tawshīḥa*, and *maqām* system.

Chapter IV – Instruments used in ṣaut

This Chapter includes the instruments that have since disappeared, and also those that are still used in *ṣaut* performance, whether they are considered as fundamental or minor instruments. The discussion contains many elaborations about these instruments through history, local terms, techniques and styles, prominent players, and instrument manufacture.

Chapter V – Variation and improvisation as a framework for understanding ṣaut

The discussion in this Chapter is dedicated to variation and improvisation in *ṣaut* performance, a subject which lies at the core of the work of the musicians, and of this dissertation. The Chapter addresses definitions of improvisation in the academic field and in *ṣaut*. Why variation and improvisation are important in *ṣaut* and why

they should be studied, is also explored. The biggest challenge identified in this Chapter is to delineate how *ṣaut* performers develop the sense or the skill of variation or improvisation, because it mostly hidden and not a matter of routine discussion amongst performers. The Chapter describes a method of learning creativity through studying the techniques that use in *ṣaut* community, such as learning by a tutor or inside the family, and by using the handwritten notebook. This Chapter argues that the ability to use variation and improvisation is indistinguishable from learning repertoire, and is a result of many practices and experiences that are collected over several years. It is related to the absorbing of *ṣaut* singing styles, understanding the differences between distinguished performers for the same *ṣaut* song, comparing, contrasting, and practicing these differences, which all work to expand the performer's imagination.

Chapter VI – Transcriptions and analysis

This Chapter will examine the techniques or the methods of composing *ṣaut* songs, initially by breaking *ṣaut* into parts and defining each part. These will be named to allow them to be fully addressed. The main part of the Chapter is a comparative study between different versions of *ṣaut* examples using different techniques of transcription, such as notation, description, and tables. Revealing the method of creation in *ṣaut* by naming parts of the *ṣaut*, and analysing the examples through a comparative study, leads the reader to recognise a number of techniques that are consistently used by the *ṣaut* performer. These are the key to being able to vary, improvise or change in their rendition, using different melodies, rhythms, forms and shapes. This Chapter provides the detailed evidence for my main thesis regarding the inseparable nature of composition, variation and improvisation in *ṣaut*.

CHAPTER I

SOURCES

Introduction

This Chapter presents the recordings that are discussed in this thesis. It will provide

information that is crucial to the analysis and interpretation of *ṣaut* in terms of

regional styles and influences. It will also enable me to structure a comparative

analysis, and thus map out the ways melodies were treated by different performers in

different places and under varying institutional frameworks. The recordings may also

reveal the process of development in performance and forms. The scope of the

research covers different periods, from the late 1920s until recent years, and contains

diverse formats: 78rpm, 45rpm, radio and television programmes, and private

recordings.

The oldest format available is the 78rpm record. Its period in the Gulf region began

in late 1927 when Baidaphon Company released around twenty six records of a

group of Kuwaiti performers. Records were prevalent in the local market until local

radio stations began to operate in the 1940s in different areas of the Gulf. Listeners

and music fans got the opportunity to listen to the other genres of Arabic music in

addition to their local music frequently for free, and it was of a better quality of

sound. As a result, the industry of 78rpm records in the Gulf region started to recede

gradually in the 1950s and the production of 78rpm records had disappeared

altogether from the markets by 1960s. A further element which contributed to the

hastening of the disappearance of 78rpm records from the market was the appearance

of vinyl disks or 45rpm records. A study indicates that 45rpm records had started to become known in the Gulf region by the beginning of the 1960s (Bin Bashīr, 2009).

It must be acknowledged that finding the 78rpm records is a serious problem for any researcher in the Gulf region. Perhaps for this reason, there have been just two studies published which focused on the historical recordings or on record archives; the first partially discussed the recordings of Bahraini ṣaut performer Muḥammad bin Fāris (al-ʿAmmārī, 1991), and the other focused on the history of the 45rpm records industry in the Gulf (Bin Bashīr, 2009).

The existence of such recordings is accompanied by an acute scarcity in terms of detail about different aspects such as dates, players, and the cost of recordings. Sometimes only the copy of a recording is available, with the original record itself being missing. In Bahrain and Kuwait, there are no museums or organisations, official or otherwise that are interested in collecting, presenting and archiving such records. Many Bahraini and Kuwaiti records are preserved in private collections. The collectors live in a semi-closed community. They are not willing to be accessible to the public or to show the collections to any interested listener, and sometimes they prefer to hide their unique records from other collectors. However, because I am a record collector, and since the aim of my investigation and communication with collectors is to study the ṣaut in Bahrain and Kuwait, many researchers and collectors have shown me rare records, documents, and catalogues. For example, Muḥammad al-Ḥamad, a Kuwaiti collector and ṣaut performer allowed me to see his vast collection which according to him had never been seen by another collector.

While I was in Qatar, Khāled al-Thānī sent several big boxes containing a huge number of records to my hotel room for me to investigate and take photographs.

At the same time, I tried to find additional sources to expand the scope of my research. To this end, I contacted the organisations that deal with Arabic records, such as the Centre of Arab and Mediterranean Music in Tunisia, which is primarily concerned with records of Tunisia and the surrounding area. In Lebanon, I visited the Foundation for Arab Music Archiving and Research (AMAR). They assisted by offering a large number of record catalogues that had been published in Egypt and Syria as well as a file of hundreds of records with many details such as dates of issue. This helped me to estimate the dates of some Bahraini and Kuwaiti records, because I could compare the matrix numbers with those I obtained from AMAR. In the British Library, I was able to access the store of Arabic records, and I found a large number of records from the Gulf, including a few records I had never seen before. With regard to the musicians who participated in the recordings, I listened to recordings to identify them, as it is usual for participators' names to be mentioned and greeted during the song, and the greeting in *ṣaut* known as *yeʿyish*. Additionally, it is possible to identify the performer who is participating in the record from his style of playing, whether it is on the violin or *mirwās*, but this needs a trained ear. I have therefore been able to identify a few musicians using my own experience, and by asking other experts to help me confirm their identity. This helps to provide more details about the records and recordings in the Gulf that were not mentioned in other studies. I have also used both published and unpublished studies of the *ṣaut* field, interviews with performers and historians, and record catalogues to assist in providing detail not available from the recordings themselves.

The following section is dedicated to explaining the information available about recordings in Bahrain and Kuwait, covering aspects such as terminology and the recording history of commercial, non-commercial, radio, and private sessions.

There are specific limitations imposed by early recording conditions, which mean that early and present day recordings should not be treated as equivalent sources of information about performance practice. The limitations are two-fold. Firstly, the duration of the early record is short or less than the present day *ṣaut's* average duration. Early records were usually around six minutes, three for each side. In addition, the process of pausing a piece in order to change the recording from one side to another meant the musicians' resumption after a few minutes had affected the singing mode, tempo, and concentration. A number of these records contain musicians of non-Gulf origin, usually from Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. None of these musicians were familiar with the style and nature of *ṣaut*, and thus mostly dealt with it as a fixed tune not as a genre that includes many elements of creativity and spontaneity.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to study and confirm accurately the outcome of these limitations, since we do not have different types of recording from that era. I believe it is not easy to conclude that the limitations have always had a negative influence. It is also probable that the restricted time or accompaniment by musicians not trained in *ṣaut* from the Gulf encouraged *ṣaut* performers to develop their own style in singing or thinking, and to make the performance suitable to the limited time and musical style of non-Gulf musicians. A positive aspect that should be taken into account is the encounter of *ṣaut* performers with other Arab musicians and singers in

the late 1920s and 1930s, before the arrival of radio in the area, helping them to learn first-hand different styles of ornamentation and techniques of singing. Therefore, the early recorded sources are not equivalent to the present day recordings, but still carry many advantages in performing and presenting the traditional or old style of *ṣaut* which are not found easily in present day *ṣaut* performance.

The history of non-commercial records in Bahrain and Kuwait

Local terms for records

Prior to 1927, the year of the first attempt by performers from the Gulf region to record commercially, 78rpm records were already known in Bahrain and Kuwait and imported from elsewhere. There are no studies about the date of the first arrival of either cylinder or disc records, but one source points out that the types of 78rpm records that arrived in Kuwait prior to 1927 were from Egypt, Iraq and Turkey in the early 1920s and possibly before this date (al-Kuwaiti, c. 1978).

A number of terms were used in both Bahrain and Kuwait to describe disc or cylinder records. A wax cylinder record was known as *um-eglāṣ*. The term derived from the English word glass, and it essentially means is "the glassy shaped". Mubārak al-'Ammārī from Bahrain suggests that the term *al-banjerī*, which means a bracelet in the Bahraini and Kuwaiti dialect, also refers to the cylinder record (al-'Ammārī, 2013). It is worth mentioning that cylinder records were usually called *cubbāyā* in Egypt, which is also derived from the English word *cup* (el-Baz, 2015). On the other hand, the term *isṭiwāna* (pl. *isṭiwānāt*), which literally means cylinder, was used extensively in Bahrain and Kuwait to refer to the type of record in the form

of a disc rather than the cylinder record, because it was adopted by 78rpm record

companies such as Baidaphon and HMV. See Fig. 1.1.

Fig. 1.1. The term isṭiwānāt that appeared on the catalogue of an Egyptian gramophone company in June 1912.

Ghawān (pl. *ghawānāt*) is a different term used less frequently to refer to disc

records in Kuwait (Su'aidān, 1993, p.1189). Complicating matters further, the *ṣaut*

performer 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti once used the term *ṣaḥan*, meaning plate, to point

to the disc style of the record (el-Koueti, 1929). Later, the term *isṭiwāna* was usually

accompanied by the words *ḥajar* (stone) or *gār* (asphalt), which refer to the material

of the disc records which are in fact made from shellac resin (Clark, 1997). The

terms *isṭiwāna ḥajar* or *gar* were used to distinguish 78rpm records from 45rpm

records which were usually made from plastic. Record enthusiasts in the Gulf

generally use the term *bishtakhtah* to refer to either the phonograph or the turntable.

The origin of the term is unknown.

Non-commercial records

Historians have mentioned that there are a number of non-commercial records that were recorded in Bahrain and Kuwait, and that some of these were recorded before the 78rpm records of the local performers became available on the market. Towards the end of the reign of Sheikh Mubārak al-Ṣabāḥ (d. 1915), the Emir of Kuwait, there was a café owner from Zubair in Iraq named ʻAbdullah al-Zubairī who ran his business in the al-Ṣafat area in Kuwait. Al-Zubairī brought a cylinder phonograph, which contained a recording function, to his café, and his clientele had the opportunity to pay to record and listen to their voices. Peopleʻs reactions were varied, with some showing fear and initial rejection of the cylinder recorder. For example, a rumour started spreading among Kuwaiti society that the recorder was possessed and operated by the devil; other serious rumours referred to the recorder as a sign of the Day of Judgment (*youm al-qiyāmah*). Sheikh Sālem al-Ṣabāḥ (d. 1921), the crown prince at that time, forbade the use of this machine, in reaction to these rumours (al-Ḥātem, 1980, p. 113). A different reference indicates a story that is related to the same person, namely that during the reign of Sheikh Mubārak al-Ṣabāḥ, a café owner named ʻAbdullah al-Rumaiḍ from Zubair originally recorded a few cylinders of the Kuwaiti singer Khāled al-Baker (d. 1925). It seems that Al Rumaiḍ left Kuwait for Bahrain, and the fate of his recordings is unknown (al-Shamlān, 1976, p.40). Furthermore, the Bahraini *ṣaut* performer, Muḥammad ʻĪsā ʻAllāyah (d. 2004) indicated that he had listened to al-Baker's cylinder records in a café in Bahrain in his childhood (al-ʻObaid, 2013).

In Bahrain, probably before 1925, there was a type of recorder called *al-banjerī*, which was likely a local term for cylinder records. *Al-banjerī* is a recording device

capable of recording several times on the same cylinder or disc, which began to disappear from Bahrain after 1925. In 1941, a lady from a wealthy Bahraini family brought a gramophone from London that had two functions, a recorder and a disc copier. The disc was small, light, and beige coloured. The Bahraini performer, Muḥammad bin Fāris, completed three records using this machine. However, they were lost in the 1960s (al-'Ammārī, 1991, pp.186-187).

The history of 78rpm records in Bahrain and Kuwait

This section discusses the main 78rpm record companies which recorded performers from Bahrain and Kuwait, examines their history with the local performers, and considers other related information such as the features and details of record labels. This research is not able to cover the history of records in the world, or the broader Arab region or Arabian Peninsula. The discussion of the history of the records outside the scope of Bahrain and Kuwait is limited and necessarily brief.

To make the discussion more coherent and compact, there will be a description of each distinguished company separately, including any details and observations that are available. The discussion about these companies and their role in music of Bahrain and Kuwait, specifically *ṣaut* music, aims to fill part of the gap in our knowledge about the companies' and performers' activities in the 78rpm period. Since the sources for this research about the local history of the 78rpm record are limited, this research contains many shortcomings but provides a starting point for other scholars to expand on, review and amend. It is worth clarifying, first of all, why 78rpm recordings form such a crucial source for this thesis.

There are many reasons why the 78rpm type of recording is the most important source in this study. First, the 78rpm recordings is the oldest types of recording and document that has survived relating to the music of Bahrain and Kuwait in general, and for the *ṣaut* genre in particular. Many of these records still survive. Also, many of these records include melodies and musical details that are unknown or rarely utilised by *ṣaut* performers today. A number of *ṣaut* singers who contributed to the field of variation and improvisation in *ṣaut*, in both Bahrain and Kuwait, recorded only for 78rpm record companies. In Bahrain for example, the most distinguished performer, and the founder of the Bahraini pattern in *ṣaut*, Muḥammad bin Fāris, recorded three series of records for two companies. Because of his early death in 1947, Bin Fāris only recorded prior to the Second World War, and did not record for radio stations. The same is true of his colleague, Ḍāḥī bin Walīd, who recorded about 21 records and passed away in 1941. Ṣāleḥ bin ʿAbdulrazzāq from Kuwait abandoned *ṣaut* and music in general from the 1930s until his passing in 1975. The only recordings by him available now were recorded as 78rpm records by Baidaphon, the Arabic record company. In addition, Mullā Saʿūd al-Mukhāyṭa recorded seven 78rpm records for two different companies, and he later seemingly preferred not to record and concentrate on his profession as a tailor.

Between 1927, the release date of the first *ṣaut* record and 1939, the beginning of the Second World War, the majority of recordings made by Bahraini and Kuwaiti performers were in the *ṣaut* genre. Records pressed prior to the war contain all genres that are understood to be part of the *ṣaut* repertoire today (*ṣaut ʿarabī*, *ṣaut shāmī*, *ṣaut khayālī*, *istimāʿ*, and *khitām*). Records of the post-war era are also based

on these *ṣaut* genres, but they do not form the majority. Also, the genre of *istimāʿ* is completely absent from the recordings of the post-war period.

In general, I have come to the view that recordings made prior to the Second World War were subject to limited influence from other Arabic music forms from Yemen or Iraq that were widespread in that period. This gives these recordings greater local connection as the methods of using variation and improvisation in performing *ṣaut* were mostly derived from local traditional practices. The style of the performance in the 78rpm period was generative in terms of variation and improvisation and richness of *ṣaut* melodies and patterns of creativity, allowing for a rich study. It provides a very large proportion of the material for this research, as will be shown in Chapter VI.

There are, however, two dangers in relying exclusively on 78rpm records as a source. First, I noticed that all the collections that I had the opportunity to see in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Iraq were incomplete. The lost records make up more than 40% of the total number that were released by Bahraini and Kuwaiti performers. The collection of records that are currently available provides groups of melodies, patterns of practice and other elements of the *ṣaut* repertoire that are not found in the other types of recordings, but it is important to acknowledge that we are analysing only some of the traditions. This study will thus diversify the search in terms of the type of sources used to obtain more details and explanations about ṣaut recordings and melodies. It will also draw on 45rpm records, radio, and private recordings, to try to compensate for the lack of information resulting from missing 78rpm records.

Second, most 78rpm records were recorded in studios located outside the Gulf region, in Baghdād, Aleppo, Cairo, Aden, and Mumbai. For this reason, many non-local musicians participated in making *ṣaut* recordings with Bahraini and Kuwaiti musicians. Additionally, a number of records were made without using the *mirwās*, the percussion instrument that is essential in the *ṣaut* repertoire, because *mirwās* players were not available. A few records used the *dumbuk*, which is a type of percussion that was known in Iraq, or the tambourine (*Daff* or *Zinjārī*) instead of the *mirwās*. The participation of foreign musicians and percussionists in the making of *ṣaut* records has resulted in a certain number of changes in the performances. Some accuracy of *ṣaut* rhythms is lost, for example the rhythm of a number of recordings of *ṣaut khayālī*, which is usually twelve beats, fluctuated between the *khayālī* rhythm (twelve beats) and the *jurjīna* rhythm (ten beats), which is well known in Iraq. An example of this is the recording of *Wa Kad Kanat* (Kwiti, 1927). However, the participation of foreign musicians did not constrain improvisation practice in *ṣaut* recordings. Even if occasionally, a passing influence of non-local instrumentals might be traced, this is minimal, and does not fundamentally alter the local vocal style.

The history of 78rpm companies prior the Second World War

Until 1939, the year of the Second World War, there was no single record made in the Gulf region itself. Rather, the performers' destinations were five cities - Baghdād in Iraq, Bombay (now Mumbai) in India, Aleppo in Syria, Aden in Yemen, and Cairo in Egypt. The record companies that recorded Bahraini and Kuwaiti performers were Baidaphon, His Master's Voice (HMV), Odeon, Neayem, Sodwa, and Aden Crown. In this section, I will provide a brief history of each company, as

well as the names and recording dates of singers from Bahrain and Kuwait who recorded with them.

Baidaphon Record Company

Around 1907, members of the Christian Baiḍā family from Lebanon (Jibrān [Baiḍā's father], Farajallah, Butrus, Jibrān and Michel) opened a record shop on Martyrs Square, in Beirut, and agreed to record and manufacture 78rpm records with a German company, which was probably the Odeon Record Company. The first records were made in Berlin by Farajallah Baiḍā, one of the company founders, accompanied by the Lebanese *ʿūd* player Qāsim al-Durzī. After a few months, the company started to record in Egypt and subsequently, the company extended their activities to many Arab countries including Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Tunisia, as well as to Iran. Until c.1911, the record label used the name Baida Record instead of Baidaphon. In addition, the label was distinguished by the picture of the singer. From c. 1911, the record label changed to Baidaphon. The change also involved adopting a picture of a gazelle as a trademark (Racy, 1976, pp. 40-42). See Fig. 1.2.
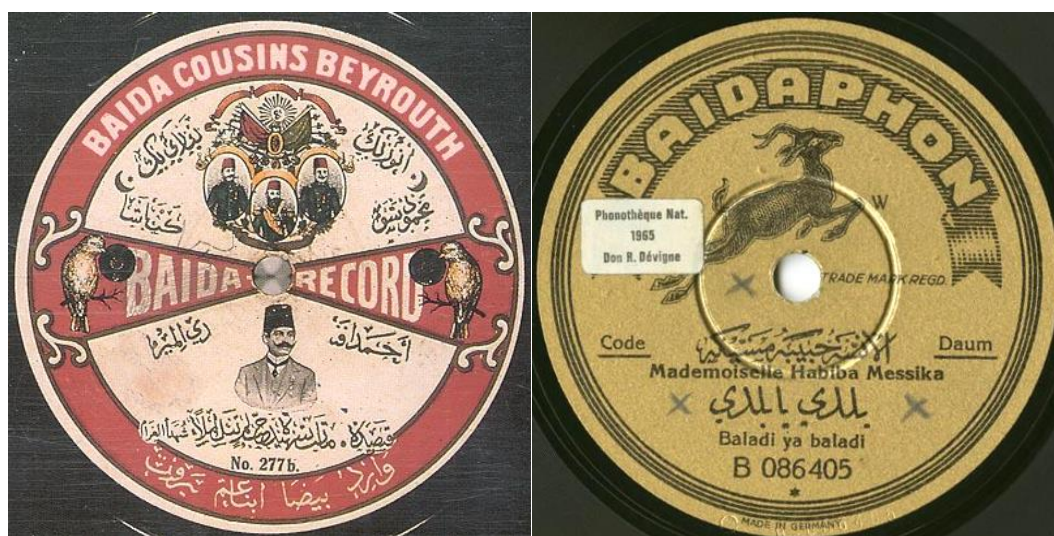
Fig. 1.2. Two Baidaphon record labels, produced before c. 1911, (left) with the title of Baida Record and a picture of the performer and after c.1911, (right) with the title Baidaphon and a picture of a gazelle.

In 1925, the Baidaphon Company, through their agents the Ḥakkāk Company, opened a record shop in Khān Dallah in Baghdād. Also in this year, an advertisement was placed in the Baghdād newspapers, announcing that Baidaphon Company had made records by the most famous Iraqi singers, such as Muḥammad al-Qubbenchī and Salmān al-Mūsollī. The company used 'Azra Ahāron or Azzūrī al-'Awwād (d. 1995), who was a famous Iraqi *'ūd* player, composer and singer in the 1920s, as the musical supervisor (al-Dujailī, 2006; Kojman, 1978, p.117).

In October 1927, the Baidaphon Company instructed their agent in Baṣra (in Iraq), Ḥassan Ibrāhīm Darsah, to send a musical exploratory mission to Kuwait, which is near to Baṣra. This mission was headed by the agent's brother, Sa'īd I. Darsah. In Kuwait, Darsah met many local performers, listened to their music to evaluate their musical qualifications and negotiated deals with the chosen performers to record for the Baidaphon Company. Negotiations were successful with 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti (performer), Ṣāleḥ bin 'Abdulrazzāq (performer), Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti (performer and *'ūd* player), Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti (performer and violin player), and Sa'ūd al-Mukhāyṭa (percussion player). Yūsuf al-Baker was another Kuwaiti performer who made an agreement to record with the Baidaphon group, after he convinced them by giving them a list of 95 songs he was able to sing (al-Baker, 1950s). However, the negotiations failed to convince a number of Kuwaiti performers to record their music, such as Farḥān Bu-Shāyi', who admitted he was hesitant and unconvinced (Bu-Shāyi', c. 1978). The Baidaphon group and the Kuwaiti musicians left Kuwait by car and travelled to al-'Ashār in Iraq where they waited for two days, then headed to Baghdād by rail. In al-'Ashār, an argument occurred between al-Baker and the Baidaphon delegate when the latter clarified that al-Baker would not himself play

‘ūd during his forthcoming recordings, and would instead be accompanied on the *‘ūd* by Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti. Al-Baker refused to accept this, and returned to Kuwait (Ḥassan, 1996, p.55). However, after a few days in Baghdād, the other performers began to record for the company without al-Baker. The first singer was ‘Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti, whose first recorded song was *‘Awāthel Thāt al-Khāl* (*ṣaut ‘arabī*) (al-Obaid, 1975).

In 1929, the Baidaphon Company wanted to find further new markets. Its agent in Baṣra, Ḥassan I. Darsah, sent his brother Sa‘īd and his group away again, but this time to Bahrain, at the behest of the company. This musical exploratory mission met only two singers, Muḥammad bin Fāris and Muḥammad Zuwayid. Unfortunately, the third prominent Bahraini performer, Ḍāḥī bin Walīd, was pearl hunting abroad (al-‘Ammārī, 1991, p.119). The negotiation was successful in agreeing a deal with Zuwayid as a performer, and Sa‘ad Bu-Sayyūl as a violin player (Zuwayid, n.d.). The Baidaphon group failed to agree a deal with Bin Fāris, possibly because the recording was to made be in Berlin[4] and he apparently did not tolerate cold climates. Another possible explanation is that Fāris might have believed the microphone or the recording machine would ‘take his soul’ (Ḥabīb, 2003, p. 24). The group left for Baghdad, where they were informed that the 78rpm recording machine still had to be sent from Berlin to Baghdād. To record his songs, Zuwayid and the other performers waited there for over four months. During the period, Zuwayid met Ṣāleḥ and Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti, and on the eventual recordings they accompanied him on violin

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4 - In 1928, Baidaphon Company sent a number of performers and musicians including Ḥabība Msīka (d. 1930) from Tunisia, and Muḥammad al-Qubbenchī (d. 1989) and his ensemble from Iraq to record in the Baidaphon studio in Berlin (Davis, 2004, p.96, p.103). It was assumed that the company was going to send another group of musicians in 1929 before they cancelled and brought the recording machine to Baghdād.

and *'ūd* whilst Zuwayid's companion from Bahrain, Bu-Sayyūl, who was supposed to play violin, in fact participated by playing *mirwās*. The first recorded song was *Salām Yā Zein*, which is a *ṣaut* type (Zuwayid, c. 1976; Zuwayid, n.d.).

From 1927 to 1930, Ṣāleḥ bin ‘Abdulrazzāq, ‘Abdullah Faḍālah and ‘Abdullaṭīf, Dāwūd and Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti from Kuwait and Muḥammad Zuwayid from Bahrain, recorded for the Baidaphon Company in Baghdād. Both Ṣāleḥ and Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti visited Baghdād several times before they settled there, and recorded for the Baidaphon Company three times in different years (al-Kuwaiti, c. 1978; Darsah, 1930). However, there is no evidence that the rest of the Bahraini and Kuwaiti singers returned and recorded again for the Baidaphon Company.

Bahraini researcher Ibrāhīm Rāshed al-Dauserī indicates that the Bahraini performer Muḥammad ‘Īsā ‘Allāyah had the opportunity to record five songs for the Baidaphon Company in Iraq for 1,000 Indian Rupees in the middle of the1940s. ‘Allāyah was accompanied by Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on the violin. Apparently Dāwūd and ‘Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti attended the recording of these songs (al-Dauserī, 1992, p.39). However, it is difficult to substantiate this account. All the records, documents, and interviews that refer to these Bahraini and Kuwaiti recordings for the Baidaphon Company indicate that they were made between 1927 and 1930. They do not provide such information with regard to ‘Allāyah's record in the 1940s. Furthermore, there is no evidence to indicate that the Baidaphon Company worked in Iraq in the 1940s. Finally, these five records are not available as discs or copy recordings, as a means of proving their existence. Therefore, it seems most likely that ‘Allāyah recorded for a different record company.

The record labels of Bahraini and Kuwaiti records were usually of a golden colour and the text was in black, with the picture of a gazelle, which is the label presents the name of the Gulf Region as *um ghazālah*. The label consists of the name of the performer and the song title in both Arabic and Roman transliteration. Sometimes the type or classification of the song appears on the label in Arabic only. The diameter of the records was 7 inches. See Fig. 1.3.

Fig. 1.3. The label of a Baidaphon record by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti.

Odeon Record Company

In 1903, the International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H. Company founded Odeon Records in Germany (Gronow, 1981, p.266). In June 1904, the Odeon Company introduced double-sided discs, a distinctive innovation that was later adopted by all other 78rpm companies (Kinnear, 2016, p. 229). The new German record company began working early to extend their activities in the Middle East. Researchers indicate that Odeon started to work in Egypt between 1905 and 1906 (Gronow, 1981, p.266; Racy, 1976, p.33), but the evidence implies that the Odeon Company probably started work in Egypt before 1905. The Egyptian singer, Muḥammad

Sālem (d. 1929), recorded a number of one-sided discs for the Odeon Company in
Cairo which means that they had been recording before Odeon's introduction of
double-sided discs to the markets in 1904. See Fig. 1.4.

Fig. 1.4. The label of a one-side record produced by Odeon for Muḥammad Sālem.

A deal negotiated between the Odeon Company and a famous singer in Egypt,
"Sheikh", stated that Odeon would pay 10,000 francs for the Egyptian singers, which
was the highest amount that had been paid to any artist at that time (Gronow, 1981,
p.267).

In 1928, the Kuwaiti performer 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti agreed with the Odeon
Company to record his songs. The recordings were made in Baghdād, and there the
company made two further records featuring another Kuwaiti singer, Sa'ūd al-Yāqūt
(known as Sa'ūd al-Baḥrānī in the Odeon catalogue and Mullā Sa'ūd al-Kuwaiti on
the Odeon labels). He was accompanied by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti as a *mirwās*
player, after a recommendation of al-Yāqūt's singing ability from the violin player
Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti (Tabbārah, 1929, pp.1-12; al-Yāqūt, 1964). Thanks to 'Abdullaṭīf's
successful record sales in Baghdād, the Odeon Company arranged for him to record
for them again. So in 1929, he headed for the Cairo branch of the Odeon Company

with *'ūd* player Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti, who was given the opportunity to record his songs for the first time. They travelled from Kuwait to Baghdād, then to Beirut, and finally to Cairo, and the company paid each of them approximately 400 Indian Rupees (al-Kuwaiti, 1963; al-Gharīb, 2003, pp.104-106). The records made in Cairo show that the form of the band or number of musicians differed from one record to another. Combinations varied from just the *'ūd* player to sometimes *'ūd* and percussion, *'ūd* and violin, or *'ūd*, violin and percussion. Two musicians participated in these recordings, and they were not from Kuwait or the Gulf region: they were the Egyptian-Syrian violin player Sāmī al-Shawwā (d. 1965), and a tambourine (*daff*) player, whose name was probably Sheikh 'Alī, and was probably of Egyptian origin, since the recordings were made there. The recordings contain a few mistakes in the actual performance, not because the musicians were unprofessional, but rather because they could not understand the form of the *ṣaut* genre. Al-Shawwā, for example, ended *ṣaut 'arabī māla rīm al-falā* (six beats) with taqsīm on four beats (el-Koueti, 1929). This concept of shifting the meters is acceptable in Egyptian music, and can be found in the recordings of al-Shawwā, for example, when he played *samā'ī dārej ḥijāz* (three beats) and ended it with a taqsīm on four beats (al-Shawwā, 1924). However, it is not accepted and never used in the *ṣaut* genre, and apart from this instance, meter shifting in the same piece is absent in *ṣaut*. In addition, the tambourine player seemingly had a problem in absorbing the rhythmic shape of *ṣaut*, he lost the rhythm several times in the recordings, for example in *ṣaut el-Bāriḥa Ḥārab* (el-Koueti, 1929). However, this did not seems to have an effect on the singer, who performed the songs properly.

The labels of the Kuwaiti records are usually golden in colour, with black text, and a picture of a minaret on the top. Both the Iraqi and Egyptian records are 7 inches in size and made in Germany. The labels show the name of the performer, the title of the song, and the type or classification of the song in Arabic, and only the name of the performer in English. Only the recordings that have been made in Baghdād feature a particular sentence in Arabic on the label, namely *'Alā Takht Ṣāleḥ Wā Dāwūd Awlād 'Ezrā* (with the ensemble of Ṣāleḥ and Dāwūd, sons of Ezra). See Fig. 1.5.

Fig. 1.5. Two labels of Odeon records made in 1928 (left) and 1929 (right) by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti.

In Bahrain, there was only one attempt to record for Odeon by Muḥammad Zuwayid, who recorded a group of *ṣaut* songs in Odean's Bombay branch in 1935 (al-'Ammārī, 1991, p.143). The violin player in these recordings was Faizullāh Taghioff, an Iranian or Uzbek musician residing in Bombay at that time. The role of the violin in the recordings was negligible and it can be heard with difficulty. Therefore, Faizullāh did not affect the Zuwayid recordings either positively or negatively.

The label of the 1935 record made in Bombay by the Bahraini singer Muḥammad

Zuwayid is similar to the Kuwaiti labels that had been recorded in Egypt. The only

difference is the colour of the label, which is black with golden text. See. 1.6.

Fig. 1.6. The label of an Odeon record made in Bombay, 1935, by Muḥammad Zuwayid.

Gramophone and His Master's Voice (HMV)

In 1887, Emile Berliner, an American of German origin, invented the flat disc (Racy,

1976, p.24). In 1898, a group of businessmen from England and the USA founded

the Gramophone Company in London after they obtained the rights to Berliner's disc

recording patent. In early 1903, the Gramophone Company began to record in India,

and it was the first company to travel as far eastwards for this purpose. In the same

year, the Gramophone Company began to record in Egypt, becoming the first 78rpm

record company to work in Egypt and the Arab region. After 1908, the Gramophone

Company issued a Syrian catalogue and by 1910 had also made recordings in

Algeria and Tunisia. In 1924, the company decided to change the trademark of the

company from Gramophone to His Master's Voice (HMV) (Gronow, 1981, pp.251-

257). HMV Company began their work in Iraq in March 1925; the agent was Vartan

Martin, and his store was in the New Street, Baghdād (Kinnear, 2016, p. 141).

In 1931, Maḥmūd Ismāʿīl al-Saʿātī (d. 1965) became the agent of HMV in Bahrain (Kinnear, 2016, p. 141). Later in 1932, he decided to develop his activities in the region by recording performers from Bahrain and Kuwait. Al-Saʿātī arrived at an agreement with two Bahraini singers, Muḥammad bin Fāris and Ḍāḥī bin Walīd, neither of whom had made recordings before. The agreement stated that the agent would bear all traveling and living expenses, and provide four Rupees for Bin Fāris and two Rupees for Bin Walīd as a daily allowance during the trip. Furthermore, the agent paid Bin Fāris 100 Rupees for each record and Bin Walīd 50 Rupees. The group included the agent, Maḥmūd al-Saʿātī, his son ʿAbdulḥusain, Bin Fāris, Bin Walīd, and a Kuwaiti *mirwās* player, Ḥamad Bu-Ṭaibān (d. 1933) who was known as Ḥamad Bu-Huwaidī. They left Bahrain in the winter of 1932, with an itinerary that consisted of crossing between three seaports in four days - Bushehr in Iran, Kuwait, and Khorramshahr in Iran again, then Baṣra in Iraq. In Baṣra, the Kuwaiti *mirwās* player and singer Mullā Saʿūd al-Yāqūt (Saʿūd al-Kuwaiti on the label of HMV records), came from Kuwait and joined the group to record his songs upon Bin Fāris' request. The next day, the group left Baṣra to travel to Baghdād by rail. The recording was delayed for two months until the recording machine arrived in Baghdād. Finally, Bin Fāris, Bin Walīd, and al-Yāqūt recorded their songs over a ten day period, accompanied by Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on the violin, who had settled in Baghdād from c. 1930. In early 1933, two months after the recording, the disc records arrived in Bahrain. The first batch contained two hundred copies of each disc, and the following batches contained 25 or 50 copies of each one, the number depending on the perceived popularity of the repertoire (al-ʿAmmārī, 1991, pp.121-

139; al-Yāqūt, 1964). Both Bin Fāris and al-Yāqūt had recorded five records each, and Bin Walīd recorded 11 records.

The record labels for the 1932 recordings are usually of a ruby or plum colour while the text is golden, with the picture of a dog and phonograph at the top and an angel at the bottom. The text included the performer's name, the song title, and sometimes the type of classification of the song in both Arabic and Roman transliteration. In addition, the disc records were 7 inches in size and made in England. See Fig. 1.7.

Fig. 1.7. The label of an HMV record recorded in 1932 by Ḍāḥī bin Walīd.

In early 1937, three singers from Bahrain and Kuwait recorded for HMV in Baghdād. The first was Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti, then Muḥammad bin Fāris, followed by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti. Al-'Ammārī suspects that the records of Bin Fāris were recorded in the last quarter of 1938 (al-'Ammārī, 1991, p.147). Michael Kinnear, an expert in Indian record companies, indicates that these recordings were made in early 1937 when Apcar Martin, the agent of HMV in Iraq, encouraged the company to record for Bahrainis and Kuwaitis. However, the records of Maḥmūd were issued in June 1939, and the records of Bin Fāris and 'Abdullaṭīf in July 1939 (Kinnear, 2016,

85

p. 142). A label of a sample record for Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti in my collection shows that the date of publishing was on 12th June 1939. See Fig. 1.8.
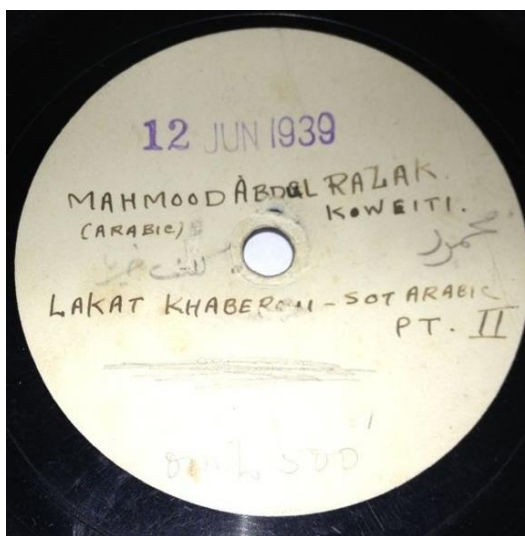
Fig. 1.8. The label of the HMV sample record for Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti.

The fundamental characteristic of the three singers' recordings in 1937 is the expanding or changing form of the *ṣaut* band. All the recordings consist of a *qānūn*, which although used before this occasion in the Kuwaiti recordings in 1928, was not audible. In these recordings, the *qānūn* is clear and interactive. The *nāy* (wooden flute) is an instrument that was used for the first time here. In the 'Abdullaṭīf recordings, the band included a cello, which cannot be found in any other Kuwaiti or Bahraini 78rpm records. In addition, 'Abdullaṭīf recordings were accompanied by a *dumbuk* instead of *mirwās*, due to the absence of a suitable expert in Baghdād. In some places in the recordings, 'Abdullaṭīf loses the meter, seemingly because he is not familiar with the *dumbuk*. It seems that the singers used new instruments in their band after the encouragement of their friend Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti, who accompanied them with his violin, and who was the leader of the radio band in Baghdād from 1936.

The labels of the 1937 records are of various colours - plum, light blue, light red or fuchsia. The text is always golden, with the picture of the dog. These records are usually known in the Gulf Region as *um chalb*. The label text consists of the performer's name, the song title, and sometimes the song classification in Arabic, and only the name of the performer in English. It is worth mentioning that each record or probably edition of records, has a different name or spelling for the same singer. For instance, Mahmood Obdel Razak Koweiti, Mahmood Abdul Rezak, Mohammed Abdul Razak, and Mohd. Abdul Razak Koweity, are all various spellings used for Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti, as can be seen on the labels of his HMV record in 1937. The discs were 7 inches in diameter and were made in India or Pakistan. See Fig. 1.9.

Fig. 1.9. The labels of HMV records made in early 1937 by Muḥammad bin Fāris (left) and Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti (right).

Neayem Record Company

There is an absence of information about the Neayem Record Company in research on Arab records. Apart from the labels, which have been, until now, the only definite source available, there is a short article published by Amir Mansour on Persian records in the Neayem Company. Mansour indicates that the company began their

work in 1937 in Baghdād (Mansour, n.d.). There are many colours for their labels - dark blue, medium blue, green, white and plum. The text is golden, except for on the white label, where the text is black. The company's trademark is a half rising sun. Two phrases on the label show that the records were made locally in Iraq, namely "Neayem Record Factory, Baghdād" and "Made in Iraq". Most Iraqi songs on Neayem records that I have had the opportunity to listen to feature, in addition to the singer, the same three musicians: Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti on *ʿūd*, Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on violin, and Ḥussain ʿAbdullah on *dumbuk*, and on rare occasions, Yūsuf Zaʿrūr, the *qānūn* player. The most famous singers that recorded for this company are Salīma Murād (d. 1974), Ḥudairī Bu-ʿAzīz and Zakiya George from Iraq, and Riza Quli Mirza Zelli and Ezzat Rouhbakhsh from Iran. In about 1937 ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti recorded eleven songs for this company. Later, in about 1939, Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti made a number of records, including the songs is *Yā Hal-i Sharq*. In Bahrain, Ibrāhīm and Ṣāleḥ Taqī, who were agents of the Neayem Company in Bahrain, sent Muḥammad Zuwayid to record for this company twice. In these sessions, Zuwayid was accompanied by violin player Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti, and recorded a number of *ṣaut* pieces, such as *Qāl al-Muʿannā Damʿ*, and *Fī Methla Ḥubbakum* (Taqī, 1938, pp. 17-23). Excluding the recordings of ʿAbdullaṭīf and one record of Maḥmūd, all the Bahraini and Kuwaiti records are now unavailable, probably because the quality of the material of the records were made with was poor and the discs fragile. The label of Neayem record contains the performer, song, and song type in Arabic only. See Fig. 1.10.

Fig. 1.10. The label of the Neayem record made by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti.

Sodwa Record Company

The Sodwa Record Company was a Syrian company established in Aleppo by
'Abdulwahāb 'Aqqād al-Wattār (al-'Ammārī, 1991, p.144). Although the activity of
this company was broad and effective during the 1930s, the lack of documentation
has again been an obstacle to constructing Sodwa's history. Therefore, the label of
the Sodwa Record Company is our main source.

These labels are usually golden, yellow, purple, green or white. The text is golden on
the purple or green labels, and black on the golden, white or yellow labels. The
trademark of the Sodwa Company is a picture of a sun with wings that is derived
from the winged sun symbol found on Assyrian and Sumerian monuments. The
French phrase "Fabrique en Syrie" appears on the Sodwa label, showing that the
records were made locally in Syria. The company recorded many performers from
different areas such as Syria, Iraq and Iran. In addition, Ibrāhīm and Ṣāleḥ Taqī, the
agents of Sodwa Company in Bahrain, sent Ḍāḥī bin Walīd in 1935, and Muḥammad
bin Fāris in 1936 to record in Aleppo. Later in 1939, the Kuwaiti performer
'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti also travelled there to and recorded a number of his songs.

The Sodwa records are considered by 78rpm record collectors in Bahrain and Kuwait to be the rarest. Nevertheless, the recordings made by Fāris and Walīd are available because ‘Alī al-Saq‘ubī, a Kuwaiti music producer, made a deal with the heirs of the Sodwa Company, bought the records from them in January 1967 and reissued them (al-‘Ammārī, 1991, p.144). The records' labels include the genre, the song title, and the name of the performer in Arabic and only the name of the singer in French. See Fig. 1.11.

Fig. 1.11. The label of the Sodwa record made by ‘Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti.

Aden Crown Record (istiwānāt al-tāj al-‘adanī)

This is a Yemeni record company that was founded in Aden by ‘Alī bin ‘Abdullah al-Ṣāffī and his brothers. The record shop was in Za‘farān Street in Aden, and it supplied radios and record accessories beside the records produced by Aden Crown Record (Abdulmajid, 2008). The activities of the company were concentrated in the Yemeni market and most of the singers were from different regions of Yemen who performed different genres of Yemeni music. The labels are usually black or blue, and the text is golden. The trademark of the company is a crown. The label of the Aden Crown Company shows that the records were made in England, but the name of the English factory used is not clear. However, a sample record produced by Aden

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Crown shows that the records were manufactured by the Decca Record Co., Ltd. in New Malden, Surrey, England. See Fig. 1.12.
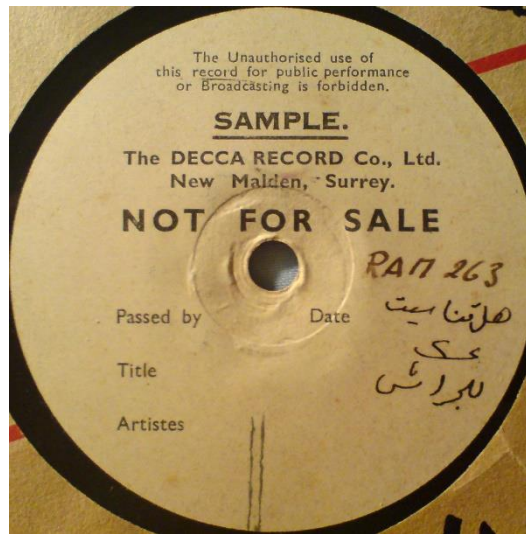
Fig. 1.12. The label of an Aden Crown sample record by the Yemeni performer Aḥmad ʿAwaḍ al-Jarrāsh. The label shows the name of the factory in which the disc was manufactured.

In addition, the label features the words "Ṣāffī–Aden", which is the name of the company's owner and the location of company. Muḥammad bin Samḥān from Kuwait was the only performer from the Gulf region to have recorded for Aden Crown Record. He was accompanied by a Kuwaiti *mirwās* player and the Yemeni singer and violin player ʿOmar Maḥfuḏ Ghābba. Today, there are three records of Bin Samḥān available in private collections. The records' labels contain the performer's name, the song title, and the classification in Arabic, and only the song title in English, see Fig. 1.13.

Fig. 1.13. The label of the Aden Crown record that was recorded by Muḥammad bin Samḥān.

In the period prior to the Second World War, the *ṣaut* genre dominated records production. Many melodies and traditional practices, such as different types of *tawshīḥa*, can only be found in these records. Most of the performers who recorded in that period owned or formed their musical style or character in performing *ṣaut*. Therefore it is easy to find different versions of the same *ṣaut* piece, and the space field of variation and improvisation reached its peak before it declined later after the war. However, this era also saw the receding of the *Istimāʿ* type until it later fully disappeared. In addition, a number of the records and recordings from this period are unavailable until now.

The history of 78rpm companies after the Second World War

The recording industry in Baghdād, which was the favourite recording destination for Bahraini and Kuwaiti performers, was mostly inactive during and shortly after the Second World War. The international companies most likely left Baghdād at the beginning of the war, and sources do not mention any songs recorded in Baghdād or elsewhere in Iraq during the war. An apparent exception is a group of recordings

made by Iraqi performers such as Nāssir Ḥakīm, Salīma Murād and Ḥuḍairī Bu-'Azīz for the Columbia Company in c. 1945 (al-'Āmerī, 1989, p.244, p.306). The source has not clarified where these records been recorded, inside or outside Iraq. Another source indicates that the recordings of Columbia records began in Baghdād early in 1948 (Ciziri, 2015).

As a consequence, in the 1940s all Bahraini and Kuwaiti performers went to Bombay to make 78rpm records. There is no study that clarifies the reason why performers only chose Bombay, but there are many logical reasons that might have led them there, rather than to Arab cities such as Cairo or Beirut. Bombay, in fact, was a familiar location for people from the Gulf, in that there was a Gulf community which worked, resided and studied in Bombay. 'Abdullah al-Faraj, for instance, the most important *ṣaut* performer of the 19th century, gained his Arabic and Indian musical knowledge during his time in Bombay ('Alī, 1980, p.5). Arab musicians from different Arabic regions performed their music in the Arabic nightclubs of Bombay (Zuwayid, c. 1976). Furthermore, it seems that the recording expenses in Bombay were less than that of recordings in Arab cities. Certainly, the Iraqi producer Adīb Khalaf preferred to record for 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti and 'Abdullah Faḍālah in Bombay than in Syria, or similar location. Bombay has more correlations to Kuwait, and probably the financial advantage is higher in India.

The names and labels of Indian recording companies are many and various, but the crucial thing is most of these different labels appear in the form of a phrase that says that the records have been recorded and manufactured by a national gramophone record company in Bombay. Besides the British company HMV, the other label

names were Young India, Oneon, Basraphone, The Bombay Record Co. (kalyan),

Emperor Record, Queen Record, Laila Phone, Sadiq Phone Company, and the

Kuwait Phone Company. See Fig. 1.14.

Fig. 1.14. Examples of four record label companies that recorded for performers from the Gulf in Bombay during the 1940s.

The records from after the Second World War show that the situation, culture, and

mode of the listeners in the Gulf were changed. Prior to the war, the songs recorded

by Kuwaitis and Bahrainis were always derived from the local musical tradition

known in that time, and it is hard to find songs that had been brought from outside

the Gulf region boundary. The records that were made after the war, on the other

hand, show that the Bahraini and Kuwaiti performers were highly influenced by

Arabic music traditions derived from outside the Gulf region, such as those present in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and the Yemen. For example, the recordings of *Salabatnī Ah Ya 'ainī* (Ezwaiyyed, n.d.), of which the genre of music is Yemeni, and *Yā Bulbul Ghannī* (Kuwaiti, n.d.), which is an Egyptian melody.

In late 1948, a new phase began when 'Abdulḥussain and 'Abdulraḥmān, the sons of Maḥmūd al-Sā'ātī (d. 1965) who was the agent of many international record companies such as HMV and Odeon in Bahrain, established a record company named Arabphone. The al-Sā'ātī brothers imported a 78rpm recording machine to Bahrain from England, the first of its kind in the Gulf area. The first singer who got the opportunity to record for this new local company was Yūsuf Phonī (d. 1998), and the name of the song was *Yaḥyā 'Omar Qāl* (Ḥabīb, 2003, p.41; Bin Bashīr, 2009, p. 217). Subsequently, many local companies were encouraged to import recording machines and to establish their own studios, such as al-Nasr Records by Jassim al-'Obaidan Fakhrū, and Bahrainphone (Taki-Store) by Ṣāleh and Ibrāhīm Taqī, who were the agents of the Sodwa and Neayem record companies during the 1930s and 1940s in Bahrain. In addition, most studios were owned and managed by Bahrainis. However, a few non-Bahrainis possessed their own studios, such as the Omani singer Sālem Rāshed al-Ṣūrī, who settled in Bahrain and founded his company, Salimphone record. See Fig. 1.15.

Fig. 1.15. Examples of record label companies that established in Bahrain.

Later in early 1950s, the first Kuwaiti record company and studio to be established was Tahaphon, which was founded by Ṭāha Ṣabrī al-ʿAlī (d. 2006) whose recording activity was in both Bahrain and Kuwait. Other companies were also established in Kuwait, such as Fadliphone, founded by the Kuwaiti performer, ʿAbdullah Faḍālah, and Bou-Zaid Phone founded by ʿAlī al- Ṣaqʿubī (d. 1984). See Fig. 1.16.

Fig. 1.16. Examples of record label companies that established in Kuwait.

However, the role of these local companies was just to offer a studio and record the songs. Records were manufactured by specialist companies in the United Kingdom, Germany, Pakistan, and India. It is worth mentioning that the establishment of local

companies in Bahrain and Kuwait was characterised by the recording of many singers and musicians who had never had the chance before. Many performers were from different areas of the Gulf, such as Oman, Qatar and the UAE, whilst before that, the performers were only from Bahrain and Kuwait. Many singers from Saudi Arabia began to record during this stage as well, but mostly under pseudonyms. This was because playing and recording music at that time was forbidden: it was against Saudi law until late 1963 (Bin Bashīr, 2009, p. 35). The majority of singers were from the Ḥejāz region, for instance Maḥmūd Ḥalawānī who used *al-Muṭreb al-Maḥbūb* as a recording name, and a few were from the Iḥsa' region, such as 'Abdullah Bu-Khuwwah. Local female singers, such as 'Ouda al-Muhanna, Mouza Sa'īd and Shamma Dawūd, also got a chance to record their voices for the first time. The local female voices in the Gulf were totally absent until the local record companies been established. During this time of local recordings, three types of music sources were used by performers. Firstly, there were local traditional songs; secondly, the traditional and contemporary music genres from outside the region, especially from Yemen, Iraq and, to a slightly lesser extent, Egypt; finally, there was an emergence of the composer, a previously absent concept. The new composers, such as 'Abdullah Faḍālah, Yūsuf Phonī and Sālem Rāshed al-Ṣūrī, were influenced by both local traditional and new music that came from outside the region, significantly from Yemen. However, the genre of *ṣaut* in the local record companies' period was limited. Therefore, it is rare to find something new or different in *ṣaut* in this period, compared to what had been recorded before.

The 45rpm records in the Gulf

The locally produced 45rpm records, which were called nylon or plastic records locally, began to sell in the markets in the early 1960s. In the beginning the demand was very low, probably because of the popularity of local radio stations and 78rpm records. Later, the demand for 45rpm records increased gradually in Saudi Arabia after the lifting of the music ban late in 1963. The popularity of 45rpm records in Bahrain and Kuwait also increased, but to a lesser extent than in Saudi Arabia. Most of the *ṣaut* music that was published as 45rpm records was converted from 78rpm records. In addition, the *ṣaut* songs that were not converted from 78rpm were few and limited. Several 45rpm record companies were established, such as al-Jawhara by Yūsuf Ḥaidar in Kuwait and al-Hilāl by 'Abdulkarīm al-Sā'ātī in Bahrain (Bin Bashīr, 2009).

There is no particularity in the musical features in this type of recording. Most 45rpm records demonstrate the same musical features that could be found in the other recording types which were available in the same period, such as private recordings and the recordings that were broadcast by the radio stations. In addition, many *ṣaut* pieces that were recorded on 45rpm records were repetitions and imitations of what had been performed and captured on the 78rpm records, allowing us to trace change or development in the tradition. A number of the *ṣaut* pieces that were converted from 78rpm to 45rpm are useful for researchers, because the original 78rpm records are missing and no longer available in private collections. Additionally, these converted records sometimes include the information that was transferred from the original labels.

Private and radio stations recordings

It is not easy to separate these two recording types from one another. Private and radio recordings are similar in the style of performing and in the quality of recording, and the oldest examples date back to the same decade, the 1950s. However, the local radio stations began to broadcast their service before the 1950s. On 4th November 1940 the British, who were occupying Bahrain at the time, established the first broadcasting station in Bahrain and surrounding areas. The main purpose for creating this station was to act as the voice of the British establishment in the Arabic language in competition with the German Arabic station that broadcast from Berlin. The Bahraini station provided *ṣaut* sessions every week, with performers from Bahrain or Kuwait, such as Muḥammad bin Fāris and Muḥammad Zuwayid from Bahrain, and ‘Abdullah Faḍālah and Sa‘ūd al-Rāshed (d. 1988) from Kuwait. Ibrāhīm Ḥabīb (2003, p. 117) indicates that the British radio stations paid a monthly salary to singers - fifty Indian Rupees for Fāris, forty Rupees for Zuwayid, and twenty five Rupees for ‘Allāyah. Al-‘Ammārī however (1991, p. 184), refers to a different payment system, which was calculated per session. Bin Fāris, for instance, was paid twenty five Rupees per session and the *mirwās* player who accompanied Bin Fāris, was paid fifteen Rupees. In 1945, the British decided to close the station as it seemed no longer required after the end of the war (Sarḥān, 2012).

Murād Bahbahānī (d. 2005), a Kuwaiti businessman who was considered an early adopter of technological innovations, founded the Shirīn station - the first radio station in Kuwait - between 1948 and 1951. Shirīn presented different types of songs from Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq and Egypt. It also presented live music sessions featuring Kuwaiti performers such as ‘Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti, Sa‘ūd al-Rāshed, and ‘Awaḍ

Dūkhī (d. 1979) (Nāṣer, 2010). The broadcasts of the British and Shirīn stations were live and they did not record the songs or programmes that they broadcasted.

The official Kuwaiti broadcasting station was founded on 12th May 1951 by the Kuwaiti government. The broadcasting was live and daily from 7 p.m to 9 p.m. In 1958, the Kuwait station began to record broadcasts. The first song to be recorded was *Lī Khalīl Ḥasīn* by Shādī al-Khalīj in 1959 (al-Suraie, 2013).

The official Bahraini broadcasts began on 12th July 1955. The station began by broadcasting daily, with the exception of Fridays, between 8 am and 10 p.m. and it the broadcasting was live only (Sarḥān, 2012). There is no indication of the date when the Bahraini broadcasts were first recorded.

The evidence shows that private recording in Kuwait preceded the recording of the Kuwait station. The Kuwaiti historian, Aḥmad al-Beshr al-Rūmī (d. 1982), indicates that in early 1953, he received a reel to reel recorder as a present from Sheikh Jāber al-ʿAlī al-Ṣabāḥ (d. 1994), who in the 1960s and 1970s subsequently became an information minister in the Kuwaiti government. This recorder was one of the first such machines to arrive in Kuwait. Al-Rūmī decided immediately to record the songs of Yūsuf al-Baker, to create what is probably the oldest private recording or the oldest surviving private recording in Kuwait, and maybe in the Gulf (Alī, 1980, pp.6-7). This recording of al-Baker has an exceptional importance in this thesis. Because al-Baker learnt music and became a *ṣaut* performer in late 19th century, this recording is considered as the only source that is available and elaborates the features of *ṣaut* in 19th century. These features of *ṣaut* in the 19th century are

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different from what was recorded on records during the 1920s and the 1930s, and from what is practised now among ṣaut performers, in both Bahrain and Kuwait. Firstly, al-Baker's recording contains a number of ṣaut melodies which had never been recorded prior to his attempt at recording. The recording of al-Baker contains many well-known or common melodies in the ṣaut community, and had already been performed and recorded by others. However, al-Baker documented these common ṣaut songs with musical details and elements that cannot be found in the other sources. The uniqueness of al-Baker's recording appears also in other aspects of ṣaut, and is related to the rhythms, lyrics, and principles of ṣaut.

On the other hand, we should consider a number of elements that might affect the accuracy of these recordings as historical traces of the 19th century. Al-Baker was about seventy five years old when he agreed to record. This recording was made in the mid 1950s, over fifty years after the turn of the century, and long after the death of his teacher, 'Abdullah al-Faraj (d. 1901). It was also about thirty years after the death of his elder brother, and that of his teacher, Khāled al-Baker (d. 1925). Furthermore, before he decided to record, al-Baker was a contemporary of the emergence of 78rpm records and radio stations. Therefore, all these aspects could have impacted on his memory and on his singing ability and also on his adherence to old styles, especially following the spread of ṣaut recordings by younger performers since 1927. The recordings of these younger performers consisted of different or developed technique of singing, and different ṣaut principles, which might have affected al-Baker's singing.

Nevertheless, these objections do not diminish the uniqueness of al-Baker's legacy, even setting aside the fact that all sources refer to him as the single representative of 19th centiry *ṣaut*. He offers us a style of singing, melodic formation and other details that according to surviving 78 rpms was not used after the late 1920s. Therefore, al-Baker's recordings will be used here as the oldest version of the melodies in the *ṣaut* repertoire.

The materials left to us from this post-war period, both private and from radio stations recordings, share significant qualities and problems. They allow us to discover melodies, musical details and creative practices of the singers which were not recorded in the 78rpm era, or no longer available. In addition, the recordings of this stage include songs by old performers who cannot be heard on the 78 or 45rpm records. For instance, the most celebrated performer, the Kuwaiti Yūsuf al-Baker, refused to record for the record companies, but made private recordings in the last stages of his life in the middle of 1950s, under pressure from friends and fans. Although these may be classified as a part of the later resource stage, they probably reveal an older tradition of *ṣaut*. Another was Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Jāber al-Ṣabāḥ, a *ṣaut* patron, *mirwās* player, and expert performer. His position as a part of the Kuwaiti royal family and as a minister prevented him from making commercial or public recordings. Hence his unpublished interview in Kuwait T.V. in 1967 is the only source that allows us to study his unique pattern in *ṣaut*, along with his knowledge of the history of *ṣaut*. There is a large volume of recordings recorded in this period which is helpful for finding more different versions of the same *ṣaut* examples chosen for study and exploring variation and improvisation in *ṣaut* for this dissertation.

Aside from the interviews that took place in an official context, whether in television or radio, there are also many interviews and discussions with musicians, experts, and patrons which were recorded during private sessions and gatherings (*samra*). Most of these private interviews and conversations include details that cannot be found in the interviews conducted for official media.

The problems can be summarised in two main points. Firstly, many of these recordings were made at an unknown date, place and may have involve unknown performers. Secondly, most of these recordings, although useful in allowing us to trace any small or limited changes or developments in the tradition, are nonetheless repetitions and imitations of the performances captured on the 78rpm records.

Conclusion

This Chapter details the features of a number of recordings through different recording formats: 78, 45rpm records, radio and private recordings, in Bahrain and Kuwait. The discussion clarifies that the most important resource type is the 78rpm record, because these records contain numerous traditions and practices that were abandoned and later disappeared, and many different aspects in terms of variation and improvisation, (the core concepts explored in this thesis). The recordings assist us in finding answers for many questions about the process of development in *ṣaut*, how variation and improvisation within *ṣaut* happens, and many other fundamental questions that are needed to analyse the genre.

The Chapter, however, suffers from the unavailability of sufficient details relating to many of the record companies, the performers who participated in the recording sessions, and also the loss of many records and recordings. Therefore the aim here has not only been to supply sources for the other Chapters in this thesis, but to create a starting point for other scholars and encourage them thereby to discover more about this field, the records and recordings in Gulf region.

CHAPTER II

ṢAUT HISTORIOGRAPHY

The concept of ṣaut: literal, metaphorical and musical meanings up to the mid-19th century

Literal usages

The literal connotation of the word *ṣaut* has a long history within Arabic literature from the pre-Islamic period (*al-jāhiliyah*), throughout subsequent Islamic epochs, and in contemporary literature, both in classical Arabic (*al-fuṣḥā*) and in different Arabic colloquial (*lahja ʿāmiyah*) languages. Up to the present day, the word *ṣaut* in a literal sense refers to all types of sound that can be heard by ear, such as human voices, the sounds of animals and indeed music. Therefore, the term *ṣaut* has been translated into English as "voice" or "sound" (Shiloah, 1995, p.15).

Metaphorical significance

Besides the literal meaning of *ṣaut* and its derivatives, there are a number of metaphorical associations to the word *ṣaut* in the Arabic language. By virtue of the representation of sound and voice in the radio, several Arabic media outlets such as radio broadcast stations adopt a name containing the word *ṣaut* in the general sense of "voice", e.g. the Egyptian broadcasting station *ṣaut al-qāhira* (The Voice of Cairo), and *ṣaut al-ʿarab* (The Voice of the Arabs). In addition, the word *ṣaut* can refer to an individual's positive reputation but also, a noise a call or a shout (Ibn Manzūr, 1997, vol. 2, pp. 57-58).

Ancient Arab music

Many music books written during the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258) present *ṣaut* as a musical term. In his major work *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, The Book of Songs, Abu al-Faraj al-Isphahani (d. 967), refers to each song in his encyclopaedic collection of Arabic music as a *ṣaut*. In fact, although it is not clear when Arabs decided to adopt *ṣaut* and use it as a musical term, al-Isphahani indicates that many *ṣaut* songs are composed by musicians who lived during the Umayyad caliphate (661-750). Ṭuwais al-Madanī is one example (al-Isphahani, 2004, vol. 3, p. 32). Another explanation of the term *ṣaut* from this period comes from the 13th century lexicographer Ibn Manzur who stated simply, "every type of singing is *ṣaut*" (1997, vol. 2, p. 58). This interpretation appears intentionally unspecific, as it does not commit, nor even relate the concept of *ṣaut* to any genre of song, composition or rhythm in Arabic music at that time. Moreover, al-Isphahani's *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, which was written in the 10th century, shows that there was indeed a diversity in the origin of older *ṣaut* songs. Songs were from varying regions of the broader Arab world, and some may have been from different Byzantine melodies (*rūmī*), or influenced by music from the monastic tradition (*ruhbānī*) (al-Isphahani, 2004, vol. 5, p. 180; vol. 23, p. 82). Therefore, it seems safe to assume that *ṣaut* in old Arab music was equal to the term "song" in contemporary terminology.

Arabian Peninsula until early 20th century

Once Baghdād fell after the siege in 1258, the term *ṣaut* began to gradually disappear from usage within important Arab centres, including Baghdād, Damascus and Cairo. Whilst sources do not mention a particular period during which the term *ṣaut* disappeared completely from the music of these centres, it is obvious that by the 19th

century, musical sources such as *Safīnat al-Mulk Wa Nafīsat al-Fulk* by Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'īl 'Omar Shihāb al-Dīn (d. 1857) and *al-Risālah al-Shihābiyah Fi al-Sinā'a al-Mūsīqiyah* by Mikhail Mashāqah (d. 1888), did not refer to ṣaut to denote song. However, the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula and those lands surrounding it continued to use ṣaut broadly as a musical term until probably 1930s or 1940s. This was the case in Saudi Arabia, specifically in the Ḥejāz region (al-'Ammārī, 2001, p.126) but also in Yemen (al-Kāff, 2000, p.178) and in Oman (Shawqī, 1989, p.307). Recent studies of the music of these regions do not indicate the current presence of the term ṣaut, with the exception of Oman, where musicians use it to a limited extent. Currently, the term ṣaut is used on a small scale in Yemen, mostly among the older generations. See Fig. 2.1.

اسطوانات   التاج العدني

احمد عوض الجراش

٢٧ (صوت صنعائي)

هذا كلام لست اسمعه	قالوا حبيبك خان فقلت لهم
والله ليس يـنـزعـه	بيغون نزع الحب منهم لا
العدل والانصاف مشرعه	عهدي بحبي ثابت ابداً
نصح "سقيم لست اسمعه	يا انا صحي لا تنصحن فذا
الحب اين أوقعه	با سادتي اسمحو لي فذا
تحت الرعود فذاك موقعه	قد كنت اجري مجاري البرق
ابن ما كنت أسعى له	لو كان قلبي يهيم به لا
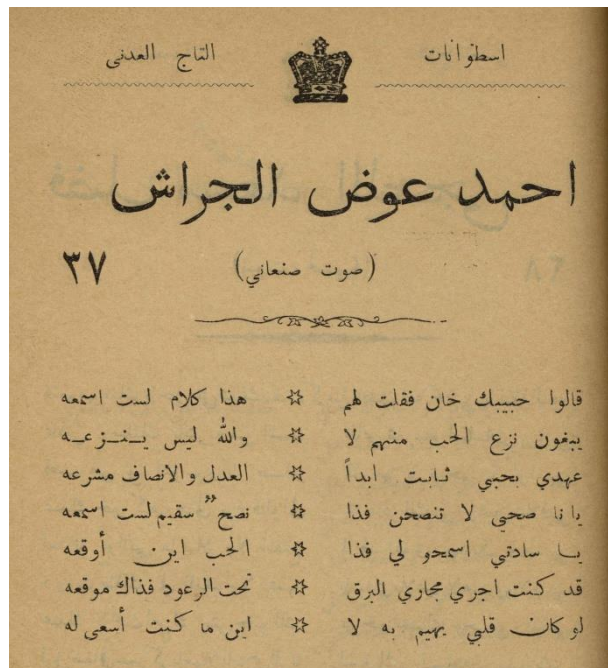
Fig. 2.1. The "ṣaut" term in Arabic that appeared on the catalogue of Adan Crown Record Company.

In spite of the lack of discussion in recent studies of ṣaut with regard to the music of these regions, the term was in use and indeed printed on the labels of many Yemeni 78rpm records that were published in the late 1930s. These supply enough detail for

researchers to infer what the features of the term ṣaut were, as understood in the Yemeni music of the period. The details that I have obtained from the Yemeni records imply that the term ṣaut meant any Yemeni song which carried Yemeni melodies, poetry and rhythm (alṢālḥī, 2012, pp. 60-62).

It is worth noting that many Yemeni performers in the 1930s and 1940s were fond of, and impressed by the ṣaut genre which came from Kuwait. A number of them, such as Aḥmad 'Obaid Qa'ṭabī and Faḍel bin 'Alī, recorded ṣaut that came from Kuwait on 78rpm records or in private recordings. The evidence shows that Yemeni performers referred to these using the term "Kuwaiti" in Arabic and sometimes in English. But they never referred to these Kuwaiti songs using the term ṣaut, which they had reserved for Yemeni repertoire of all kinds, see Fig. 2.2.

Fig. 2.2. The 'Quwaiti' term or Kuwaiti in Arabic that appeared on a Yemeni 78rpm record.

Bahrain and Kuwait: mid 19ᵗʰ century to present day

Unlike the broad definition given to the term ṣaut in Abbasid or even Yemeni music, currently in Bahrain and Kuwait ṣaut relates to a specific genre of singing. According to existing studies such as *The Kuwaiti rhythms of folkloric songs* by

Ghannām al-Deikān (1998) and *Kuwaiti Songs* by Yūsuf Dūkhī (1984), it is a performance by a solo male singer, accompanied by *'ūd* and *mirwās*. It is associated with three rhythms: *ṣaut 'arabī* (six beats), *ṣaut shāmī* (four beats), and *ṣaut khayālī* (twelve beats). In addition, there are two more singing forms, *istimā'* and *khitām*, neither of which, although forming part of the *ṣaut* repertoire, are associated exclusively with *ṣaut*.

However, this standard description neglects the manner in which elements in *ṣaut* are relatively unstable and open to change, rendering the practice of *ṣaut* a more complex and ambiguous affair. It is not adequate to define the genre through its rhythms and instruments, and in fact doing so describes just one particular practice of *ṣaut*. By application of such a definition, it might be possible to take a song that is not of a *ṣaut* type, perform it with the relevant rhythms and instruments, and call it *ṣaut*. These elements cannot constitute the makings of a *ṣaut*, even if they is appear so to inexpert listeners. At the same time, it is difficult to associate the concept of *ṣaut* with the inherited repertoire that is known in Bahrain and Kuwait, because most of the *ṣaut* pieces, in both shape and content, are changeable and unstable. It is an exceptionally fluid genre.

One further use of the term *ṣaut* refers to songs that appeared in Kuwait in the late 1950s. These songs, which are commonly referred to as *ṣaut mulaḥḥan* (composed) or *ṣaut muṭawwar* (developed), were performed by large ensembles and performed by men and women, whether as a solo performance or a choral ensemble. The music arrangement and style of composing of *ṣaut mulaḥḥan* or *muṭawwar* was mainly influenced by Egyptian music of the time. However, these new compositions were

still based on the rhythms of *ṣaut shāmī* and *'arabī* from the traditional *ṣaut*

repertoire in Kuwait.

Thus, the question remains as to how one can adequately define the genre of *ṣaut*. I

start by clarifying how the performers practice and think within the *ṣaut* repertoire.

An appropriate definition of *ṣaut* in Bahrain and Kuwait is not, in my opinion,

possible without this dimension. To refine our understanding of *ṣaut*, two principal

notions are central, namely, fluidity in constituent elements and *ṣaut* community

knowledge. I argue that research strategies must revisit and add to the components

discussed in earlier studies, but also find a new definition based on the style of

performance and aesthetic values in the *ṣaut* community.

Ṣaut performers require a great deal of experience to perform in ways considered by

the community to be accurate. The community appreciates (and thereby defines) *ṣaut*

through three main aspects. The first is the unique way of pronouncing words and

lyrics which is mostly not in accordance with Arabic grammar. The second is the

distinctive voice pattern that is required. It is described as being manly, strong,

harsh, and it is sometimes delivered in a husky and nasal voice. The final aspect is

the practice of variation and improvisation, which will be discussed later on in this

dissertation. All these aesthetic elements are involved in performing a typical *ṣaut*,

and contribute to its fluidity.

Equally important to note is that the principles must be acquired through practice and

observation, rather than through direct training or studying. The singer who

combines all this is usually described as having *jā'dah*, meaning that he has acquired

the skills of a master singer. Therefore, the form and structure of *ṣaut* in Bahrain and Kuwait is immensely variable, and the elements that control such variability are the qualifications of the performer, which need to be compatible with a specific type of voice, pronunciation, and development. The singer is always a man, never a woman.

In conclusion, the term *ṣaut* in Arabic has had many linguistic and musical connotations, but those in the music field can be limited to three main usages. Firstly, the word referred to any type of song from the Abbasid caliphate period. Secondly, *ṣaut* was for a certain period in Yemen, any type of Yemeni song. Thirdly, in Bahrain and Kuwait, *ṣaut* is a specific local music genre, this being the most recent use. I have suggested above that this meaning can be elaborated upon through discussion of elements of community aesthetics.

The history of ṣaut

There are many barriers that make investigation of *ṣaut* history a challenge, primarily because of the lack of evidence and contradictions in narrator accounts. In addition, many studies in field of *ṣaut* history are influenced by nationalist ideology or by politics whilst misinterpretation of terms adds another problematic obstacle. This is, therefore, a brief study to discuss the most prominent hypotheses and reveal some misinterpretations through a few particular examples, which cast some doubt on the accuracy of these theories. In addition, a new hypothesis is suggested in this section, which is based on a discussion of the elements of *ṣaut* as a guide to uncovering its history, and which is consistent with the early narrators' statements in Kuwait.

Ṣaut and Abbasid music: Aḥmad 'Alī's study

One hypothesis says that the melodies and rhythms of *ṣaut* are inherited from the music of the Abbasid Empire, which ended in 1517, and have been preserved from that time in Bahrain and Kuwait. It is the most popular hypothesis about the origin of *ṣaut* amongst researchers both inside and outside the region, for example Habib Hassan Touma (1996), Ḥamad al-Habbād (2007) and Ibrāhīm Ḥabīb (2003). Most of the researchers rely on the term *ṣaut* used by Abbasid musicians and theoreticians and found in their music books, (for instance *kitāb al-adwār fī al-mūsīqā* (c. 1236) by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī) to make this correlation between *ṣaut* music of Bahrain and Kuwait today and the music of the Abbasid period. The existence of the term *ṣaut* in the Gulf lexicon and Abbasid music texts created a certainty amongst the scholars about the authenticity of this relationship (Marhūn, 2012). Thus, the scholars have not gone far in examining this relationship to support or refute this theory. Ibrāhīm Ḥabīb for example states that all the *ṣaut* melodies in Bahrain are composed by Bin Fāris, and that only one *ṣaut 'arabī* melody has been inherited from the Abbasid period (2003, p. 17). Ḥabīb did not discuss how he came to realise that this *ṣaut* been inherited from Abbasid music so one cannot examine his conclusions further. However, it is arguably unsafe to attribute the entire genre of *ṣaut* in Bahrain and Kuwait to the Abbasid music simply because the term *ṣaut* has appeared in the vocabulary of both musics. As has been mentioned before, the term *ṣaut* in the 19th and 20th centuries was known in different regions of the Arabian Peninsula, such as Yemen, Oman, and Ḥejāz, and in each region the term *ṣaut* was associated with different types of music and rhythms. Perhaps more significantly,

such a relationship would be impossible to definitively confirm or deny, as no one knows the exact nature of Abbasid music, practised many hundreds of years ago.

Aḥmad ʿAlī is the only scholar who believed in this hypothesis and tried to go beyond the nominal similarity to provide new historical evidence that would support this connection. His method was to study the rhythmic system of Abbasid music and compare it with the rhythms of ṣaut nowadays. ʿAlī studied two books from the Abbasid period, *ajzāʾ khabariyah fī al-mūsīqā* by Yaʿqūb al-Kindī (d. 873), and *al-adwār fī al-mūsīqā* by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī (d. 1294), and interpreted or decoded the transcription of rhythms in these books. His findings, he argued, found similarities to back his theory. However, there are a few observations and matters of contention that put ʿAlī's findings into doubt. For example, al-Urmawī used different phrases to refer to the *al-hazaj* rhythm in his time, which is *te-na ne-n te ne-n te ne-n- te-n*. ʿAlī interpreted the phrases as follows: *te-na* = one quaver + one quaver rest, *te* = one quaver, *te-n* = one crotchet, and *ne-n* = one crotchet rest (ʿAlī, 1980, p.24). ʿAlī noticed that the description of *al-hazaj* in al-Urmawī's book shows that it contains twelve quavers, and ʿAlī distributed the high and low beats (which known in Arabic music as *tek* and *dum* or *ṭaraf* and *baṭen* in ṣaut music) as he wished, because al-Urmawī did not specify which beat is high or low in his transcriptions. As a result, ʿAlī argued this was proof that *al-hazaj* is similar to the *ṣaut arabī* rhythm in Bahrain and Kuwait, see table. 2.1.

Al-hazaj (al-Urmawī) in Arabic	ثَنَ	نَنْ	تَ	نَنْ	تَ	نَنْ	ثَنْ
Al-hazaj (al-Urmawī) in English	Te-Na	Ne-N	Te	Ne-N	Te	Ne-N	Te-N
'Alī's explanation of _al-hazaj_	♪𝄾	𝄾	♪	𝄾	♪	𝄾	♩
Ṣaut arabī rhythm	♩	𝄾	♪	𝄾	♪	𝄾	♩

Table. 2.1. Al-hazaj as appeared in al-Urmawī's book and 'Alī's explanation.

However, to do this 'Alī assumed that _na_, the quaver rest in the first phrase and _n_, the quaver rest in the second phrase are equal, which I find illogical since to be so, they should have been represented as the same: _na_ and _na_ or _n_ and _n_. Ibn Zaila (d. 1044), an Abbasid music theoretician and the author of _al-kāfī fī al-mūsīqā_ book, refers to the people who think that _na_ and _n_ are equal and states that "he is wrong who thinks that _te-n_ is a double of _te_, because the double of _te_ is _te-na_" (1964, p.47). Furthermore, Farmer indicates that there is no great difference in time between _te-n_ and _te_ (2005, p.740). Thus, as _na_ is not equal to _n_, it is impossible to accept 'Alī's assumption that deals with _al-hazaj_ as twelve equal beats, rendering it not a match for the _ṣaut arabī_ rhythm.

The origin of ṣaut: Yūsuf Dūkhī

At first glance, the topic of Dūkhī's theory is slightly similar to that which was proposed by 'Alī. This is because Dūkhī emphasised that music of the Abbasid Empire had a real impact on everything in _ṣaut_ in Bahrain and Kuwait and that every element in _ṣaut_ can be found in an Abbasid music source, such as terminology, melodies, and rhythms. He did not imply, however, that _ṣaut_ is a direct descendent of Abbasid music rather, that _ṣaut_ is a new genre founded in Kuwait because of the knowledge and musical genius of 'Abdullah al-Faraj. After his rigorous and

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profound study of musical theories in the Abbasid music books, al-Faraj decrypted the musical symbols and terms, and revived or recreated the Abbasid music that had disappeared. Subsequently, al-Faraj established a new local form of music, which he named *ṣaut*, based on knowledge and experience that he gained through his wide reading (Dūkhī, 1984, p.46).

The approach of Dūkhī is completely different to that of 'Alī. Dūkhī focused on comparing or contrasting musical terms and looked into the linguistic issues cited in Abbasid music books, rather than analysing and interpreting the rhythms and music symbols of the period. This section is intended to re-read Dūkhī's hypothesis and shed light on the issues that may have been misinterpreted.

In his method, Dūkhī refers to a number of elements in *ṣaut* and states that they were known in the Abbasid sources, but he does not clarify how or why these contemporary elements have this correlation with ancient Abbasid music. Some of his statements are entirely free from any evidence or discussion that might enhance his argument or prove the existence of a connection. For instance, according to Dūkhī, the rhythm of what is known nowadays as *ṣaut khayālī* was known also in the Abbasid period and was mentioned in the Abbasid book *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by Abu al-Faraj al-Isphahānī. *Ṣaut khayālī* in that period appeared through many different names, such as *hazaj yamānī, hazaj ṭanbūrī, hazaj khafīf, and mākhūrī*, which is, according to Dūkhī, the most renowned term. Dūkhī states that 'Abdullah al-Faraj in the19[th] century gave the *mākhūrī* rhythm a new name, that of *khayālī* (Dūkhī, 1984, pp. 175-178). He did not however offer any explanation or discussion to justify this assertion.

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In different examples, Dūkhī tries to use terms that could not be found in the *ṣaut* community or sources and compare them with similar terms found in Abbasid sources. He indicates that *radda* is a singing section that can be found in *ṣaut shāmī*, and compares it with a melody that has a *radda* in *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Dūkhī, 1984, p. 136). However, *radda* is a term that is unknown amongst the *ṣaut* performers. In addition, what Dūkhī calls *radda* in *ṣaut shāmī* is in fact a known type of *tawshīḥa*.

In a few examples, Dūkhī shows that he has misspelled terms that have appeared in the Abbasid sources, which would make them similar to terms that are known in *ṣaut* today. Dūkhī states that term *rawwāsīn* appears in Abbasid book *al-Kāfī Fī al-Mūsīqā*, and it is similar to the term *imrawsīn*, the group of *mirwās* players in *ṣaut* (Dūkhī, 1984, p. 199). However, what appear in the book *al-Kāfī Fī al-Mūsīqā* are the terms *rāwisīn* and *rawishīn*, which are different from what Dūkhī mentions (Ibn Zaila, 1964, p. 66, p. 70). Additionally, in Bahrain and Kuwait, performers and listeners use the term *imrawsah* to refer to the group of mirwās players, not *rawwāsīn* a term found only in Dūkhī's research.

In this example, Dūkhī misunderstands what he found in an Abbasid music source, and draws a conclusion that is based on an incorrect premise. One of the most famous melodies in *ṣaut* repertoire is *ṣaut hindī*, because it has Indian elements and influences. Dūkhī believes that al-Faraj composed this *ṣaut*, when he found a detailed description of this kind of *ṣaut* in *Kitāb al-Adwār fī al-Mūsīqā*. The phrase that Dūkhī found is "we will set the numbers of beats opposite every note in the Indian font". Dūkhī comments on this phrase and says al-Faraj had read this phrase

and recreated it using his capabilities with regard to the Hindi language, in order to develop the *ṣaut hindī* type (Dūkhī, 1984, p.218). However, the phrase seems to have had a different meaning that is not related to Indian music. Al-Urmawī indicates that he wants to clarify that every note would be accompanied by numbers to explain the number of beats. These numbers would be written in Hindu-Arabic numerals. In fact, Arabs use the term Indian numbers Because of the Hindi-Arabic numeral system (Consortium, 2006, p.272). Furthermore, the text did not refer explicitly to Indian music or melodies.

A popular theory: 'Abdullah al-Faraj's crucial role in the emergence of ṣaut
According to a widespread belief, *ṣaut* was created in Kuwait by 'Abdullah al-Faraj in the mid-19th century. Three main sources support the idea, namely the statements of early narrators, and the influence of two types of music on *ṣaut*, Indian and Yemeni.

It is instructive to approach this matter with a basic account of al-Faraj, who was born to a wealthy family in Kuwait in 1836. His father, Muḥammad bin Faraj, was one of the most famous Kuwaiti merchants of his era who gained his wealth from maritime trade in India. His mother was Khadīja bint Ibrāhīm al-Dauserī. In his childhood, al-Faraj learnt the basics of Islam and the Arabic language under Aḥmad bin Abduljalīl al-Ṭabṭabāeī before settling in India at the age of fourteen at the request of his father who was living there permanently (al-Faraj, 1919, p.6). There, he lived in the centre of old Bombay in an area called Arab Street where the Arab community resided (al-Ibrāhīm, 2012). Al-Faraj enrolled in an Indian school and became fluent in Hindi (or maybe Urdu) and basic English (Dūkhī, 1971,

Introduction, p.24). His father invited Yemeni tutors to teach him the classical Arabic language (al-Ibrāhīm, 2005, p.2).

The long residency of al-Faraj in India influenced his nature and behaviour. He learned different arts that were uncommon in Kuwaiti society at that time such as drawing and calligraphy, especially the *Lahore* script and Persian script *Nastalik* (al-Faraj, 2002, p.18). In addition, at the age of seventeen, al-Faraj started to write poems in different patterns of poetry (al-Faraj, 1919, p.6), such as the classical (*faṣīḥ*), colloquial (*nabaṭī*), and few poems in the Yemeni type (*ḥumainī*), which is commonly used in *ṣaut* songs. His colloquial poem collection was published posthumously in 1919 in India by his cousin Khāled al-Faraj (d. 1954). His poetry shows his broad knowledge of Islam, Arab history, astronomy, and mathematics. He was considered the most prominent Kuwaiti figure of poetry in his period, and many poets refer to him as a one of the three most important names in the history of *nabaṭī* poetry (al-Ibrāhīm, 2005, p.1, p.8).

At the beginning of his musical education experience, al-Faraj learnt Indian instruments and music under a professional Indian musician (al-Faraj, 1919, p.6), and he learnt how to transcribe the music (al-Faraj, 2002, p.17). Due to his interaction with the musicians of the Yemeni community in Bombay, al-Faraj began to learn Yemeni songs and the *'ūd* ('Alī, 1980, p.5). At that stage, he began to formulate his own approach to music, which would become fully developed in Kuwait, and named it *ṣaut* (Dūkhī, 1971, Introduction, p.25). In 1854, his father passed away as a result of a heart attack. 'Abdullah al-Faraj and his only sister inherited an ample fortune. Nonetheless, al-Faraj lost most of his money within a

few years as he tended to spend his money on excessive pleasures, and neglected his business. Later he returned to Kuwait with limited funds, and began to settle down and focus on his poetic and musical activities (al-Faraj, 2002, p.17). Al-Faraj's only daughter, whom he begot from his slave, married Sheikh Saūd 'Abdullah al-Ṣabāḫ, the Prince of Failaka, a Kuwaiti island (al-Kharrāz, 1966). On the 15th of July 1901, al-Faraj passed away in Kuwait as a result of a chest infection (al-Qinā'ī, 2006, p.7; al-Faraj, 2002, p.17; al-Faraj, 1919, p.6).

The name of 'Abdullah al-Faraj as a father, elder, and creator of *ṣaut* was present in local discourse among many people of his generation and his legacy continues some generations after his death in 1901. Thus, the Kuwaiti author and historian Khāled Sa'ūd al-Zaid (d. 2001), refers to al-Faraj as the real founder of the urban music of Kuwait (al-Ibrāhīm, 2005, p.6). Conversely the scholars who believe that *ṣaut* is very old and inherited from Abbasid music have tried to find the similarity between the terminologies of *ṣaut* and Abbasid music but are unable to find any evidence that prove the existence of *ṣaut* before the al-Faraj period.

Most of the indications about the important role of al-Faraj come from Kuwaitis, supplemented by a few Bahrainis. The prominent Kuwaiti historian Aḥmad al-Beshr al-Rūmī, for instance, states that al-Faraj is the father of *ṣaut* songs in Kuwait. Aḥmad 'Alī added that al-Faraj was the most prominent musician among the generation of *ṣaut* pioneers ('Alī, 1980, p. 5; p.28). Poul Rovsing Olsen, a Danish scholar who investigates Bahraini music of from 1958 until the 1970s, indicates in his book *Music in Bahrain* that *ṣaut* appeared because of al-Faraj. Seemingly Olsen transmits this point of view from Bahraini narrators (Olsen, 2005, p. 100).

Within the local community there are many references to al-Faraj by narrators. In 1966, Jum'a Burḥamah was invited to talk in a documentary programme about his encounter with al-Faraj on Kuwait TV. Burḥamah states that he had the opportunity to meet al-Faraj in 1893 in Yūsufān in Iraq, when he was there with a Kuwaiti ship for trading purposes. According to Burḥamah, al-Faraj played ṣaut for him and the ship's crew every day for a period of 16 days. The interviewer asked him: did you have any idea about any singers before 'Abdullah Al-Faraj? Burḥamah answered that he had never known any other singers of ṣaut before Al-Faraj, but later knew Khāled al-Baker and Ibrāhīm bin Yaq'ūb (d. 1928), who appeared after al-Faraj (Burḥamah, 1966).

Othmān al-Kharrāz, who accompanied al-Faraj in the last few years of his life, mentioned that all the ṣaut singers in al-Faraj's time were his students; they visited al-Faraj to listen and learn ṣaut from him. These include Khāled al-Baker, Abdulazīz Muḥammad Ṣarām and Yāsīn Buṭallā' al-Qinā'ī (al-Kharrāz, 1966).

Al-Rūmī (d. 1982), who has long been considered a specialist in the subject of the music of al-Faraj and ṣaut history, states that he began an investigation into the history of the 'ūd in Kuwait in the 1920s and 1930s by interviewing many elderly Kuwaitis. He said that all of them emphasised that al-Faraj was the first 'ūd player in Kuwait ('Alī, 1980, p.5). However, in another source, al-Rūmī says that there may have been other musicians before al-Faraj, but we know nothing of them (al-Rūmī, 1971, p.9). This statement from al-Rūmī seems to be a personal opinion that is not based on evidence from his research. In a different reference, al-Rūmī made clear

statements about the emergence of *ṣaut* and its relation to 'Abdullah al-Faraj. He points out, firstly, that al-Faraj was fond of Indian music, and learnt Yemeni music through Yemeni musicians who were based in India. Upon his return to Kuwait, al-Faraj established *ṣaut*, with a Yemeni musical influence. Al-Rūmī added that al-Faraj worked to modify and add new elements to his music to create a new genre of music that was different from Yemeni and other music types. Furthermore, other song types had already existed in Kuwait before the al-Faraj period, such as wedding songs, *khammārī*, and labour songs, but the songs that we know today and call *ṣaut* appeared during the al-Faraj era (Dūkhī, 1971, Introduction, p.25, p.31).

The Kuwaiti singer 'Abdullah Faḍālah (d. 1967) said that many elderly Kuwaitis told him that *ṣaut* melodies had been composed by al-Faraj, and that he was the first singer in Kuwait (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter II, Pupils , p.5).

On the other hand, the Bahraini historian Mubārak al-'Ammārī believes that *ṣaut* is not a new genre, and that it was known in Kuwait before 1766, and in Bahrain since 1783 (al-'Ammārī, 1991, p. 244). He tried to provide evidence of the existence of *ṣaut* before al-Faraj. One of the most important findings in his research about its history is the discovery of Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad, a Bahraini singer who presented a musical performance on Umm an-Na'sān Island in Bahrain in February 1826, before al-Faraj was born. The poet, Abduljalīl al-Ṭabṭabā'ī (d. 1853), was one of the attendees of Bin Aḥmad, and documented this session and praised the singer, in the following verses:

In the afternoon, our singer Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad came

He is better than his namesake[5] and his son because of his skills

He became a master of music, he knows all the songs we request

According to al-ʿAmmārī, these verses are evidence of the existence of *ṣaut* and the *ʿūd* before the time of al-Faraj (2002, pp.16-17). However, there is no explicit mention of *ṣaut* or any specific kind of music in the poem. There is also no mention of the *ʿūd* or any other musical instrument. Instead, the poet is talking generally about the music and singer, which could be any kind of music and instrument. Al-ʿAmmārī seemingly confuses the meaning of singing and music with *ṣaut* and *ʿūd*. In the Gulf, there many pieces of evidence to show that there were songs and singing before al-Faraj. For example Muhammad bin Laʿbūn, one of the most important singers in the region music history, died in Kuwait in 1831, before the birth of al-Faraj. Bin Laʿbūn was a performer of *khammārī* and founder of *laʿbūnī*, which consists of only percussion instruments, without *ʿud* or any other melodic instrument. Therefore, we may say many kinds of singing were known in the area before al-Faraj, but not *ṣaut*.

In addition, one must consider one more observation which could clarify the type of Bin Aḥmad's singing. The poetry collection book of Abduljalīl al-Ṭabṭabā'ī shows that there is one more verse talking about Bin Aḥmad, which was not referred to and was ignored by al-ʿAmmārī. This fourth verse is important because it defines the nationality and the musical background of the singer. The verse says:

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5 - The poet refers to the most prominent Abbasid singers in the Arab history, Ibrāhīm al-Mūṣelī (d. 805) and his son Isḥāq (d. 850), who were Persian origin and lived in Iraq (Nuʿmān, 2006, p.61).

From Barmak family, grew up in Baṣra, he has a tribe there and a family (al-Ṭabṭabā'ī, 1965, pp.34-44).

In this verse, al-Ṭabṭabā'ī states clearly that the singer has grown up in Baṣra, Iraq, and he has a family there. This verse conflicts with al-Ammārī's statement that the singer and his type of songs are of Bahraini origin.

Thus, at this stage al–Faraj remains a central figure in any attempt to create a history for *ṣaut*. One important strand in his legacy deserves drawing out further, namely his absorption of musical practices from outside Kuwait. India is the first location to consider but Yemeni traditions may have played an even more powerful role.

Ṣaut's possible debt to India

Viewed analytically, the Indian influences are manifest in three different aspects*:* melodic, poetic, and vocal. As will be discussed below, historically an instrument was a further influence, namely the *'ūd hindī*.

The most obvious traces are the terms *ṣaut hindī* and *ṣaut hindustani*, and both are known in Kuwait only. There is a common belief amongst performers that these terms refer to *ṣaut* pieces that contain an Indian effect, for instance, *ṣaut hindī Malak al-Gharām*, and *ṣaut hindustani Fī Hawā Badrī* (al-Baker, n.d.). The *maqām* of *ṣaut hindī* and *hindustani* is *'ajam* (known also as *'ajam 'ushairān*, see Fig. 2.3), which has never been associated in *ṣaut* repertoire with another term. In other words, melodies composed in the *'ajam* mode are always classified under the term *ṣaut hindī* or *hindustani*.
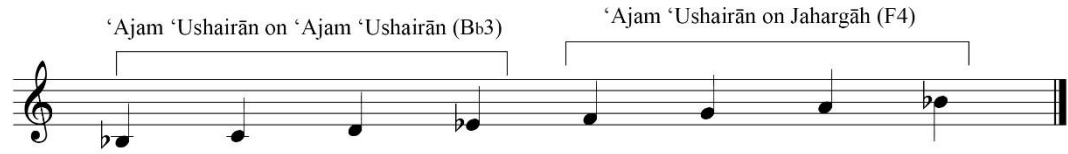
Fig. 2.3. Scale of the maqām 'ajam 'ushairān on Bb3.

Although the language of text in *ṣaut* is Arabic, in rare cases, the *ṣaut* lyrics consist of words in Hindi or Urdu within Arabic verses. For example, the poem used in *ṣaut Lī Shādenun,* (a *ṣaut hindī* form), is in *fuṣḥā* (classical Arabic) but has words in Hindi or Urdu (Al-Kuwaiti, 1937). In the *ṣaut hindustani Fī Hawā Badrī* performed by Yusuf al-Baker, he performs an entire verse in Hindi or Urdu within the poem. *Ṣaut bulbulah* is an example that contains verses in an Indian language (al-Kuwaiti, n.d.). However, it differs in certain features compared to the previously mentioned examples, and is not described as *ṣaut hindī*, but is based on *maqām ḥijāz* (see Fig. 6.2.), while the other examples that contain Indian words and verses are based on *maqām 'ajam* (see Fig. 2.3).

The use of vowels in *ṣaut* is quite different from that which is known and used in Arabic and local music. The most common vowel sound is *āh*, which can be found in many types of Arabic music and is used as a link between the verses or as a prelude to songs, for example, *muwashaḥ Āh Mur al-Tajannī* by Ṣabāḥ Fakhrī (TarabAseel12, 2008). In Gulf, the *āh* sound is also common in various types of song, for instance in the sea songs of Kuwait (Dūkhī, 1984, p.315). Only in the *ṣaut* genre is the *āh* sound, used as a linking word or for ornamentation, an uncommon vowel amongst old and new *ṣaut* performers; rather the common vowels are *oh* and

eh. This tradition of using specific types of vowels that are not popular in the rest of

the Gulf of other Arabic regions, is probably a result of the influence of a different

musical culture. Indeed, these kinds of sound or vowel are known widely and used

regularly in the tradition of Indian singing (Manuel, 1989, p.112).

As mentioned earlier, most of the Indian features in *ṣaut* are practised only in

Kuwait. Bahraini performers have never tried to perform *ṣaut hindī* and rarely use

Indian words in their singing. The vowel sound is the only Indian feature that is

known and used in the *ṣaut* singing in Bahrain as well as Kuwait, for example, *Khū*

'Elwī Seja' (Bin Walid, 1932), and *'Ala Dam'o 'Aynī* (El Fares, 1932).

The question of Yemeni influence

Few researchers in Yemen have claimed that the origin of *ṣaut* is from Yemen (Nājī,

1983). Certainly, the evidence shows Yemeni influence is much greater than Indian

music. However, the old Yemeni sources reveal that *ṣaut* was defined as a new

music genre that arrived from Kuwait, as will be discussed broadly later. During his

residence in India, al-Faraj had the opportunity to learn *'ūd* and music from Yemeni

musicians who lived there. This may explain the Yemeni traces in *ṣaut* that have

been connected in the sources with al-Faraj ('Alī, 1980, p.5; Dūkhī, 1971,

Introduction, p.25), but not explored in depth.

Many terms are common to both Yemeni music and *ṣaut* in Bahrain and Kuwait, for

example *tawshīḥ*, which in the *ṣan'ānī* genre is simply a section that is different in

melody and length from other sections in the *ṣan'ānī* song (Ghānem, 1987, p.39). In

ṣaut, *tawshīḥ* or *tawshīḥa* is a section that is different in melody and length or form

of text (al-Rifāʿī, 1985, p.343). *Tawshīḥ* or *tawshīḥa* in both *ṣanʿānī* and *ṣaut*

vocabulary have similarities as concepts, but the difference is in the function,

position, and practice of them within the genre. Another common term is *zifān*,

which is the name of *ṣaut* dance, and *zafīn*, which also means a type of dance known

in Yemen (Nājī, 1983, p.82).

One of the most important terms that could be found in both *ṣaut* and Yemen is in

fact, *ṣaut*, the name of the genre in Bahrain and Kuwait, but known in Yemen as a

musical term. Many Yemeni records show that the term was spreading among

Yemeni musicians in the 1930s, however, there are no studies or references that

clarify its meaning further.

I investigated a number of Yemeni records with labels that cite the term *ṣaut*, for

example, *Ya Kaheel Tarfak - ṣaut laḥjī* (al-Laḥjī, 1930s), *Ya Ghart Allah - ṣaut*

ʿadanī (Ghabbah, 1930s), *Min Yom Fragak - ṣaut ḥejāzī* (Abdulghanī, 1930s), and

Ibn Sombul Yegool - ṣaut yafeʿī (al-Jarrāsh, 1930s). See Fig. 2.4.

Fig. 2.4. Ya Agab Min Da (ṣaut ʿadanī) by ʿOmar Ghabbah.

Upon observation, it became clear that there are no specific methods, elements or structures in these records to distinguish the Yemeni ṣaut. The type of lyrics sung in the records that I got the opportunity to investigate were Yemeni colloquial. The melodic and percussion instruments and rhythms are commonly used in other Yemeni songs. The records do not present ṣaut as a separate genre, instead, it is always accompanied with the name of a Yemeni town or region, such as ṣaut ʿadanī or laḥjī which could signify a melody from the towns of Aden or Laḥj. In addition, the ṣaut term was sometimes accompanied with the name of a region from outside Yemen, for instance, ṣaut ḥejāzī which could mean a melody from the Ḥejāz region in Saudi Arabia. Thus, ṣaut could be an inherited term that refers to any Yemeni melody in Yemen.

The *mirwās* is an element that is known both as an instrument and a musical term in both *ṣaut* and Yemeni music. It is the only essential percussion instrument in *ṣaut*. In Yemen, its uses are for folk music, and it is characterised by its size, which is larger than that of the *ṣaut*. The technique and rhythms of the Yemeni *mirwās* are completely different from those practised in *ṣaut* (al-Suraieʿ, 2011).

The classical Yemeni poem genre, *ḥumainī*, is known only in *ṣaut songs* in the Gulf whilst it cannot be found in any other kind of music in the Gulf. It is worth mentioning that al-Faraj was the first poet from Kuwait and probably the Gulf region to write poems in *ḥumainī* style (al-Faraj, 2002).

Furthermore, a number of *istimā'* songs in Kuwait are influenced by old Yemeni songs, and may even be reproductions of them , for example, *Yā Ẓabyat al-Bān* (al-Baker, n.d.). Another feature that is an obvious Yemeni influence is the seven beat rhythm, which is found only in *istimā'* pieces. No other music types in the Gulf consist of a seven beats rhythm or any other odd meter. Whilst this rhythm is popular in both the Yemen and India, it seems that the influence on *ṣaut* has come from Yemen as it appears specifically in the melodies that have a Yemeni character in their composition, for instance, *Ḥusnahā Shalla Rūḥī* (al-Baker, n.d.).

The method of employing all these terms, instruments, and rhythms in Yemen is completely different from that of the *ṣaut* method. In other words, Yemeni and *ṣaut* music share the same concepts but are dissimilar in practice.

Conclusions

This Chapter discusses the different meanings of the term *ṣaut* in both the Arabic literature and in music through different historical stages and in different regions. The discussion shows that *ṣaut* has different meanings in music, such as in the case of any song in the Abbasid era and a Yemeni song in Yemen. Only in the Gulf region, is *ṣaut* a specific type of music that has its own regulations and principles that make it differ from other forms of Arab music.

Additionally, the Chapter consists of an initial discussion about the three main theories that deal with the history of *ṣaut*. Due to the assumption about the similarity of the term *ṣaut* with regard to Abbasid music, most of the *ṣaut* studies discuss the

connection between the music of *ṣaut* in Bahrain and Kuwait with Abbasid music. This encouraged Aḥmad ʿAlī to study, interpret, and correlate the rhythm systems that have been described in Abbasid music books as *ṣaut arabī* and *shāmī* rhythms. However, ʿAlī's methodology with regard to the interpretation of the Abbasid rhythms is questionable, because it is inconsistent, and includes doubtful explanations of the Abbasid theoretician Ibn Zaila in terms of the principles of analysing the Abbasid rhythm system.

Yūsuf Dūkhī' however states that *ṣaut* music has been found by ʿAbdullah al-Faraj following his efforts to interpret and decode Abbasid music. His hypothesis relies more on the etymology of the musical and linguistic terms that are common in *ṣaut* and in Abbasid music. Dūkhī encountered difficulties in clearly delineating and defining the elements of Abbasid music correctly.

According to the early narrators, *ṣaut* emerged as a new genre in Kuwait in the 1850s, through the efforts of al-Faraj. Therefore, the third hypothesis attempts to reveal the elements that have a connection with the music that influenced al-Faraj. However, this Yemeni connection is historically problematic.

CHAPTER III

NEW ṢAUT HISTORY: FORMAL ELEMENTS

Ṣaut texts

The texts of many Arabic song genres, such as *daur* in Egypt and *basta* in Iraq, are associated with a particular melody, and it is rare to find a melody that could be performed using two different sets of lyrics. In contrast, despite the text carrying significant importance within *ṣaut* repertoire, the relationship between the text and the melody in *ṣaut* is arguably loose. In the tradition of *ṣaut*, most *ṣaut* songs are not associated with any particular poem, and each melody could be performed using different lyrics. In addition, there are many poems which have more popularity amongst the performers which could be performed in the context of different *ṣaut* melodies. The text can be performed on different *ṣaut* rhythmic types, *ṣaut* ʿ*arabī*, *shāmī*, and sometimes during the *tawshīḥa*. For instance, the poem *al-Bāriḥa Fī ʿAtīm* is utilised in many melodies of *ṣaut* and through various forms e.g. on *shāmī* by ʿAwaḍ Dūkhī (1970s), on ʿ*arabī* by ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti (el-Koueti, 1929), and as a *tawshīḥa* in a *ṣaut* ʿ*arabī* by Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti (1937).

However, the principle of using different poems in the same *ṣaut* melody does not exclude the existence of a slight correlation between the text and melody in *ṣaut*. Many popular *ṣaut* melodies have particular titles based on famous or renowned texts that have become associated with particular ṣaut recordings, mainly ones recorded in the 1920s and 1930s. For example, the title of *ṣaut Inna Wajdī* or *ṣaut*

Māl Ghuṣn al-Thahab is usually used to distinguish or refer to a particular melody amongst others.

Poetic genres in ṣaut

There are several types of poem associated with *ṣaut*. Two genres are used more widely than any others: the classical Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) and the Yemeni poems (*ḥumainī*). *Fuṣḥā* is based on the language that is used in the Quran. Although *fuṣḥā* poetry is an old style of writing, it can be found in all periods of Arabic history and has a high degree of acceptance in various types of traditional Arabic music. The *fuṣḥā* poems in *ṣaut* been written by poets that belong to different historical stages, since pre Islamic period towards the 20th century, includes the works of Abu-ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī (d. 965), Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Ḥājerī (d. 1235), Abdulghaffār al-Akhras (d. 1875), and Bahā' al-Dīn Zuhair (d. 1258). In addition to these, the work of a number of poets from the Gulf region has also been used in *ṣaut* repertoire, including Fahad al-'Askar (d. 1951) and Sheikh Aḥmad āl-Khalīfa (d. 2004).

The other main genre, *ḥumainī,* is a Yemeni poetic genre that mixes between *fuṣḥā* and colloquial words, and includes many poetic meters that are not known in *fuṣḥā* (Ghānem, 1987, p. 21). Many sources refer to *ḥumainī* as the Yemeni version of *muwashaḥ*, a poetic form that was invented in Andalusia (Nājī, 1983, p. 42). However, the stylistic and aesthetic excellence of *ḥumainī* poems is considered less than that of *fuṣḥā* but greater than colloquial poetry (*sha'bī*), which gives *ḥumainī* astatus somewhere between the two. The works of many Yemeni poets have an acceptance amongst the *ṣaut* performing community; the poems of Yaḥyā 'Omar al-Yāfe'ī (d. c. 1652) for instance, are extremely popular and feature frequently in *ṣaut*

repertoire. Other examples include Ḥussain Zāyid, Aḥmad Saʻīd al-Wāḥedī, and Abu-Muṭlaq. Although *ḥumainī* emerged in Yemen, several non native poets have been influenced by this genre in the Arabian Peninsula and their poems are used in the *ṣaut* repertoire, including Ibn Jaʻfar from Ḥejāz, ʻAbdullah al-Faraj from Kuwait, Mubārak al-ʻAqīlī (d. 1954) from Dubai, and Ḥussain Bū-rquba from Bahrain. Seemingly, *ḥumainī* was a popular type of lyrics during and prior to the 19th century and was the favoured genre of poem for both singers and composers from different areas in the Arabian Peninsula. As a result, *ḥumainī* is not only associated with *ṣaut* music in Bahrain and Kuwait, it is also known in different genres of music in the Peninsula, such as *Ṣanʻānī* music in Yemen and *dānah* songs in Ḥejāz (Ghānem, 1987; Bāghaffār, 1994). It worth mentioning that a few *ṣaut* performers also wrote their own *ḥumainī* poetries to sing in their gatherings. The anthology of ʻAbdullah al-Faraj's poems shows that he wrote a number of poems influenced by the *ḥumainī* pattern, such as *Walla Mā Dareit* and *al-Ḥamd Li Allāh al-Mufallak*, which are very well known in *ṣaut* repertoire (Al-Faraj, 2002, p. 50, p. 184). Ḥamad Khalīfa is also a poet and singer who sing his poems to *ṣaut* or *ʻadanī* music, such as *al-Nāḏemī Qāl*, *Yā Mālek al-Rūḥ* and *Mennī Mesāk al-Kheir* (Khalīfa, 2005). Sheikh Aḥmad āl-Khalīfa, is a prominent Bahraini poet and a *ṣaut* singer. He has written a number of poems in both *ḥumainī* and *fuṣḥā* styles with the intention of their use in *ṣaut* songs, such as *Yaḥyā ʻOmar Qāl Qad Zān al-Ṭarab* in *ḥumainī*, and *Salūhā ethā kānat* in *fuṣḥā* (al-Ḥamad, 2013).

The Gulf region's local colloquial poetry, known as *nabaṭī* and *shaʻbī*, is the most popular genre in the Gulf and is used in many types of song such as *sāmrī*, *khammārī*, and *rabāba* songs. It is, however, mostly ignored within the genre of *ṣaut*

(Muḥammad, 2003; al-Deikān, 1995). The exception to this is the repertoire of *ṣaut* in Kuwait which contains a limited number of *songs* based on *nabaṭī* poems. These include *Mā Ḥalā Naḏem* (al-Ṣabāḥ, 1967), *Qāl Minhu* (Al-Kuwaiti, n.d.), *Zein al-Mebāsem* (al-Kuwaiti, c. 1935) and *Mālī Arā al-Lail Dhā* (al-Rāshed, n.d.). In addition to this irregularity, there are a few *ṣaut* songs consisting of Indian phrases or words which are used alongside the main Arabic text in both Bahrain and Kuwait, for example *Ṣaut Bulbula* (al-Baker, n.d.).

Lyrics: themes and content

In general, most *ṣaut* poems are based on themes of love and its nature (*ghazal*), the separation of lovers, longing, suffering and emotions. There are also many love poems which start with a religiously themed introduction and are about the belief of Islam, God (*Allāh*), and the prophet Muḥammad. In the poetry of the *khitām*, there is a greater variety of subject matter and style; examples include the satirical lyrics, *Aḥmedallah Wa Ashkerah* (Faḏālah, 1960s), moral or wisdom poem, *Tamattaʿ Bi al-Reqād* (al-Baker, n.d.), the praise poem or ode, *Ahlan Wa Sahlan Marḥaban* (al-Kuwaiti, 1938), and *Yegūl Bū-Meʿjeb Nahār al-Aḥad* (Bin Fāris, 1937) which features humour and dialogue. A abroad discussion about the text in *ṣaut* presented on p. 208.

Ṣaut genre types: shāmī, ʿarabī, khayālī, istimāʿ, khitām, and mawwāl

Although many forms of songs are performed at a *ṣaut* gathering, not all can be considered core elements of the genre itself. Let us consider the three rhythmic types of song that are always associated with the term *ṣaut*; *ṣaut shāmī* (four beats), *ṣaut*

'arabī (six beats), and *ṣaut khayālī* (twelve beats). Both the *shāmī* and *'arabī* types

are considered to be the essence of the genre as they account for the majority of

songs within the *ṣaut* repertoire. *Khayālī*[6], although a legitimate types of *ṣaut*, is less

prominent in the repertoire and carries less importance. It is performed just once

during the *ṣaut* gathering, and occasionally will be omitted entirely from the

proceedings[7].

Istimā' and *khitām* are two vocal types which are not usually described as *ṣaut*, but

are nonetheless only performed in *ṣaut* gatherings, each with a specific function.

Istimā', which means listening, was popular until 1930s and was performed in the

beginning of the *ṣaut* gathering as an introductory song (al-Deikān, 1998, p. 133).

However, it has since declined in use significantly and is only performed

occasionally in present day gatherings mainly thanks to the *ṣaut* revival. The songs

of the *istimā'* type are rhythmic, contain a clear pulse, and are composed to a range

of different meters, such as two, three, and seven beats. They are however performed

without the accompaniment of a percussive instrument but other musical instruments

may participate in performing the melody alongside the *'ūd*.

The *khitām* or *khatem*, which means conclusion, is the last song in a *ṣaut* gathering

and is used to finish the concert. This form is based on one melody which, during the

1920s and 1930s, followed a 3 beat rhythm. In current practice however, this has

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6- Muḥammad Jamāl, a scholar from Bahrain, finds the features of *khayālī* do not resemble those of *ṣaut*, and surmises that it is probably known as such due to its accompaniment by *mirwās*, the same percussive instrument used to perform in the other *ṣaut* types (Jamāl, 2001, p. 144).

7- The dance of *ṣaut* (*zifān*), the *mawwāl*, and the *tawshīḥa* (coda) play no part in *ṣaut khayālī*; rather, they are used in accompaniment, or within *ṣaut shāmī* and *'arabī*.

been replaced with that of *ṣaut khayālī*, a twelve beat rhythm (al-Deikān, 1998, p.363).

Mawwāl, a song type which involves free and improvised singing is also considered to be a part of the *ṣaut* repertoire (Shiloah, 1995, p.129). In contrast to all others however, *mawwāl* can be found in many other Arabic music genres. Many *ṣaut* performers such as 'Abdullah Faḍālah and Maḥmūd Al-Kuwaiti prefer to understand *mawwāl* as distinct from the *ṣaut* genre, and never recorded *mawwāl* with *ṣaut*. However, I believe that *mawwāl* should be considered an element of the *ṣaut* repertoire as in the context of a gathering, because it is never sung as a freestanding place but acts like an introduction to *ṣaut shāmī* and *'arabī*. Many other *ṣaut* performers deal with *mawwāl* as an important type of singing in *ṣaut*, and they perform it constantly in *ṣaut* gatherings. *Ṣaut* singers such as Muḥammad Zuwayid, Ḥamad Khalīfa, and Ibrāhīm al-Khashram, instituted and developed their own styles in performing *mawwāl*, and they render the *mawwāl* in *ṣaut* differently from other types of *mawwāl* in Arabic music[8].

There are additional types of singing that can be found in the *ṣaut* concert such as, *sāmrī*, *fonūn*, and *basta*. These are not however part of the *ṣaut* repertoire, despite being performed with a *mirwās*, because they are not linked with a *ṣaut*. To clarify: it is impossible to present a *basta* or *sāmrī* as an introduction to a *ṣaut* for example, while it is possible to utilise a *mawwāl* for this purpose. The main reason they are performed at certain moments in the gathering is a need to avoid monotony.

8- Whilst *mawwāl* is usually an introduction for *ṣaut 'arabī* and *shāmī*, there are however, a few exceptions; 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti, for example, performed a *mawwāl* before a *ṣaut khayālī* (al-Kuwaiti, 1964) and Yusuf al-Baker sang a *mawwāl* then followed it with an *istimā'* entitled *Inna Hindun* (al-Baker, n.d.).

Rhythm system in ṣaut genre

This section aims to explore the rhythm systems of *ṣaut* in present day performance, but also identify the ways in which rhythm practice has changed over the years. I believe this discussion offers a clear insight into the *ṣaut* development process and clarifies the disparities among all the types of elements that have developed within the genre. Since not all forms possess prescribed rhythms, this discussion has been kept separate from a discussion of forms.

The rhythm system in *ṣaut* consists of three types: *ṣaut shāmī*, *'arabī*, and *khayālī*. These rhythms are usually produced with the *mirwās*. Since each rhythm has adopted a different form over different time periods, this section will address the nature of each *ṣaut* rhythm in each of its stages, separately. The discussion also includes new traditions that have arisen to accompany the spread of the latest method of performing the *mirwās* and its rhythms.

Rhythm and meter in the late 19th century

As mentioned before, the only known sources of *ṣaut* practice during the 19th century are the records of Yūsuf al-Baker. In a number of his recordings, he was accompanied on the *mirwās* by his elder brother Muḥammad, who passed away in 1953 (al-Shamlān, 1975, p. 40). It is apparent from these recordings that Muḥammad tried to present the features of *ṣaut* rhythms of the 19th century as accurately as he could. Having had the opportunity to listen to Muḥammad's playing in four

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examples of *ṣaut shāmī* and six of *ṣaut ʿarabī*, (unfortunately, he did not perform a *ṣaut khayālī)*, I concluded that he tried to present the features of *ṣaut* rhythms of the 19th century as accurately as he could. In contrast to present-day practice, he used the same method and style for all the pieces. By today's standards, the rhythms he produced might be described as simplistic and primitive.

In his recordings of *ṣaut shāmī*, Muḥammad adopts a particular rhythmic form (shown below) which provided as a base shape to the beat he would then manipulate. See Fig. 3.1.

Fig. 3.1. The base rhythm of ṣaut shāmī that presented by Muḥammad al-Baker.

The meter of the rhythm in the above transcription could be written as two beats, however, I prefer to write it as four. This is because the *mirwās* player, Muḥammad, in other examples suggested more variations (*shakel*, pl. *ashkāl* or *tashkīlāt*) for *shāmī*, which expand the meter from two to four beats. In the *shāmī* example recordings, Muḥammad used a simple technique to vary the rhythm. He did this by changing the order of the high (*ṭaraf*) and low beats (*baṭen*) , but also would replace some of these beats and play rests instead (*takhṭīr*). See Fig. 3.2.

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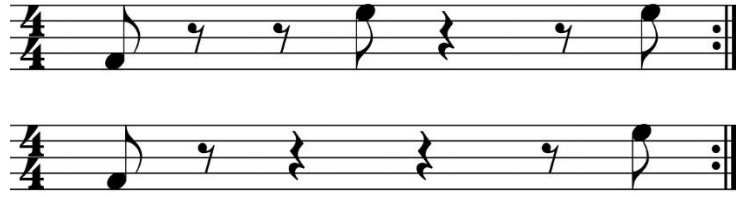
Fig. 3.2. Number of variation rhythms of ṣaut shāmī that presented by Muḥammad al-Baker.

The meter of the *ṣaut shāmī* forms practised by Muḥammad al-Baker thus appeared to fluctuate between two and four, but in fact he played originally two-beat measures which expand to become four in their varied forms. Thus, the characteristic that is common to all forms of *ṣaut shāmī* practised by Muḥammad is simplicity in performing style, free from any kind of syncopation or complex structures.

When performing *ṣaut 'arabī*, Muḥammad al-Baker employed a similar method to that used for rhythms of *ṣaut shāmī,* using a particular shape of rhythm as a foundation upon which to build variations. The based rhythm that appears in all *ṣaut 'arabī* pieces recorded by Muḥammad measured as a three beat meter, with variations measured as a six beat meter. I choose to transcribe it on six beats, because most of the variations of *'arabī* are on this meter. See Fig. 3.3.

Fig. 3.3. The base rhythm of ṣaut 'arabī that presented by Muḥammad al-Baker.

Beside this form, Muḥammad presented many other forms and variations upon the *ṣaut 'arabī* rhythm. He followed the same strategy as when varying in *ṣaut shāmī*, by changing the order of high and low beats, and using rests instead of playing. See Fig. 3.4.
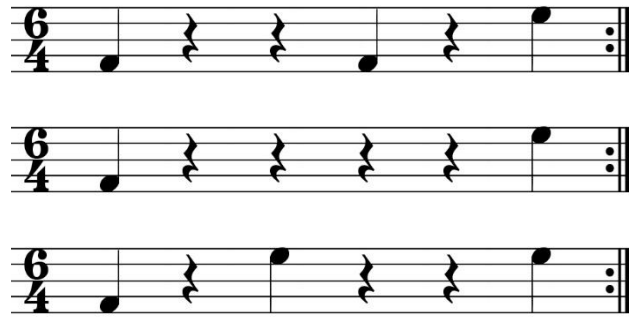
Fig. 3.4. Number of variation rhythms of ṣaut ʿarabī that presented by Muḥammad al-Baker.

Most of the recorded examples show a straightforward treatment of the base rhythm without much complexity. However, in *ṣaut Jalā Bel-Kās*, Muḥammad adopted a more advanced shape of rhythm that included syncopation, and the meter of the rhythm is six (al-Baker, c. 1953). See Fig. 3.5.
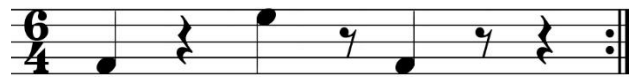
Fig. 3.5. An advanced shape of rhythm of ṣaut shāmī that included syncopation and presented by Muḥammad al-Baker.

There is some doubt, however, about the age of this form of rhythm as it can also be heard in recordings made in later years. It has been performed predominantly by other *mirwās* players younger than Muḥammad al-Baker and considered to be a new generation of percussionists. Thus, it is somewhat unclear whether it originated in late 19th century practice or is a developed form that appeared in the early 20th century, but which led Muḥammad to experiment with a new orientation of *mirwās* in his recordings.

Rhythm and meter in the recording period (1920s and 1930s)

In the recording period of the 1920s and 1930s, rhythm forms that had been presented by Muḥammad al-Baker were still being used by a new generation of

performers albeit limitedly. Two instances of this are recordings of *Min Ghair Sā'el* ('Abdulrazzāq, 1927) which is based on a *ṣaut shāmī* rhythm, and *Garīb el-Faraj* (El Fares, 1932) based on a *ṣaut 'arabī* rhythm. However, these rhythm forms practised by Muḥammad disappeared rapidly within a few years. Instead, the new generation of *mirwās* players (*imrawwis*, pl. *imrawsah*) adopted different rhythms during the 1920s that can be described as more dynamic, complex, and full of syncopations. Instead of the previous behaviour in the late 19th century involving fluctuation between different meters to perform the same *ṣaut* rhythm, the meters of rhythms became more stable and steady since approximately the 1920s: four beats for *ṣaut shāmī* and six beats for *ṣaut 'arabī*. See Fig. 3.6.

Fig. 3.6. The shape of ṣaut 'arabī (six beats) and shāmī (four beats) since 1920s and onward.

These transcriptions are for the base rhythms that were used in most recordings during the early recording era. However, the *mirwās* players used additional rhythm forms, which were derivations or reformulations of the previous forms. See Fig. 3.7.

Fig. 3.7. Reformulated forms of ṣaut 'arabī (six beats) and shāmī (four beats) been used in 1920s and 1930s.

An addition element that is not found in the rhythm playing style of the 19th century is the *mirwās* performers tendency to improvise (*yeshakkel* or *yel'ab*) through the

rhythmic forms, whether within the *ṣaut shāmī* or *'arabī*. These improvisations (*ḥarakāt*) are always different from one *mirwās* player to another, and from one *ṣaut* to the next.

Until the mid 1940s, all the recordings of *ṣaut khayālī* had been made only by Kuwaitis. In the 1920s and 1930s, the meter of *khayālī* was unclear and not standardised. In a few recordings, *khayālī* is played as ten beats, but in other recordings it has three beats. In the recordings of the 1940s, the *khayālī* rhythm had developed to become a twelve beats meter. On the other hand, other factors remained constant; *ṣaut khayālī* was and remains performed by either the *mirwās* or *dumbuk*, which is a type of local percussion instrument. Sometimes, it is performed by both the *mirwās* and *dumbuk* (al-Deikān, 1998, pp.363-366). See Fig. 3.8.
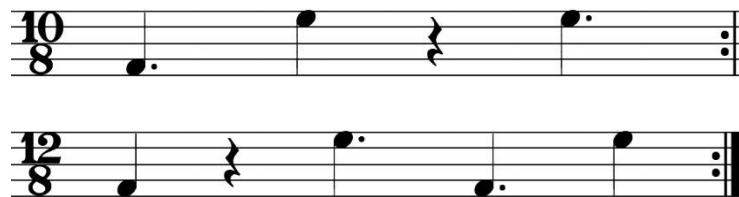
Fig. 3.8. *Ṣaut khayālī rhythm before 1940s (ten beats) and after (twelve beats).*

The meter of *khitām* rhythm is three beats, and the form of the rhythm is similar to the *ṣaut 'arabī* was that performed by Muḥammad al-Baker, but faster. It could be performed with a *mirwās* or *dumbuk*, or both. In addition, it is possible to perform *khitām* without any type of percussive accompaniment. See Fig. 3.9.

Fig. 3.9. *Khitām rhythm (above) and it variation (down).*

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Since the 1950s, the basic rhythmic forms of *ṣaut ʿarabī* and *shāmī* have remained unchanged. On the other hand, both *ṣaut khayālī* and *khitām* have been performed according to a twelve beats rhythm only since the 1940s. Although present day rhythms of *ṣaut* have not changed from the preceding periods, many new elements have been established or developed in the system of performing the rhythms. These will be discussed in the next Chapter, to connect it with the *mirwās*.

Hand clapping

While clapping in many other musical cultures is a form of interaction with the musicians, be it as encouragement or a greeting, the purpose of clapping in *ṣaut* is to participate as part of the band and to integrate more within it. The clapping in *ṣaut* can be distinguished from others by the rhythmic pattern of clapping and interlocking. It is performed by a large number as usually most of those in attendance join in and it can be found in *ṣaut ʿarabī* and *shāmī*.

This unique style of clapping involves using both the palms of the hands strongly. It is necessary for the left hand's fingers and palmar surface to touch those of the right hand to extract the desired sharp and loud sound. This type of clapping could be described as masculine, as most women or female in the Gulf clap differently by touching the fingers of first hand with the surface of the second hand's palm. It is important to note that, within the *ṣaut* community, the clappers or attendants do not clap after the end of the *ṣaut* in praise of the musicians. Instead, they react by loudly saying a few words that are known to express greetings and support for the band, for

instance *tislam*, *ṭayyib*, *yeʿīshūn*, and *hallah hallah*. It is possible to find some people

wishing to salute the band by clapping at the end of a *ṣaut*, but this only tends to

happen in the media or outside the *ṣaut* community.

Ṣaut is characterised by the use of different types of hand clapping, and they each

have a specific place in the *ṣaut shāmī* and ʿ*arabī* as well as an associated local name

to describe and distinguish it from other types.

Many people and scholars use the term *ṣafqa* (derived from the Arabic *taṣfīq)* to

refer to clapping (Dūkhī, 1984, p. 208; al-ʿAmmārī, 1991, p. 266), which is practised

in many other Arabic musical cultures. The most popular term among the

practitioner of *ṣaut,* however, is *sharbuka.* This form consists of a clapping cycle

that is successive, and interlocking and which includes two separate parts: the

duration of the first is between two to three bars and the second is one bar (al-

Deikān, 1988, pp.129-130). The clapping is usually used during the instrumental

refrain, which are the instrumental sections between one verse and another.

Sharbuka is not used during singing, and when the singer moves on to the *tawshīḥa*,

this type of clapping will stop and the clappers will employ a different pattern. At the

end of the *tawshīḥa*, which is also the end of the *ṣaut*, the group or the attendants use

the *sharbuka* pattern once as a conclusion. Another more general phrase used by the

ṣaut community is *kaf rābeṭ,* used to describe the perfect interlocking of hand

clapping; *kaf*, meaning the palm of the hand, and *rābeṭ* meaning tied or bound. In

addition, a group of hand clappers is known as *kaffāfah*, whilst a single hand clapper

is a *kaffāf. Waḥda*, which means one, is a term used to refer to a singular clap that is

performed usually at the beginning of the bars and is mainly during the beginning of

the *tawshīḥa*. It is common to hear people shout the instruction *waḥḥed*, cueing the attendants to shift from the *sharbuka* to the *waḥda* pattern. It is also possible to hear the *waḥda* pattern during the singing of the *ṣaut*, but this is less common. Yūsuf Dūkhī refers to more types of clapping patterns in *ṣaut*, such as *al-takhbīz*, *ṭaq al-iṣbeʿ* (finger clicking), and *al-beithānī* (Dūkhī, 1984, pp. 208-212). I was fortunate to have the opportunity to see members of the Kuwaiti folklore band, Bin Ḥussain, use the *al-beithānī* pattern during the *taqsīm* part of a *tawshīḥa*.

Determining the history of hand clapping in *ṣaut* as prior to the 19th century, for example, or a being a much newer tradition is tricky to say the least. All the sources that are available, whether early recordings or interviews, do not contain any mention of the practice of clapping. However, the absence of clapping in these sources does not necessarily prove or refute their existence. This is because it is a minor element in the whole genre that is performed by the audience and not the musicians, nor does not have the ability to change the form of the *ṣaut*. Furthermore, clapping may not have even been possible in the recordings because it requires a big group of participants. This would have been difficult to achieve inside the old studios, because of the extra cost and the likely risk of overshadowing the music.

Dūkhī indicates that clapping is not a new tradition in *ṣaut* (1984, p. 209), but he does not present any evidence or sources to support his conviction. Mubārak al-ʿAmmārī mentions that Muḥammad bin Fāris refused to use hand clapping during his singing of *ṣaut*, for the reason that it is not an old tradition of classical *ṣaut* (1991, p. 266). This would indicate that clapping is not long-standing but that it was known in Bahrain before Bin Fāris' death in 1947. However, al-ʿAmmārī also does

not refer to any sources to prove what he refers to. Therefore, both the researchers have difficulties confirming the authenticity or inauthenticity of hand clapping in *ṣaut*. Nevertheless, studying the private recordings of 1950s and 1960s could help to build a clearer picture and clarify if it is an old practice and if any development of it has happened. Apart of the recordings of Muḥammad bin Samḥān who passed away in 1960, and Yūsuf al-Baker who passed away in 1955, it is not easy to confirm if the early private recordings of *ṣaut* gatherings were recorded in 1950s or 1960s.

The recordings of Bin Samḥān are either free of all patterns of clapping or contain a simple style that could be perceived as an interaction between the attendance and the singing, and does not include any specific forms in performance, which could be described as chaotic clapping. Most of the recordings of al-Baker are free from the hand clapping that is known today. Only a few *ṣaut* recordings contain limited clapping that is a simulation of the rhythm, for example, *ṣaut Yā Asmar el-Loun* (al-Baker, n.d.). Moreover, in many recordings by ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti, Mubārak bin Nomān (d. 1977), and Ḥamad Khalīfa, which are probably made in the late 1950s or early 1960s, the concept of clapping is similar to that in the recordings of Bin Samḥān and al-Baker (either no clapping, rhythmic imitation, or irregular). Additionally, the recordings of Bin Nomān and Khalīfa include a novel tradition not found in the other recordings that have been mentioned previously which is practicing *sharbuka* during the singing and anywhere within the *tawshīḥa*. There is also individual clapping which could be likened to *waḥda*. Nowadays, these concepts of clapping have disappeared and instead there are strict principles that regulate its performance, as discussed in details above.

This study of recordings made in the 1950s and 1960s, although lacking in some breadth and detail, points tentatively to the notion that the system of clapping in *ṣaut* was different in 1950s. It was simple and improvisational and did not follow any forms or principles, except the imitation of rhythm. When it began to become more complicated through the use of interlocking perhaps in the late 1950s or early 1960s, the clapping performances sound confused and do not bear any relation to the structure of the *ṣaut*. It would seem that clapping was a long-standing feature known in *ṣaut* but it was not yet taken shape and been standardised to become a tradition with clear principles until probably the 1960s.

Clapping therefore, as a feature of *ṣaut,* is an additional piece of evidence with which we can understand the process of development in the genre. This appears to have involved adoption of characteristics inspired by elements from within *ṣaut* and the local culture, and then development or regulation to become a more complicated and unique style of its own, distinct from clapping known in other types of music in Bahrain and Kuwait.

Mirwās as a phenomenon, formulating new aesthetics

There was a change in the *mirwās'* role in *ṣaut* bands in the 1950s that significantly influenced the patterns of *ṣaut* performance, which in turn had an impact on its aesthetic values. Before the 1950s, the fact that there was just one *mirwās* performer caused their style of performance to be interactive with the music. Besides the basic rhythm of *ṣaut*, the *mirwās* player considered the features of the *ṣaut* melody as elements which contributed to the formulation of his performance on the drum. He

would try to concretise the melody of the *ṣaut* with his *mirwās*, for instance, by stopping playing in some parts of the melody, or ornament it in other places. This style of performing depends on the *mirwās* player having an awareness and knowledge of the *ṣaut* melodies. In addition, it depends on the extent to which the *mirwās* player is able to instantly interpret the improvisation that is presented by other performers, and simulate their actions or otherwise interact with them immediately through the *mirwās*.

Since increasing the number of *mirwās* players in *ṣaut* after the 1950s, however, the performance of the genre has changed greatly as a tradition in practice and conceptually. The present aim of the *mirwās* players is to play the rhythms in a basic and accurate style, without any type of change or improvisation in order to exact unified beats from the *mirwās*. This type of playing mentioned above is known as *hayma*, and it enables support of the *mirwās* improviser during their practice (*taksīr*). In this context, increasing the number of *mirwās* players creates a barrier between them and other performers and the singer, as it would inhibit any desire to interact or respond with others. Therefore, however competent or skilled the singer or performer of *ṣaut*, this cannot influence or motivate a group of *mirwās* players to perform better. On the other hand, the *mirwās* improviser has more freedom to interact and respond to other performers during the performance. Indeed, the quality of singing and performing in *ṣaut* usually encourages the distinguished *mirwās* improviser to perform better. The post 1950s era change that happened within the *ṣaut* band gradually enhanced the importance of the *mirwās* improviser. Thus, many *ṣaut* singers invite distinctive *mirwās* improvisers to perform with them, with the latter in some cases achieving more popularity amongst audiences.

Before the 1950s, the number of *mirwās* players was limited, mostly to just one

mirwās player per *ṣaut piece*, and on rare occasions, two (Zuwayid, c. 1976). Since

that time, the number of *mirwās* players has doubled and settled to be between three

to five *mirwās* players. This dramatic increase in the number of players has imposed

its own new traditions when it comes to performing the *mirwās* drum itself as well as

an increased importance ascribed to *mirwās* playing within the whole genre. As a

result, the *mirwās* performance is now significantly different from what had been

recorded in earlier eras. The *mirwās* group is usually divided into two different types

of instrumentalist. The first type is the improviser (*yekasser*, *yelʿab*), who

concentrates on improvising and providing ornamentation during the *ṣaut*

performance. This improvisation is called *ḥaraka* (pl. *ḥarakāt*), which means

movement. Each distinguished *mirwās* improviser has his own pattern in terms of

improvisation, which can appear in two elements – the *ḥaraka*, and the *ṭaqqa*,

meaning the sound that is extracted from the drum. The sound (*naghma*) is described

as ideally having a sharp, pure, and pleasing quality. Such is the distinctive nature of

the improvisers' playing patterns that many expert listeners can easily identify

mirwās instrumentalists by just listening to their recordings. The pulse or tempo of

the improviser must be steady and accurate. If they make a mistake in tempo

(*yekhafiq*) during the performance, this reduces their perceived value as a performer.

The number of improvisers is usually one during each *ṣaut* song, although there are

few exceptions. In the recordings made in the 1950s and 1960s, it is possible to hear

two *mirwās* players improvise at the same time. This style of combined

improvisation disappeared gradually however and most present day improvisers

perform separately during the same *ṣaut* song. Nonetheless it is still possible to find

two players improvising at the same time on rare occasions where the atmosphere is particularly competitive and exciting. It may even be caused by stubbornness on the part of both players to relinquish their primary role. It is not common however as this practice is considered by other performers and the audience to detract from the quality of the *ṣaut*.

The other type of *mirwās* performer is the *hayyām* (pl. *hayyāmah*) or *lazzām* (pl. *lazzāmah*), who plays the basic rhythm of the *ṣaut* song, without any improvisation. The role of the *hayyām* could be compared to a metronome for the singer, the clappers (*kaffāfah*), and the *mirwās* improviser. The size of the *mirwās* that is used by the *hayyām* is bigger than that which is used by the improviser; the type of sound that is extracted is described as being wide and deep, in both the high and low beats. The number of *hayyām* players is usually between two and four with the most talented or reliable *hayyām* player usually positioned between the singer and the improviser, leading the other *mirwās* players. The *hayyāmah* and improvisers mostly commit to playing together as a group, to ensure the high quality of performance and a harmony between all *mirwās* players.

Maqām system in ṣaut

To reveal the uniqueness of *maqām* in *ṣaut*, I used different sources about *maqām* in Egypt, since it is impossible find all the *maqāmāt* that are used in *ṣaut* within a single reference, and each source referred to group of *maqāmāt* that can be found in *ṣaut*. It is important not to present all *maqām* theory as a single or homogenous entity. Each source represents the *maqām* from different perspective in Egyptian

music, and the differences are based on many elements such as the influence of Ottoman or Western classical music.

Sources indicate that the *maqām* system, which is "the main modal unit of Arabic music" (Randel, 2003, p.486), was known to a limited extent by *ṣaut* performers born in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Yūsuf al-Baker referred to *mawwāl Laka Manzilun Be-l-Qalb* as being based on *maqām rāst* (al-Baker, n.d.), see Fig. 3.10.
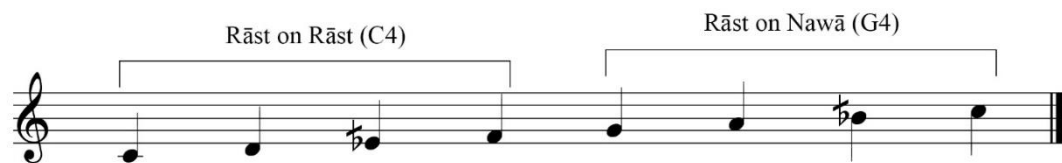
Fig. 3.10. Scale of the maqām rāst on C4.

Zuwayid also mentioned *maqām rāst* when talking about performing this *mawwāl* (Zuwayid, c. 1976). In addition, the label of a recording of Iraqi song (*basta*) made by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti refers to *maqām kurd* (al-Kuwaiti, c. 1947). See Fig. 3.11.
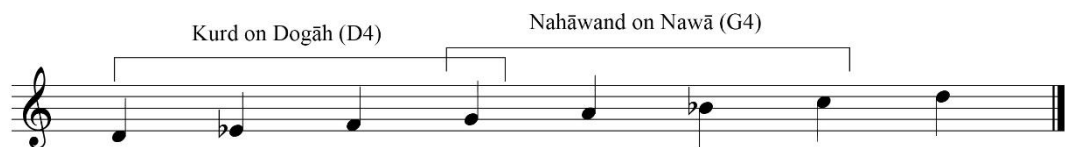
Fig. 3.11. Scale of the maqām kurd on D4.

These earlier *ṣaut* performers had seemingly limited knowledge about *maqāmāt* and would refer to *maqām* when performing other genres of singing such as *mawwāl*, but not in reference to *ṣaut*. Besides these, there is an absence of Arabic or local music

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theoretical terms in the *ṣaut* field, and there are no terms to describe the *maqām* in *ṣaut* pieces amongst *ṣaut* performers. However, since the 1950s, Egyptian music's influence on the Gulf musicians was marked, a result of the opportunity to study music with Egyptian teachers in the Gulf or Egypt. Therefore, many *ṣaut* performers and scholars have since adopted the Arabic music system that is known in Egypt, to analyse, notate and describe *maqām* and other musical elements in *ṣaut*. Accordingly, the system of analysing *ṣaut* pieces in this dissertation utilises these Arabic music theories and *maqām* systems used today in Egypt, and which are known throughout the majority of Anglophone literature. This is because embracing the name intervals, symbols of quarter tones, name of *maqāmāt*, and other elements, it is suitable for the purposes of clarifying and explaining the musical system and components of *ṣaut*.

As Scott Marcus explains, most *maqāmāt* in Arab music have come to be understood as comprising two parts, often tetrachords, (*jins,* pl. *ajnās*) a term which is derived from the ancient Greek term *genus*, but sometimes trichords (*nisba*) or pentachords (*'iqd*) (Marcus, 1989, p. 275, pp. 283-284). The lower tetrachord is known as *jins al-aṣl* or *jins al-jedh'* and the upper tetrachord is *jins al-far'* (Marcus, 1989, p. 379; Arafa, 1994, p.24). In the modern period of Arab music theory, the whole tone is divided into four quarters (*arbā'*), flat, half flat, sharp, and half sharp, so the octave (*dīwān*) consists of twenty four quarters (Touma, 2003, p.24). Half flat and sharp are not necessarily equal quarters because the quarter tones in Arabic music are not equal temperament as I mentioned before. Half flat and half sharp are represented by new symbols that are derived from the symbol for flat and sharp in western music theory, see Fig. 3.12.

Fig. 3.12. Symbols of the half flat and half sharp that used in the Arabs music.

In general, most *maqāmāt* that are used in the *ṣaut* field can be found in Arab musical theory books. In addition, certain *maqāmāt* that are used widely in *ṣaut* are considered rare in Arabic music practice, for example, *maqām ḥussainī ʿushairān* (see Fig. 6.27) and *maqām neirz rāst* (see Fig. 6.20). The finale notes (tonics) of *maqāmāt* in the *ṣaut* repertoire are based on tones that are uncommon or unpopular in Arabic music. For instance, the finale notes of *maqām ḥijāz* in Arabic music is always on D4 (see Fig. 6.2.), whilst it is at most on G4 in the *ṣaut* repertoire. In addition, the compositions of *ṣaut* usually deal with a *maqām* differently to the way it is used in other Arab music genres. For instance, Arab music theoretical literature states that *ḥussainī ʿushairān* is a *maqām* that is based on A and the pitches of the 2nd and 5th notes are half flattened (al-Shawwā, 1946, p.26). It is defined as a *maqām* that has a specific form, containing a number of tetrachords and pentachords, in a specific order to perform it ideally. This form consists of a *bayātī* tetrachord on A5, *bayātī* pentachord on D5, *nekrīz* pentachord on C4, and ends with *bayātī* tetrachord on A4 again (Education, 1933, pp.190-191). In *ṣaut*, as a result of examining 11 different *ṣaut* melodies[9], the form of the *maqām* is different and appeared through two patterns. In the first the *ṣaut* begins with a *bayātī* tetrachord on D5, then moves to a *bayātī* tetrachord to A5 to settle. In the second pattern, the *ṣaut* begins with a

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9- The names of the *ṣaut* songs are *Ohail al-Naqā* (el-Koueti, 1928), *Inna Hind* (el-Koueti, 1928), *Inna Wajdī* (el-Koueti, 1928), *Mā Yaṭrib Al-Qalb* (two melodies) (al-Baker, n.d.), *Salū Fāter al-Ajfān* (al-Baker, n.d.), *Layāliya Baʿd* (al-Baker, n.d.), *el-Bāriḥa Ḥārab* (el-Koueti, 1929), *Min Ghair Sāʾel* (ʿAbdulrazzāq, 1927), *Yegūl Abū Mutlāq* (Bin Walīd, 1935), *Nālat ʿAlā Yaduhā* (al-Ḥāy, 1960s).

bayātī tetrachord on D5, a different musical phrase based also on a *bayātī* tetrachord on D5, and it turns to a *bayātī* tetrachord on A5.

Observation of the character of *ḥussainī ‘ushairān* in the *ṣaut* repertoire indicates that both patterns are quite similar, they begin by using a *bayātī* tetrachord on D5 then they turn to a *bayātī* tetrachord on A5 to finish the melody. In addition, in the *ṣaut* repertoire, there is no modulation technique nor accidental note in this *maqām*, which distinguishes it from the same *maqām* in Arabic sources.

Tawshīḥa of ṣaut

A *tawshīḥa* or *tawshīḥ* is a part of a *ṣaut* that can be found in two rhythmic types of the genre: *ṣaut shāmī* and *‘arabī*. Both the melody and the text of the *tawshīḥa* differ from that of the *ṣaut* itself and usually, the mode also changes for the duration of this section. The dancing and clapping that accompany the *ṣaut* change for the *tawshīḥa* and both the audience and musicians can participate in singing along with the lead vocalist. On the whole, however, the *tawshīḥa* is performed solely by the singer. Linguistically, the origin of *tawshīḥa* and *tawshīḥ* is "w.sh.ḥ", which has many meaning. One of them is the ornaments on the clothes or body, like jewelry for women (Ibn Manzūr, 1997, vol. 2, pp. 632-633). It is possible to say that the meaning of *tawshīḥa* in *ṣaut* has a similarity to that the linguistic meaning. It is a part that is different from the melody of *ṣaut*, and could be consider as a part that ornamenting the *ṣaut* piece.

A number of *ṣaut* studies refer to *tawshīḥa* briefly, but usually described it as two particular of *tawshīḥa* pieces, one used for *ṣaut shāmī* and another for *ṣaut ʿarabī* (Dūkhī, 1984, p. 115; al-Deikān, 1998, p. 254, pp. 342-345). See Fig. 3.13.

Fig. 3.13. Transcription of tawshīḥa piece that uses for ṣaut shami and been referred by number of ṣaut studies.

Other studies indicate that *tawshīḥa* types are more than two: Lisa Urkevich in her recent study notes that *tawshīḥa* in the "early days of the *ṣaut*" was more types from that is known today (2015, p. 175). This observation, however, is not further elaborated upon with any detail nor examples which might help to distinguish the old and new forms of *tawshīḥa*. In this study, I examine and contest the aforementioned notion that the *tawshīḥa* is formed of just two types, and complete what Urkevich refers to by proving that there is diversity in types and melodies of *tawshīḥa*. Furthermore, all these differences of *tawshīḥa* (in melody, function, and form) happened within a long and profound development process through three main stages, current period, in 1920s and 1930s, and in late 19th century.

Depending on the type performed, a *tawshīḥa* generally has a number of identifiable sections; the majority of these, however, are not assigned formal names or definitions within the vocabulary of the *ṣaut* genre. This study therefore examines the sections of *tawshīḥa* and offers definitions for them, to enable readers and

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scholars to recognise the dynamic of change, modification, and development that has impacted the *tawshīḥa* of *ṣaut*. It is important to note that this study is not intended to be a comprehensive compilation of all the types and melodies of *tawshīḥa* that have existed in the *ṣaut* repertoire. Rather, the chief aim is to demonstrate that there is an essential process of development and revision that has occurred over many years to render *tawshīḥa* more integrated, active, and interesting for both the *ṣaut* performers and audience.

Definition and form of current tawshīḥa

Present-day Bahrain and Kuwait share a unified definition of *tawshīḥa*; it is a piece that is played at the end of the *ṣaut* song to act as a final part (coda) and its conclusion signals the end of the *ṣaut* as a whole. Whilst the content and melodies of *tawshīḥat* (plural of *tawshīḥa*) are the same in both countries, there are some differences in its practice. For Bahraini *ṣaut* performers, the *tawshīḥa* is considered a fundamental element without which a *ṣaut ʿarabī or shāmī* could not be completed. Amongst Kuwaiti performers, *tawshīḥa* is slightly less important and it is not inconceivable to end the same forms of *ṣaut* without performing the *tawshīḥa* part, but this rarely happens.

Tawshīḥa has an organised structure that consists of five parts, all of which are based on *maqām rāst*. The first is the "musical theme", followed by the "sung section", "*kalima*" meaning the word, "*taqsīm*", and the last section which I shall term the "*qafla*", meaning the conclusion. The musical theme is a short instrumental line or motif announces of the beginning of the *tawshīḥa*. It also works as a link between other parts in *tawshīḥa*. The sung section can involve one of two different melodies,

one used in *ṣaut shāmī*, and the other in *ṣaut 'arabī* (Dūkhī, 1984, p.115). It usually

comprises one or two verses chosen from an alternative poem to that of the

preceding *ṣaut*. Since there is only one melody for *ṣaut shāmī* and another for *'arabī*,

the text of the *tawshīḥa* can be changed each time, to provide variation and avoid

monotony. The *kalima* is a single word or phrase, such as *aḥḥī*, *halla hallah*, *yā-*

dalīl, or *yā-salām*, and is used as a signalling the end of the sung section. The

melody of the *kalima* contains either one or two musical notes, G and C or just C,

which is the finale note of *rāst*, the *maqām* of the *tawshīḥa*. The *kalima* is not really

a singing part, and probably it better described as a tuneful shout or call. The *taqsīm*

section is usually performed by a musical instrument or two, mainly a violin and

sometimes *'ūd* or any other available instrument. The *qafla* section contains a short

instrumental piece that is performed by all the musical instruments (*'ūd*, violin, and

qānūn). The instrumentalists use it to bring the *ṣaut* to an end all at the same moment

without slowing down the pulse of the rhythm. The *mirwās* must stop at the same

time as the musical instruments. See table. 3.1.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Musical theme	Sung section	*Kalima*	Musical theme	*Taqsīm*	*Qafla*

Table. 3.1. The first method of elements order of a tawshīḥa.

There is another method of performing *tawshīḥa*, which is less common in *ṣaut*

today. As it is based on the exclusion of the sung section, it might be described as an

instrumental *tawshīḥa*. See table. 3.2.

1	2	3	4	5
Musical theme	*Kalima*	Musical theme	*Taqsīm*	*Qafla*

Table. 3.2. The second method of elements order of a tawshīḥa.

Forms of tawshīḥa in the 1920s and 1930s

A study of the period of early records, published in the late 1920s and 1930s

confirms that the position of *tawshīḥa* belongs at the end of the *ṣaut*. It also reveals

the two types of *tawshīḥa* on *maqām rāst* that were very popular at the time, and

which are similar to those of the *rāst* melodies *tawshīḥa* performed nowadays. One

difference is the absence of the *qafla* in the earlier *tawshīḥa* recordings, which today

is considered a fundamental ingredient.

The records of Kuwaiti performers contain numerous *tawshīḥa* melodies, and three

different methods of performing them. The first method results in a *tawshīḥa* that

differs from its preceding *ṣaut* in melody, lyrics and *maqām*. The only similarity

between the *ṣaut* and its *tawshīḥa* in this method, is the rhythm. This method of

tawshīḥa is already been discussed above in the current forms section.

The second method of performance divides the *tawshīḥa* into two parts; singing and

instrumental. The sung section consists of many melodies that are based on the

maqām of the preceding *ṣaut*; for instance, a *ṣaut* that is based on *maqām bayātī* is

followed by a sung section also on *maqām bayātī*. See Fig. 3.14.

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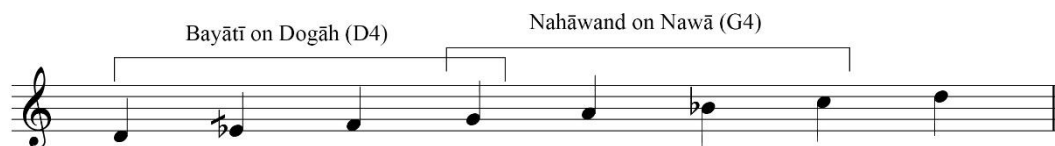
Fig. 3.14. Scale of the maqām bayātī on D4.

After singing, the performer uses the *kalima* as a connector to the subsequent instrumental sections. The instrumental part is always on *maqām rāst* (as discussed previously) and comprises the musical theme and the *taqsīm*. See table. 3.3.

1	2	3	4
Singing section	*Kalima*	Musical theme	*Taqsīm*

Table. 3.3. The order of contents in tawshīḥa performance in 1920s and 1930s.

There are appear to be two sources which give rise to the melodies in the sung section of this type; melodies that have been composed purely for use as part of the *tawshīḥa*, and melodies that have been taken from other *ṣaut* melodies and modified to be part of the *tawshīḥa*. This supposition is supported by examination of the catalogue of the Kuwaiti records published by the Odeon Record Company in 1929 in which three different melodies are referred to as *tawshīḥa*. Two of them are used exclusively as *tawshīḥa*, while the third as part of another *ṣaut* melody that was taken and re-used as a *tawshīḥa* (Tabbārah, 1929, p. 4, pp. 9-10). Most scholars have not discussed this type of *tawshīḥa* (in which the sung section shares the same *maqām* as the *ṣaut*) in their research on *ṣaut* and *tawshīḥa*. Scholar Aḥmad 'Alī is most likely the only scholar who refers to this form of *tawshīḥa*, in his discussion of *Yā Ḥamām Mālak* as an example of a method of *tawshīḥa* performance in *ṣaut* (Ali,

1980, p.108). For instance, whilst Yūsuf Dūkhī refers to the same *tawshīḥa* mentioned by 'Alī, he asserts that this section of the *ṣaut* is not an example of *tawshīḥa*. Rather, Dūkhī calls this melody "*radda fī al-ṣaut*" and "*ṣaut mardūd*" (Dūkhī, 1984, pp. 136-138). It is not exactly clear what is meant by *radda* and *mardūd* in this context, though one might surmise Dūkhī is referring to the notion of 'response' in *ṣaut*. The Odeon catalogue however does refer to this same *tawshīḥa*, *Yā Ḥamām Mālak*, as *tawshīḥ* (Tabbārah, 1929, p. 10).

Ghannām al-Deikān is another *ṣaut* scholar who refers to a number of melodies in this type of *tawshīḥa*. Although he states that the function of these melodies is similar to that of the *tawshīḥa*, he does not call them *tawshīḥa*, and uses terms like *raddādī* and *tardīda* to refer to them, which is probably inspired by Dūkhī who used similar terms *radda* and *mardūd* (al-Deikān, 1998, p. 215, pp. 346-347). It is noteworthy that a number of melodies that al-Deikān described as *raddādī* and *tardīda* in fact appear in the catalogues of Kuwaiti records by Odeon and Baidaphon under the titles of *tawshīḥ* (Tabbārah, 1929; Darsah, 1930).

The third type of *tawshīḥa* is the rarest amongst all types, and has been so throughout all periods of *ṣaut* practice. As described above, this type shares similarities with the *ṣaut* that it follows in *maqām*, lyrics, and rhythm. The only difference is in the melody of the *tawshīḥa*. The *ṣaut* performer uses the last verse in the poem of the *ṣaut* to perform it in a different melody. Although this type of *tawshīḥa* has been applied in a few *ṣaut* pieces, there is only one published reference to it as a *tawshīḥa*. In the Catalogue of Kuwaiti Records published by the Baidaphon Record Company in 1930, there is a section on the poem of the *ṣaut Min Gheir*

Sā'el, which was performed by Ṣāleḥ bin Abdulrazzāq in 1927. The transcription of the poem of the *ṣaut* ends simply with the word "*tawshīḥ*", and the catalogue does not offer any text of the *tawshīḥa*, as it does with other *ṣaut* pieces (Darsah, 1930, p. 8). However, upon checking the recording of Abdulrazzaq's *ṣaut*, there was no *tawshīḥa* on *rāst* or *bayātī*, the *maqām* of the *ṣaut* as would be expected. The only irregular act notable in this *ṣaut* is that the performer sang the last verse of the *ṣaut* in a different melody, which the catalogue in fact referred to as a *tawshīḥ*. In a different *ṣaut*, *Alā Yā Ayyuhā*, the performer 'Abdullaṭīf Al-Kuwaiti employed the same method as Abdulrazzāq at the end of the *ṣaut* (Al-Kuwaiti, 1937); he presented the last verse of the *ṣaut* within a different pattern of melody. Other examples include Maḥmūd Al-Kuwaiti, who used the same notion to end the *ṣaut, Thā Be-Rūḥī* (Al-Kuwaiti, n.d.). This type of *tawshīḥa* deserves further investigation in order to build a clearer definition and understanding of it.

The instrumental *tawshīḥa* existed in the early recording period, and it was occasionally used among the Kuwaiti performers, and to a lesser extent by Bahraini performers. As mentioned previously, the *qafla* was not in use yet during this era. See table. 3.4.

1	2	3
Kalima	Musical theme	*Taqsīm*

Table. 3.4. The brief order of the instrumental tawshīḥa in 1920s and 1930s.

Definition and form of tawshīḥa in the late 19th century

The recordings of Yusuf al-Baker, who was a *ṣaut* performer in the late 19th century, reveal that the repertoire of *tawshīḥa* melodies in the late 19th century and the 1920s

were similar. However, the similarity in melodies does not mean that the *tawshīḥa* in the recordings of al-Baker involved the same practice or could be defined in the same way as *tawshīḥa* performed in other times.

Many of the *ṣaut* pieces that al-Baker recorded did not end with the use of a *tawshīḥa* as the last part of the *ṣaut*. However, all the *ṣaut* pieces that did end with *tawshīḥa* in al-Baker recordings do not contain the sung section. Thus, the *tawshīḥat* in al-Baker recordings are instrumental only. Other dissimilarities in the instrumental *tawshīḥa* include the absence of the musical theme and taqsīm. Instead, al-Baker plays part of a different *ṣaut* to end the *tawshīḥa*. The motive of this is unclear but it may have been intended as a signal or clue as to what he would play next. Thus, the content of *tawshīḥa* in the al-Baker recordings contains two elements, the *kalima* and a melodic part that is borrowed from another *ṣaut*.

The al-Baker recordings also include the sung section, an essential part of a *tawshīḥa*, perhaps since the 1920s until the present day, but conversely, it is not performed at the end of the *ṣaut*. It is an element that is separate from others within the *tawshīḥa* and can be used during the singing of the *ṣaut itself*, between one verse and another. It can be repeated twice or more during the same *ṣaut* piece. For instance, in *ṣaut Yaḥya 'Omar Qāl*, al-Baker followed the second verse of the *ṣaut* with a sung section, which he repeated again after the third verse using different text (al-Baker, n.d.). The recordings of al-Baker do not contain any sung sections that are not performed by other singers in the records of the 1920s and 1930s. In contrast, the sung section in the *tawshīḥa* of *ṣaut 'arabī* that is used and known in the current days is absent in al-Baker recordings. A possible explanation for this is that it had

not yet been composed when al-Baker learnt *ṣaut* in the late 19th century. In addition, it is not clear if both the sections, sung and instrumental, were called *tawshīḥa* or *tawshīḥ* in the time of al-Baker; it is possible that one of them was known as *tawshīḥa*, whilst the other was not.

Experimentation in performance

Although this study focuses on the process of development through each historical period, there are individual attempts and exceptions to these norms, attempting to change, modify, develop, and expand this component of the *ṣaut* song. These instances where not been mentioned in any discussion of the earlier historical phases in *tawshīḥa* development because such attempts were rare. Nevertheless, it is important to examine them to appreciate the enthusiasm of the *ṣaut* performers for experimentation and their ability to develop *tawshīḥa*.

In early 1937, the violin player Sāleḥ al-Kuwaiti accompanied 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti in recording *ṣaut Lī Shādenun* for HMV in Baghdad (al-Kuwaiti, 1937). The *tawshīḥa* of the *ṣaut* was of the instrumental type, which has historically always been played on *maqām rāst*. Only in this recording however, Saleh and his band decided to play the known musical theme followed by a *taqsīm* in *maqām 'ajam 'ushairān* (see Fig. 2.3). Apparently, Saleh was inspired by the *maqām* of the *ṣaut*, *'ajam 'ushairān*, and decided to continue and played the *tawshīḥa* in the same *maqām*.

In Bahrain, Muḥammad Zuwayid invented a *tawshīḥa* type and used it to end the song, *Yegūl Abū Me'jeb* (Zuwayid, 1950s). It was problematic to use a *tawshīḥa* based on a song form that is not a *ṣaut* but has a similarity in beats with *ṣaut khayālī*,

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which is classified as a form of *ṣaut* that does not contain a *tawshīḥa* (Jamāl, 2001, p. 145). Zuwayid's attempt could have been considered to be against the common notions and principles of the *ṣaut* community. Therefore, to make a *tawshīḥa* in a song that is not a *ṣaut* but has beats similarity with *ṣaut khayālī* understandable, more harmonic and acceptable to the *ṣaut* audience, he utilised most of the *tawshīḥa* elements that were known in Bahrain at the time. See table. 3.5.

1	2	3
Sung section	*Kalima*	*Taqsīm*

Table. 3.5. The elements that were used to invent a tawshīḥa for a song or ṣaut khayālī.

In the 1960s, Ḥamad Khalīfa made another contribution to *tawshīḥa* development by adding a *mawwāl* as an additional sung section. Khalīfa places the *mawwāl* usually after the *kalima* in *tawshīḥa*, and before the musical theme and *taqsīm*. Therefore, the *tawshīḥa* of Khalīfa in *ṣaut* contains six parts. See table 3.6.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Musical theme	Sung section	*Kalima*	*Mawwāl*	Musical theme	*Taqsīm*	*Qafla*

Table 3.6. The form of tawshīḥa that been developed by Ḥamad Khalīfa.

Khalīfa's act is considered controversial within the *ṣaut* community. It is possible to find many listeners who admire his *mawwāl* in *tawshīḥa* however, many listeners and performers are not supporters of this practice, probably because *mawwāl* has never been employed within the *ṣaut* piece and therefore they are unaccustomed to it. According to Khalīfa, he was accused by Saʿūd al-Rāshed, the prominent *ṣaut*

performer, of destroying *ṣaut* by using *mawwāl* in *tawshīḥa*. However, Khalīfa had a

different point of view to justify his experiment. He said, when I sing the *tawshīḥ*, I

come to the end of the *ṣaut*; after that I am free to do whatever I want. Therefore, I

perform *mawwāl* because I like to be distinctive, and it appeals to the Arab attendees

who are from out of the Gulf region (Khalīfa, 2005). The latter part of Khalīfa's

justification might explain the style of his *mawwāl* in *tawshīḥa*, as it is mostly a

mixture of Iraqi and Egyptian patterns of singing.

In summary, it is apparent that the *tawshīḥa* has undergone significant development

over the turn of the 20th century by modifying, expanding, or omitting sections of

tawshīḥa. Today, the *tawshīḥa* continues to develop as new elements are

incorporated such as the *qafla*, which is totally absent in other stages. This process of

developing through many decades proves that *tawshīḥa* although just a small part in

ṣaut is nevertheless important and effective. Many musicians have tried and still try

to make it more dynamic and attractive for the performers, their peers and the

audience.

Zifān, the dance of ṣaut

Z*ifān* is a local term that is derived from the old Arabic word *zafin*, meaning a

movement that is similar to dance (*raqṣ*) (Ibn Manzūr, 1997, vol. 13, p. 197). It

refers to the dance in *ṣaut* which is not found elsewhere in traditional music in the

Gulf. It does not happen at every *samra*. When it does happen, it is usually

performed by two men known as the *zaffānah* (singular, *zaffān*). The term *zaffān* can

also be used for the leading dancer, while the other who follows him is named *rīs*

(al-Meftāḥ, 2014). *Zāfūn* might also be used to describe the performer and the performers are *Zuwāfīn*, but these terms are less prevalent (al-Mas'ūd, 2013). Many *ṣaut* performers insist on making a distinction between z*ifān* and the act of dance, refusing to describe it using the word *raqṣ*. One example is Aḥmad al-Qadīrī, a *zaffān* since the early 1950s who does not elaborate on his assertions that z*ifān* is a different act to dance. One may theorise that a connotation of femininity associated with the term *raqṣ* (al-Qadīrī, 2007) is what the performers wish to distance their practice from. Therefore, the term remains solitary in meaning and in practice, is used without any overlap with words that refer to *raqṣ*.

Zifān is performed in both *ṣaut shāmī* and *arabī*. Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti mentioned that *ṣaut khayālī* involved a dance style in the 1930s and stated this dance was "*raqṣ* that is different from *zifān*" (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter IV, p.22). The *raqṣ* of *ṣaut khayālī* has however since disappeared.

The principles of zifān

The nature of motion in *zifān* might be described as a rhythmic walking that includes a few movements or gestures as opposed to simply dancing. This is because the performer is mostly making walking steps whilst in front of the *ṣaut* singer. *Zifān* includes further elements such as jumping (*nashah*), turning (*laffah*), half turns (*nuṣ laffah*), shaking the shoulders, and moving a hand and arm to the right or left, in a wave-like motion. See Fig. 3.15.

Fig. 3.15. Two dancers (zaffānah), jumping (nashah) in the front of the ṣaut singer.

Present day practice of *zifān* in Kuwait contains three parts which I shall describe in brief. The first part occurs from the beginning of the *ṣaut* piece until the singing starts. During this time, the two *zaffānah* walk forward toward the singer and back several times, whilst also raising their right hand as they approach the singer. The second part begins when the singer starts to sing; the two *zaffānah* change their previous pattern of performing and do more varied movements. They use the half turn, usually twice, in order to move further away from the singer until they reach the end of the room (*mīd*) and then repeat this in the other direction. The *zaffānah* also use a full turn to go round repeatedly in the same spot, and this happens near to the singer. In addition, one of the most popular acts in *zifān* is *nashah*, where the performer bends both knees down partially then jumps, and the jump must finish on the pulse of the *ṣaut* rhythm. The performers repeat this form of *zifān* many times until the third part begins signalled by the *taqsīm* section in the *tawshīḥa* (coda part). The pattern of movements in *zifān* changes again. During this final section it is

possible for other enthusiastic dancers to join the two *zaffānah* and participate in doing more improvisational moves including finger clicking.

A number of elderly *zaffānah* indicate that the old style of *zifān* was quite different from what is known today. *Zifān* was more plain (*rāked*), there were fewer movements and jumping (*nashah*) and the performers themselves appeared more serious (al-Qadīrī, 2007; al-Meftāḥ, 2011). However, one explanation for it has been argued that the performers more than fifty years ago were generally older than the current generation of performers, and simply did not have the energy or the capability to do as many activities (al-Rāshed, 2011).

In Bahrain I did not get an opportunity to talk to a *zaffān* from the country, and there are no videos illustrating *zifān* as it is performed there today. However, a few videos of *ṣaut* performers from Bahrain that date back to the 1980s are available. These are enough to illustrate the Bahraini style and to recognise how it differs from the *zifān* of Kuwait. The *zifān* in both countries do share several similarities, but there are also many differences especially in the order. *Zifān* in Bahrain does not contain the first part of the Kuwaiti style which occurs before the singing and involves walking to and from the singer's position etc. Instead, Bahrainis utilise all the movements available right from the beginning of the *ṣaut* piece, including jumping and turning actions, which commonly happens in the Kuwaiti style only when the singing has started. Consequently, Sālem al-Muftāḥ, a Kuwaiti expert in *zifān* says that whilst the *zifān* of Bahrain is nice (*ḥelū*), the *zaffānah* jump (*yaṭmorūn*) too frequently and too early (al-Muftāḥ, 2011). A further motion found in Bahrain and not in Kuwait happens during the *tawshīḥa* part: the two *zaffānah* separate from each other and

while one starts to improvise along a different pattern, the other *zaffān* stands up and watches before they reunite to continue the *zifān* (Dūkhī, 1970s; Aḥmad, c. 1975; Khāled, 1980s).

Characteristics of a zaffān or performer

To become a *zaffān*, there are certain physical requirements. For instance, the body of the *zaffān* should be slim or not overweight to enable his movements to be measured and controlled. He should not be short, and the two *zaffānah* should be the same height.

Further conditions of compatibility are required between the two *zaffānah*, which based on the need for communication between them. A *zaffān* will usually search for another *zaffān* or *rīs* (follower) who is of the same age, fitness and experience. Therefore, each distinguished *zaffān* has a preferred performer (*rīs*) who fulfils these requirements which in turn makes the *zifān* successful. Many have friendships beyond the performance space of *zifān* (*mīd*). In addition, many of the performers have their own special language or techniques to communicate with each other and therefore regulate the motion and steps during a performance. Aḥmad al-Qadīrī, the oldest *zaffān* I met, indicates that his preference is to move his hand to signal to the other *zaffān*, sometimes by tapping him quickly (*yanqiz*) to get his attention (al-Qadīrī, 2007). Sālem al-Muftāḥ, who is a *zaffān* since the 1960s, states that he uses a sound *ist* to get the attention of the other *zaffān* (al-Muftāḥ, 2011). Sulaimān al-Baṭṭāḥ, a young zaffān, has a more noticeable method to communicate with the other performer; he usually uses the word *nuṣ* (half) to refer to the half turn, *kāmlah*

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(complete) to refer to the full turn, and *'indah* (here) as a cue for the jump or *nashah* (al-Baṭṭāḥ, 2011).

Zifān is practised only by men, however, both Aḥmad al-Beshr al-Rūmī and Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Jāber al-Ṣabāḥ assert that in the 1920s, there were female *ṣaut* performers instead of male ones with two women performing *zifān* together. Also it was possible at the time to perform as a group of four, two men and two women. Al-Ṣabāḥ goes on to refer to the best known women dancers, such as al-Naqqāza (the jumper), Maryūm and 'Odash (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter IV, pp.7-10; al-Ṣabāḥ, 1967). In addition, al-Qadīrī indicates that when he was young he heard about women who perform *zifān*, but he never saw them (al-Qadīrī, 2007). Further to this, there is just one video available which shows a *zifān* between a man and a woman and they are from Bahrain (Aḥmad, c. 1975). Apart of this clip, there are no more details to explain the role of women in performing *zifān* in *ṣaut*.

The historical memory of *ṣaut* comprises many names of *zaffānah*, such as Abdulwahāb al-Qeṭāmī (d. 1968), Sa'ūd bin 'Awn, 'Abdullah bin Thābet, and Abdulazīz al-Ghannām (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter IV, pp.7-10; al-'Amīrī, 2011). However, few of the *zaffānah* are exceptional in *zifān*, and their names are associated with a description or they possess a nickname to reflect the advanced levels they reached. For example, Abdulḥamīd Muḥammad al-Mājed (d. 1990) a *zaffān* who was originally from the Kuwaiti island Failaka, was known and described as al-khaizarān (bamboo) because of his flexibility and sophistication in performance (al-Muftāḥ, 2011). In addition, an account in the 1930s by a sailor refers to two ship captains (*nokhitha*, pl. *nuwakhdhah*), Abdulwahāb al-Qeṭāmī and Alī bin Nāṣer al-Najdī (d.

1979) as two damask roses (*jūrī*) to emphasise the elegance of their *zifān*

performance (al-Ḥajjī, 2009, pp. 192-193).

Linking words

A "linking word" refers to a word, phrase, or even vowel used to form a connection

between one verse and another within a poem or word and another inside a verse. Its

main purpose is to fill the gaps that can exist during the singing of a *ṣaut*. In general,

the length of the linking word's melody is a few notes, and not more than a bar. It is

used widely during the singing of *ṣaut ʿarabī*, *shāmī*, and the *tawshīḥa* section.

Although most of these phrases have independent meaning, they do not have a

correlation with content of the verses of the *ṣaut* in which they are used.

Some of the many words or phrases used as linking words include *alā*, *yā rūhī* (oh,

my soul), and *yā sīdī* (oh, my lord) or only *sīdī* which is the most popular amongst

ṣaut performers. Other phrases that are consider less popular and can likely be found

in early recordings include *yā nās* (oh, people) (Bin Walīd, 1935) *yā qalbī* (oh, my

heart), *yā ʿeinī* (oh, my eye) and *khallī bālak* (take heed) (El Koweiti, 1932). On the

whole, the *ṣaut* performer has the freedom to use one of these phrases anywhere

within the *ṣaut*, within the second for example, or last verse.

A few *ṣaut* songs have specific phrases used as fundamental linking words which

should be used in certain places in each verse, because they are part of the *ṣaut*. Due

to its importance in the *ṣaut*, it is not easy to eliminate the essential linking word and

sing the *ṣaut* without it. Instances of this include the phrase *alā* in *ṣaut Ḥarrak*

Shijūnī (al-Kuwaiti, 1927) and the phrase *yā lālā* in *ṣaut Yegūl Abū-Muṭlaq* (Bin Walīd, 1935). In addition, vowels like *oh* and *eīh* are also used as linking words in *ṣaut*, and most of them are essential. In each verse of the *ṣaut*, the same vowel will be repeated in the same place. This can be heard in *ṣaut Be-abī al-Shumūs* (el-Koueti, 1928), and *ṣaut Kho 'Elwī Sija'* (Bin Walid, 1932).

There are three examples in *ṣaut* which are exceptional with regards to how the linking words are dealt with. Whilst most are located within the body of a verse, 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti in *ṣaut Ḥarrak Shijūnī* used a linking word in the beginning of the *ṣaut*, before the first verse (el-Koueti, 1928). Muhammad bin Fāris also used an advanced, complex approach in his utilisation of the linking words through *ṣaut Dam'ī Jarā Be-l-Khudūd* (1937). He manipulated a part of the last verse in the *ṣaut*, the phrase *'indī 'alā dhā*, by repeating the word *'alā*, which is of course similar to the linking word, *alā*. In this same phrase, Bin Fāris uses another linking word, *sīdī*, whilst most performers usually use only one per verse. The result of Bin Fāris' unusual approach is an expansion of the original phrase *'indī 'alā dhā* to *'alā 'indī 'alā dhā sīdī 'indī*.

Finally, Muḥammad Zuwayid demonstrated another method in his performance of *ṣaut Yā Rabbanā Yā Dha-l-Jalāli* (1970s), which is a *ṣaut* that contains *alā* as an essential linking word to be performed in each verse. However, Zuwayid's followed a unique approach in dealing with it by eliminating it entirely from all the verses. Thus by removing it, he changed the *ṣaut* melody slightly through adoption of a different shape for the same melody in order to avoid using the fundamental linking word.

The importance of using linking words is not merely to fill the gaps between words or to create a melodic link between verses. Rather, it has a more significant effect by offering the performers a chance to go out of the proposed context and rebelling on the standardised form of the *ṣaut* through the manipulation of the linking words as a key to change the shape of the melody. As discussed, when Bin Fāris employed both the linking words and his ingenuity in improvisation, he changed the shape of the melody as well as the phrase in that section, which made it different to all other verses of the same *ṣaut*. Indeed, most distinguished performers strive to use linking words with sophistication, because it is an element that motivates the singer's mind to improvise and is part of the improvisation of *ṣaut*.

Conclusion

The Chapter has focused on explaining the details of the components that have built the *ṣaut* genre. The arguments highlight a process of change, which has included most *ṣaut* elements and which has happened through three historical stages, the late 19th Century, the 78rpm records period, and current performance. The processes of modifying and changing the elements of *ṣaut* through these different stages as shown here, proves again that *ṣaut* was and remains an active and live music genre which is always evolving to become more aesthetically suited to the preferences of a new generation of *ṣaut* performers and their audiences.

The challenge of the Chapter is however the shortage of references relating to each element in each historical period. More research is required to uncover additional

sources concerning the history of *ṣaut* or the history of its individual elements. This

chapter could be considered a foundation that provides a point of entry to other

scholars wishing to explore the elements of *ṣaut* that require wider investigation.

CHAPTER IV

INSTRUMENTS USED IN ṢAUT

The instruments types that are presently in use or have been used in the past and have since disappeared from ṣaut performance are primarily stringed instruments. They are the *'ūd* (pl. *'īdān* in Arabic and *a'wād* in the local colloquial), which is fundamental to *ṣaut* and without which *ṣaut* performances would be impossible, violin, *qānūn*, and other instruments that are less important or less popular among ṣaut performers. The only percussion instrument that is used in *ṣaut* is the *mirwās*.

'Ūd

The type of *'ūd* that is in use in *ṣaut* today is the instrument already known in most of the Arab world and Turkey. However, until a few years after the First World War, a different type of *'ūd* was used to perform *ṣaut* in both Bahrain and Kuwait, and was known as the *'ūd hindī*, meaning Indian lute. A study about this instrument is overdue, references available are limited and have been unexplored by scholars.

'Ūd hindī

Although this instrument was dominant in Bahrain and Kuwait a hundred years ago, it has long since disappeared, resulting in ambiguity and great difficulty in defining it. Therefore, this research aims to establish, as much as the sources can provide, a clear definition of the features of the *'ūd hindī*, including its shape, materials, and number of courses. The information is based on the evidence accounts and descriptions given by old performers, who used or saw this type of *'ūd*.

The date the *'ūd hindī* entered the Gulf region is not known. However, according to

Aḥmad al-Beshr al-Rūmī (d. 1982), in his statement on the history of *'ūd* in Kuwait,

'Abdullah al-Faraj (d. 1901) was the first person to bring an *'ūd* to Kuwait. This

happened when al-Faraj returned from India, and the type of *'ūd* he brought was

hindī (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter II, p. 42). A different reference indicates that al-Faraj,

who learnt music in India, returned to Kuwait a few years after his father's death

which occurred in 1854 ('Alī, 1980, p. 5). This indicates that al-Faraj probably

returned to Kuwait with his *'ūd hindī* at some point before 1860.

This *'ūd* was given the name *hindī* (Indian) because it was brought from India.

Muḥammad Zuwayid (d. 1982), however, referred to this instrument by using two

different terms, *'ūd bambāwī*, in reference to Bombay (now Mumbai), the prominent

Indian city, and *'ūd bū-raqma*, which means *'ūd* of skin, because skin is part of it

(Zuwayid, c. 1976). It is important to note that the *'ūd hindī* is mentioned in the book

of Arabian Nights, and the stories talk about both *a'wād* those made by Indian

makers in Baghdad and those brought from India (Farmer, 2005, p. 104). However,

it is difficult to prove that the *'ūd hindī* mentioned in the Arabian Nights stories is

similar to what was used by al-Faraj and others since the mid 19th century, especially

with the absence of any comparison between the features of the *'ūd 'arabī* and *hindī*

in the content of the book of Arabian Nights. Apart from these stories, the only

source or music genre in the Arabic region that refers to *'ūd hindī* or *'ūd* from India

in its literature is *ṣaut* music in Bahrain and Kuwait.

According to the descriptions of the old musicians and narrators, it seems that the features of *'ūd hindī* are rather different from the features of the *'ūd* that is known today, which I call *'ūd 'arabī*. Most of the musicians and narrators describe the *'ūd hindī* as much smaller than the *'ūd 'arabī* and the shape of its body (*qaṣ'a* or *ṭāsah*) is circular and its neck (*raqaba*) long, which is different from the *'ūd 'arabī* as we will see later. The entire *'ūd hindī* instrument was made as one segment from a large piece of the Indian teakwood (al-Baker, 1960s). The body was carved out to be circular shaped, as mentioned previously, and inside, the body was hollowed to become shaped like a bowl. The carving included other parts of the *'ūd*, the neck and the tuning pegs' head (*bunjuq*). The body of the *'ūd* was covered by a thick skin (*raqma*) to act as a soundboard (*saṭḥa* or *wajh*) and a small circular shaped hole cut in the middle of the soundboard which they called *shamsiyah* or *wardah* (rosette). While, in the tuning pegs' head, seven small holes were made to install the pegs (*malāwī*). The courses were tied to the pegs and on the other side to the tailpiece (*marbaṭ*), at the end of the *'ūd's* body. The courses were raised by a floating bridge (*ghazālah*) made from wood, and set up somewhere between the tailpiece and the rosette.

The number of courses in the *'ūd hindī* is four, three double and one single. Each course (double or single) associates with a particular local term; *al-sharār* (C4) which means the spark, *al-methānī* (G4) which means the second, *al-methāleth* (D4) which means the third, and *al-yetīm* (A3) which means the orphan, because it is a single course (Dūkhī, 1984, p.190, p.192; al-Gharīb, 2003). Yūsuf Dūkhī (d. 1990) was the only scholar to refer to the fourth course (A3) as *al-bām*. This term was probably inspired by or borrowed from the same name used for the same course of

the Abbasid *'ūd*. In addition, Dūkhī mentions the fifth course and calls it *al-rākhī*, and it seems that this term appeared after the appearance of the *'ūd 'arabī* in the Gulf, because the courses of *'ūd hindī* are four in number, not five (Dūkhī, 1984, pp. 190-192).

Many renowned musicians in Bahrain and Kuwait used to play the *'ūd hindī*, such as the Kuwaitis 'Abdullah al-Faraj, and Yūsuf al-Baker (d. 1955), who named his instrument *'ūd baṭlūs* (al-Baker, 1960s), and Muḥammad bin Fāris from Bahrain, who received his *'ūd* as a gift from his uncle Shaikh Jāber Āl-Khalīfa, and named it *bāshat Maṣir* (the pasha of Egypt) (Olsen, 2005, p. 96; al-'Ammārī, 1991, p. 107). Apparently, all the instrumentalists mentioned here and those named in the other sources as *'ūd hindī* players, were performers of *ṣaut*. Therefore, it is possible to say that this *'ūd* was primarily dedicated to playing the songs of *ṣaut* repertoire.

It would seem that the *'ūd hindī* has many faults that make it an unsuitable instrument for *ṣaut* music. For example, the frequency of the *'ūd* is weak, or low, as the body of it is small and thick. This is incompatible with *ṣaut* music which requires a loud string instrument to suit the loudness of the *mirwās*. A fact that supports this supposition is that Khāled al-Baker (d. 1925) manufactured an improved *'ūd hindī* in the early 1890s in Kuwait. He made it with a bigger and deeper body than the regular *'ūd hindī*, which made it slightly more similar in size to the *'ūd 'arabī* (al-Baker, 1960s). In addition, another weakness was the tuning of this *'ūd* which was, I believe, a problem. The stability of the soundboard tension was not steady, because it was made from skin that shrinks in dry weather and stretches in humidity. The reason for the *'ūd hindī's* prevalence amongst *ṣaut* performers in Bahrain and

Kuwait was probably its low price and availability. Commercial life in the Gulf until the 1950s was mainly reliant on ships trading with the Indian seaports, and there were tens of people from the region travelling to India frequently. Thus, it was easy for any sailor or merchant to find and buy an *'ūd* during his visit into India. In the 1920s, the spread of the *'ūd hindī* began to retract and it disappeared in the 1930s after six decades of use in Kuwait. The last musicians to use it were Yūsuf al-Baker and 'Alī al-Tamīmī (Dūkhī, 1984, p. 195).

However, as mentioned before, there is no surviving instrument today, nor are there any pictures of it, making it a rather enigmatic instrument. Several researchers have investigated the mysteries that surround it, such as Nizār Ghānem from Yemen (2001, p. 162) Muslim al-Kathīrī from Oman (2009, pp. 151-163) and Jean Lambert from France (2014). Their hypothesis is that the *'ūd hindī* and *qanbūs* are one, and that the *qanbūs* is the *'ūd* that spread to different areas in the Arabian peninsula 100 years ago, such as Ḥejāz and Oman. This instrument still exists in Yemen but under different names such as *ṭurbī* and *qanbūs*. The scholars refer to elements common to both the *'ūd hindī* and *qanbūs*: both instruments are made from a single piece of wood, the soundboards are made from skin, and the number of courses is four.

Whilst these similarities lend support to the idea that the *'ūd hindī* is the *qanbūs* in all but name, there are, however, a few pieces of evidence and observations that would throw this hypothesis into doubt. Maḥmūd al- Kuwaiti describes the shape of the *'ūd hindī* precisely and says it is circular with a long neck, which made it similar to the *mellās*, a type of circular shaped ladle known in Kuwait with a long arm (al-Gharīb, 2003, p.102). Furthermore, Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti indicates that his uncle,

Raḥmain Ḥabūsha, sent him a mandolin from India as a gift in the 1910s (Twīnī, 1977). It would seem that Dāwūd received *'ūd hindī*[10] not a mandolin, because the shape of the mandolin is similar to the *'ūd hindī* (circular shaped body and long neck), and the gift came from India. In addition, Zuwayid has provided an illustration drawn by him or under his supervision and presented in a TV interview in c. 1976, the only existing reliable document relating to the *'ūd hindī*. In the interview, Zuwayid emphasised that the illustration represented the *'ūd hindī* he used. All the aforementioned descriptions about the *'ūd hindī's* shape confirm that it is not similar to the shape of the *qanbūs* which is in fact, semi-oval. See Fig. 4.1.

Fig. 4.1. On the left, an illustration of 'ūd hindī shown in a TV interview with Muḥammad Zuwayid (c. 1976). On the right, the Yemeni singer Qāsim al-Akhfash holding a qanbūs (Nājī, 1983, p. 135).

An additional difference concerns the hole or rosette: this is in the middle of the skin soundboard in the *'ūd hindī*, while it is in the wooden part of the soundboard near to the neck of the *qanbūs*. Lambert (2014) proposes that it is impossible to make a hole in the skin, without destroying it. However, there are a few instruments that have a soundboard made from skin containing one or more holes, for instance, the African

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10 - In a radio programme about Dāwūd's death anniversary, the broadcaster indicates that Dāwūd received 'a small *'ūd*' from his uncle, and small size is a feature of *'ūd hindī* (Gabbāi, 1976).

instrument that is known in the Gulf as the *ṭanbūra*, in addition, the *quwaytara* from

Zanzibar. See Fig. 4.2.

Fig. 4.2. On the left, an African instrument in the Gulf known as the ṭanbūra, the soundboard made from skin and possessing two holes or rosettes (Khalīfa, 2012). On the right, quwaytara from Zanzibar, the soundboard made from skin and possessing a hole (Quwaytara, 2016). In addition, it is the most similar instrument to ʻūd hindī as been described by Kuwaitis and Bahrainis.

Moreover, all the sources agree that the *ʻūd hindī* was imported from India only.

Although the Kuwaitis have a strong historical relationship with Yemen in different

aspects, in music and trading for example, the *ʻūd hindī* is never cited to have been

imported from Yemen. There is no evidence that the Yemeni *qanbūs* was widely

manufactured in India then sent to Bahrain and Kuwait under the name *ʻūd hindī*.

See Fig. 4.3.
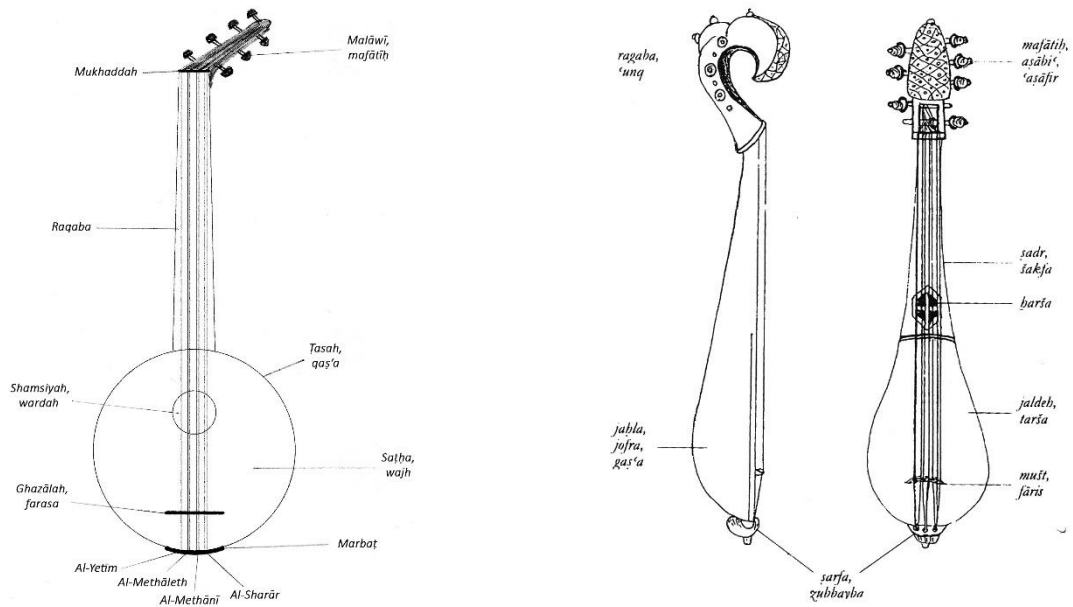
Fig. 4.3. On the left, an illustration by Aḥmad alṢālḥī of the 'ūd hindī based on the illustration by Zuwayid and descriptions from various musicians and narrators in the time of its use. On the right, an illustration of a qanbūs (Lambert, 2002, p. 83).

A further reference from Yemen indicates to the existence of *'ūd hindī* in Yemen. According to the Yemeni researcher 'Abdullah Ḥaddad, the *'ūd hindī*, which has many similarities with the old local *'ūd* (*qanbūs*), been brought for the first time to Hadramaut in Yemen by Sultan bin al-Sheikh 'Alī (d. 1904), from India in late 19th century. Ḥaddad adds that many historians and writers (researchers) suspect that 'Alī was the first musician who brought *qanbūs* to Hadramaut, which is a common mistake, because the instrument was in fact *'ūd hindī* (Ḥaddad, 2003).

Although the hypothesis that the *'ūd hindī* and *qanbūs* are the same is in doubt, it does seem that the *qanbūs* was known by musicians in Bahrain and Kuwait, and was probably used in *ṣaut* performance as well. The descriptive term is *imkabbis*, which is used until now to refer to the *ṣaut* singer. The term *imkabbis* is derived from *kabbūs*, which is a different name for the *qanbūs*, and also means the *kabbūs* player. It seems that *imkabbis* was used by *ṣaut* performers to describe the *'ūd* player in the

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beginning, and later it became associated with the *ṣaut* singer, because the singer is also the main *'ūd* player. Therefore, this would suggest that the *qanbūs* or *kabbūs* was known or was used in Bahrain and Kuwait.

There is another possible explanation for the use of the term *imkabbis* in the *ṣaut* community. In the 19th century, the *qanbūs* was the only type of *'ūd* used in three adjacent areas, Ḥejāz, Yemen, and Oman. In Ḥejāz, it was known as *qanbūs* (Ṣabbāgh, 2012), in Oman it was known as *qanbūs* and *'ūd yamānī* (al-Ṣurī, c. 1978; Al-Kathīrī, 2009), and in Yemen it had many different names, such as *'ūd ṣanʿānī*, *ṭurbī*, *ṭarab*, and *gambūs* (Lambert, 2002; al-Māss, 1930s). This term and instrument, *qanbūs*, emigrated via Ḥejāzī and Yemeni musicians to the Malay world and spread there under many names, for instance *gambūs*, *hejāz*, *seludang*, and *perahu*. These names refer to different types of *qanbūs* alongside the classical *'ūd* which is also known as *gambūs* (Hilarian, 2007, p. 2). Since the old musicians and narrators never made references to the *qanbūs* or *kabbūs* as an instrument that was used in Bahrain and Kuwait, it is possible that the term *imkabbis* was used because it was a renowned term in Arabian Peninsula in that time, and used in Kuwait to refer to players of the *'ūd*, either the *hindī* or *'arabī*.

To summarise, any study that aims to trace the history of this instrument should consider that it was dissimilar to what we today call the *'ūd* (what I am calling it *'ūd 'arabī* here) probably a type of mandolin as Dāwūd said, and that it had a different name in India. The zones of study should be the old Indian seaports visited by Kuwaitis and Bahrainis 100 years ago as this instrument was sold and possibly manufactured in proximity to these ports, mainly those in Bombay as suggested by

Zuwayid's use of the name *bambāwī*. This instrument probably disappeared from India, which is a further obstacle that should be thought through.

'Ūd 'arabī

In the early 1920s, the classical *'ūd* or the *'ūd 'arabī* became more desired amongst the *ṣaut* performers. Within a few years the *'ūd* was dominant, while the *'ūd hindī* was in decline, eventually disappearing in the1930s. However, the prevalence of the *'ūd 'arabī* in the 1920s does not mean it was unknown before, but it seems that it was rare. A few sources state that the *'ūd 'arabī* was known in the region, at least in Kuwait, in the late 19th century. Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti indicates that he got the chance to see the *'ūd* of 'Abdullah al-Faraj, who passed away on 15th July 1901 (al-Wugayān, 2006, p. 280), and the *'ūd* was with Maḥmūd's brother, Ṣāleḥ (d. 1975), who was a renowned *ṣaut* performer in 1920s. The statement of Maḥmūd about al-Faraj's *'ūd* was quite ambiguous, he said that it was an old *'ūd* type, and different from that which was covered by a skin (*'ūd hindī*), but did not give more details or clarify what 'the old *'ūd* type' meant (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter II, p. 44). The brother of Khāled and Yūsuf al-Baker, Ibrāhīm, was more precise, saying that he saw al-Faraj's *'ūd* with his brother Khāled and it was the *'arabī* kind (al-Baker, 1960s). Thus, unfortunately, the information about this *'ūd* that dates back to the 19th century is inadequate, and the only further detail provided is that the *'ūd* pegs were silver plated (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter II, p. 44).

Generally, the *'ūd* that I described as *'arabī* or classic is known today as simply an *'ūd* among *ṣaut* performers. However, with the increasing prevalence of this *'ūd* in Kuwait, the performers began to name it *'ūd shāmī*, to distinguish it from the other

ʿūd, *hindī*. There is no consensus on why Kuwaitis called this *ʿūd* '*shāmī*'. It may be have been imported from al-Shām, the name for Damascus or Syria, according to al-Rūmī ('Alī, 1980, p. 5). It could also indicate it came from Iraq, since al-Shām means north in Arabic, and Iraq is north of Kuwait. It might be more logical and indeed easier to bring an *ʿūd* from Iraq, because of the short distance between the two countries. Additionally, a few performers indicated that they brought their *ʿūd* from Iraq, while no one referred to Syria as the source of their *ʿūd*. For instance, in the mid 1920s, Maḥmūd bought an Iraqi *ʿūd* from Ibrāhīm Kechek or Kuchuk, a maker whose store was based in the seaport of Basra in Iraq, and it cost him 30 Indian rupees (al-Gharīb, 2003, p. 103)

The features of the *ʿūd* are its oval shaped body, short neck, wooden material and its glued or unmovable bridge (al-Shaṭṭī, 2012). This *ʿūd* contains distinctive features that are not found in the *ʿūd hindī*, such as the number of courses: in the *ʿūd* is five, or more rarely six, while in the *ūd hindī* it is four. The *ʿūd* has a fine quality sound and it is large, which means the sound is louder. The shift from *ʿūd hindī* to *ʿarabī* can be traced in the development of *ṣaut* music. A number of pieces were likely to be composed on *ʿūd ʿarabī* because they require five courses to be performed, for example, *ṣaut Be-abī al-Shumūs* (el-Koueti, 1928). Therefore, the additional course has expanded the range of notes in the *ṣaut* compositions. The loudness of the *ʿūd* was a reason to increase the number of mirwās players; this was typically just one individual in the period of the *ʿūd hindī*, but is now three or more. Such an increase in the number of *mirwās* players would not have happened if the *ʿūd* type was *hindī*, because its frequency is described as weak and low. See table. 4.1.

	ʿŪd Hindī	**ʿŪd ʿArabī**
Name	*ʿŪd hindī, ʿūd bambāwī, ʿūd bu-raqmah, mandolin*	*ʿūd, ʿūd shāmī*
Courses	Four	Five or six
Shape	Circular shaped body and long neck	Oval shaped body and short neck
Materials	Indian teak wood (*sāy or ṣāj*)	Different types of wood
Soundboard	Thick skin (*raqmah*)	Wood
Rosette	One small hole	Ornamented rosette from wood or other materials
Sources	India	Different Arabic regions, e.g. Syria, Iraq, Egypt

Table. 4.1. The difference in features between ʿud hindī and ʿūd ʿarabī.

With the exception of a few performers, such as ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti and Saʿūd al-Mukhāyṭa, most *ṣaut* singers are *ʿūd* players. Therefore, there is a unique association between singing and playing *ʿūd* in *ṣaut*, and this association explains why people in the *ṣaut* community still refer to the singer as *imkabbis*, because usually the *ʿūd* player and the *ṣaut* singer are one.

Due to the prominent and influential role of the *ʿūd* as the only fundamental musical instrument in *ṣaut*, the technique of playing is always changing and developing, and most of this change happened through the efforts of three *ṣaut* performers, Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti, Muḥammad bin Fāris, and Ḥamad Khalīfa (b. 1928).

Since the 1920s, the recordings show that the technique and style of playing *ʿūd* were generally similar among the performers. The exception was Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti, who used an advanced technique that required long periods of practice and skill. He was the first *ṣaut* player to demonstrate *al-rīsha al-maqlūba*, a technique that

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requires the plectrum (*al-rīsha*) to be used in two directions, up and down. All the

players from his generation used the plectrum in one direction, down only. This

technique allowed Dāwūd to perform and improvise in the music of *ṣaut* that would

be impossible to achieve using the plectrum in one direction style. Dāwūd was

sophisticated in his use of the *'ūd* positions system, which was very limited before

his contribution. He was able to jump to the positions, up to the fifth note, easily,

clearly, and confidently. Although the style of Dāwūd is a distinctive and attractive

one for playing *ṣaut*, his influence is limited among *'ūd* players as this style demands

thorough training for a long period of time in order to reap the benefits.

By comparison, Muḥammad bin Fāris has been influential in his contribution to the

development of *'ūd* playing in *ṣaut* (al-'Ammārī, 1991, p. 318). Compared to

Dāwūd, the techniques developed by bin Fāris are much easier to adopt and more

popular among the *ṣaut* performers. Bin Fāris used the technique of making a wide

vibrato on a F5 and dragging it gradually to the G5, and sometimes the wide vibrato

would begin from a lower note, E5 or D5. This type of note ornamentation is a

combination of different types of techniques, such as vibrato and glissando. Most of

the instances of using this technique finish with a long tremolo on G5, which is

another technique begun by Bin Fāris.

In the early 1960s, Ḥamad Khalīfa took the *'ūd* playing in *ṣaut* to a new level of

dexterity, which further enhanced the position of the *'ūd* in *ṣaut*. In *ṣaut,* usually the

instrumental refrain is similar to the sung melody. Khalīfa developed the refrain by

presenting a semi-instrumental or semi-composed part, which is a combination of the

ṣaut melody and an improvised rhythmic *taqsīm*. Sometimes, Khalīfa used his notion

of the instrumental refrain in the beginning of the *ṣaut* like an introduction, and sometimes during the *ṣaut*, and both of these methods were previously unknown in *ṣaut*. In the end of the *ṣaut*, particularly in the *tawshīḥa* part, he would play a long *taqsīm* while other performers usually performed a short *taqsīm* or left this to another instrument, commonly the violin. In addition, Khalīfa used *al-rīsha al-maqlūba* but in a more limited way, generally only in template passages, which is however different from what had been used by Dāwūd.

Nowadays, there are a number of names that are considered to be prominent *ʿūd* players in *ṣaut*. They utilise different techniques, mostly those founded by Dāwūd, Fāris, and Khalīfa. These include, for example, Rāshed al-Ḥemely from Kuwait and Rāshed Zuwayid from Bahrain.

The tuning system (currently *dozān* and previously *taṣlīḥ*) of the *ʿūd* in *ṣaut* is traditional, in that it can be found in several areas in Arab world. The first or highest course is C5, the second G4, the third D4, the fourth A3, and the only exception is the fifth which is usually G3. It is possible to find some players who tune the fifth as F3, but it is rare. It is common to tune the *ʿūd* one step down, which means the first course that is usually C5 will be Bb4, and similar with the rest of the courses. In addition, it possible to find singers tune their *ʿūd* one step up, and the first course will be D5 instead of C5. This matter of the *ʿūd* tuning depends on the range of the singer's voice, because transposition in *ṣaut* is very limited.

The majority of *ʿūd* types used in *ṣaut* are Arabic; it is possible to find a singer who uses a Turkish *ʿūd*, but this is rare. The performers believe that the *ʿūd* in *ṣaut* needs

a specific type of sound and frequency, which they describe as *yābes* (solid or strong). Therefore, they prefer the large sized *'ūd* to ensure that the frequency is loud. This made the instruments of the Iraqi *'ūd* maker Muḥammad Faḍel (d. 2002), made to be big and loud, very popular among *ṣaut* performers. 'Abdullah al-Shaṭṭī, a Kuwaiti *'ūd* maker, told me that he made an *'ūd* specifically designed for *ṣaut* music. This instrument was similar to the Faḍel style of *'ūd*, characterised by its large-sized bowl (*ṭāsa*) as well as a loud and deep sound.

Nowadays, the *'ūd* plectrum tends to be thick and made from plastic, to ensure that the player can extract a loud sound from the *'ūd*. In the old TV recordings, a few old singers, such as Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti, used a long feather of an eagle as an *'ūd* plectrum, which, it seems, was more wide-spread in the 1930s and 1940s.

Mirwās

The *mirwās* is the only percussion instrument used in *ṣaut*. This percussion was brought from India to Kuwait in the middle of the 19th century by 'Abdullah al-Faraj to use in his *ṣaut* music (al-'Ammārī, 2002, p.25). Recently the *mirwās* has become more of a figure or symbol, not only of the *ṣaut* community, but also of music culture in the entire Gulf region. It became popular out of the context of *ṣaut*, and it can be found regularly on the TV and in radio jingles, as well as many contemporary musical pieces that are not *ṣaut* music. Within the *ṣaut* community itself, the *mirwās* holds a uniquely significant position amongst the *mirwās* players, many of whom do not play any other type of traditional percussion instrument. Indeed, some players

gave their preferred *mirwās* a name of endearment, such as *bulbul*[11] by Fāḍel

Maqāmes, and *dār al-ḥanān*[12] by Khalaf al-Mas'ūd (al-Jassār, 2008).

History and prevalence of the mirwās

Despite the *mirwās* being a familiar term in the Arabian Peninsula, its origin and

etymology are obscure. Yusūf Dūkhī states that the term and instrument *mirwās* date

back to the Abbasid Caliphate period. He refers to the word *rawwāsīn* mentioned by

the Abbasid music author Ibn Zaila (d. 1044) in his book *al-Kāfī Fī al-Mūsīqā* as

meaning the *mirwās* player at that time. Dūkhī asserts that the term *rawwāsīn* has

been corrupted and mutated at some point to become *imrawsīn*, the word for the

mirwās players used in Kuwait (Dūkhī, 1984, p. 199). However, Ibn Zaila does not

actually write *rawwāsīn*: rather, the terms that can be found in his book are *rāwisīn*

and *rawishīn*. Ibn Zaila explains that *rāwisīn* is a music genre or a tune that is free

from poetry or words, and can be presented through the human vocals or strings

instruments. The editor of Ibn Zaila's book, Zakariyā Yūsuf, believes that *rāwisīn* is

what we would today call *mawwāl* or *taqāsīm* in Arabic music (Ibn Zaila, 1964, p.

66, p. 70), and that it is unrelated to any kind of rhythm or percussive instrument. In

addition, the term *imrawsīn* seems never to have been used in Bahrain and Kuwait.

Commonly, people in the *ṣaut* community call the *mirwās* players *imrawsah*.

Therefore, the theory of Dūkhī is highly questionable.

It would seem that the oldest source to refer to the term *mirwās* can be found in

Yemeni literature. One of the earliest traces a poem written by Aḥmad Abdulraḥmān

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11 - *Bulbul* means nightingale.

12 - *Dār al-ḥanān* means the house of love.

al-Ānsī (d. 1825), who said: *"or extinguish his passion, he who is far from you, by the tunes of the strings and the sound of marāwīs"* (Ghānem, 1987, p. 287). 'Abdullah Muḥammad Bā-Ḥasan (d. 1928) is another Yemeni poet who makes mention of it: "do not fear any matter, this is a great boon, on the tune of the mirwās, will hold the night (samra)" (al-'Ammārī, p.83).

Mirwās as a term is used in many other Arabian Peninsula or surrounding areas, such as Oman. There are also a few terms that are derived from or are similar to the word *mirwās*, such as *moryās* in Nubian region and in Sudan (Olsen 2005, p. 83), and *mirwāsī* in Zanzibar (al-Ibrāhīm, 2005). It is not certain that the instruments of *moryās* and *mirwāsī* are similar to the *mirwās* of ṣaut in Bahrain and Kuwait. Nevertheless, the features of the *mirwās* in Yemen[13] and Oman are also quite similar to the *mirwās* in ṣaut, and the differences lie in the size, the technique of its use, and the rhythms played (al-Kathīrī, 2015, p. 165). In addition, according to Lisa Urkevich the *mirwās* in Saudi Arabia, specifically in the Ḥejāz region, is a common term associated with all types of double headed drum (Urkevich, 2015, p. 183)

Mirwās features and technique of use
In the Gulf, the *mirwās* has a specific shape and method of use (*tarwīs*) that is used in the ṣaut genre, and to a limited extent, in sea songs. It is a small double headed drum that is covered by skin on both sides. The length is about 20 cm and the diameter is about 15 cm (al-Mawāsh, 2011). The weight of the *mirwās* is light to enable the player to hold it and raise it with one hand. It possible to find a player

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13 - *Mirwās* in Yemen was accompanied string instruments, particularly the Ṣan'ānī music until 1930s, when it began to disappear from the strings bands, and continues to be used only in the Yemeni folk music scope (Ghānem, 1987, p.19; Bin Tha'lab, 1987, p.41).

who uses a heavier and bigger size *mirwās*, but this is rare and probably only found in cases where a players wishes to show off (al-Jassār, 2008).

There is a standard method of holding or gripping and using the *mirwās* in *ṣaut*. The player usually uses the thumb, third and fourth fingers of the left hand to hold the *mirwās* from underneath. He tilts the drum slightly towards to the right hand, and raises it almost to chest level. The *mirwās* should be 30 cm away from the body of the player. The right hand knocks the *mirwās* to extract two types of sounds, *ṭaraf* and *baṭin*. *Ṭaraf* is the high pitch sound that happens by using the index and middle fingers to knock the rim of the *mirwās*. At the same time, the index finger of the left hand touches the skin of the underside to make the knocking sound sharper (*ghamta*). *Baṭin* is the low pitch sound that happens by using the same right hand fingers, index and middle, to knock the area between the centre and the rim of the *mirwās*. Simultaneously, the index finger releases the skin on the underside, generating a high frequency and deep sound. There are players who use only one finger to extract the *ṭaraf* and *baṭin*, usually the index finger, but this is considered as weakness in technique or worse, a sign of failure (al-Jassār, 2008). See Fig. 4.4.

Fig. 4.4. A mirwās player

Manufacture of the mirwās

Three elements are involved in the manufacture of the *mirwās* that is used in *ṣaut*:
wood, skin, and cotton. The body of the *mirwās* (*qurf*) is made mainly from a large
piece of teak or rosewood. The piece of wood is carved out perfectly without any
breaks or cracks to become hollow from inside with a circular shape on both sides,
inside and out, then the *qurf* rubbed inside and outside to become thin,
approximately four mm in thickness. A circular hole 5 mm in diameter is made in the
middle of the *qurf*, the purpose of which is to help release the air pressure. The *qurf*
of the *mirwās* is painted from outside with different colours, such as red, yellow, and
green. Recently, many *mirwās* players have preferred not to have colouring on their
mirwās because it reduces or changes the sound.

The skin (*raqma*) that is used to cover both sides of the *mirwās* is usually rabbit,
goat, or fish skin. Each *raqma* type gives a different type of sound, sharp or deep.
Therefore, the performers sometimes use two different types of skin to cover the
mirwās, for example rabbit for the higher side and goat for the lower, which gives a
sound that combines the deepness in *baṭin* and sharpness or resonance in *ṭaraf*. The
size of the *raqma* before its installation should be one and a half times the diameter
of the *mirwās*. The *raqma* must be immersed in water for a short time to make it
flexible enough to install onto the *mirwās*. After the *raqma* covers a side of the
mirwās, a piece of bamboo made as a collar (*ṭouq*, pl. *ṭījān*) is shaped and placed
onto the *raqma* and the *qurf*, like a ring on a finger. The *raqma* is pulled to the top to
cover the *ṭouq*, then another *ṭouq* is placed to press and hold the *raqma*, and the
process is repeated on the other side of the *mirwās*. After installing both sides of the
mirwās, the skin that is left of the *ṭījān* will be cut.

A long, twined and thin cotton rope, about 2 mm in width, is passed between the body of the *mirwās* (*qurf*) and the collar (*ṭouq*) by a big needle (*mīber*). It is used to make six holes in on side and seven in the other, and to connect both sides in a zigzag form. At the end of the threading, 80 cm of the rope is left to use for pulling the rope that is between the collars of both sides. This pulling or tugging process is known as *shibāḥ*, and helps to control the tune of the *mirwās*. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were *marāwīs* with metal rings placed between every two lines of rope, and were used in tugging (*shibāḥ*) the *raqma* by pulling the ring up. However, this model did not succeed against the traditional *mirwās* and disappeared later (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter VI, p. 12; al-Mawāsh, 2011; al-Jassār, 2008).

It is important to note a development process that happened to the *mirwās* in Kuwait. The head of the Musical Instruments Office in the Ministry of Education in 1983, Rāshed al-Rashīd, had difficulty in providing percussion instruments for the schools in Kuwait, due to a financial problem. Al-Rashīd's solution was inspired by the electric instrument, which is usually made from artificial materials. He proposed using a plastic pipe as a body of *mirwās* (*qurf*), rather than expensive wood. At that time, the traditional *mirwās* cost four Kuwaiti dinars (nine pounds sterling), whilst the plastic *mirwās* cost 150 Kuwaiti fils (35 pence). A further limitation of the wooden *mirwās* was the uniformity of size. Plastic instrument could be made several sizes: quarter, half, and three quarters, which suited all ages of students (al-Suraie', 2011). Although the plastic *mirwās* is very effective in the schools and less costly, it is rare to find it used within the *ṣaut* community.

There are some problems or diseases that affect the skins of *mirwās* (*raqma*), and force the player to replace them with new ones. Commonly, there are three types of problem that cause the *raqma* to lose its capability to function properly: a hole in the skin (*baṭ*), a rupture near the collar or the rim (*mindili'*), or the deterioration of the quality of the skin. In this case, the *mirwās* needs *riqām*, which means re-skinning or making a new skin for the *mirwās*.

Mirwās players

The oldest *mirwās* player that been written about is ʿAbbūd al-Ṣaffār, who accompanied ʿAbdullah al-Faraj in 19th century. The aforementioned Muḥammad al-Baker (d. 1953) is another *mirwās* player from the late 19th century, who accompanied al-Faraj as well as his two brothers Khāled and Yūsuf al-Baker (al-Shamlān, 1975, p.40). In 1930s and 1940s, many *mirwās* players were known for their work on early records made in both Bahrain and Kuwait. Mullā Saʿūd al-Mukhāyṭa (d. 1971), was a singer and *mirwās* player, and performed with many of the *ṣaut* singers in the 1920s and 1930s. Here corded his *mirwās* playing with ʿAbdullaṭīf, Maḥmūd, Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti in Kuwait, and Muḥammad bin Fāris, and Ḍāḥī bin Walīd in Bahrain. Ḥamad Buṭaibān (d. 1933), was a Kuwaiti *mirwās* player who accompanied bin Fāris, bin Walīd, and al-Mukhāyṭa in their recordings in 1932 (al-ʿAmmārī, 1991, p. 139). From Bahrain, Ṣaqer bin Fāris (d. 1948), Juwhar al-Najdī and Blāl bin Faraj, all performed in the recordings of the 1930s. After the1950s, with the developments to the *mirwās* performance approach and the appearance of the *mirwās* improviser, many players became well known such as Almāṣ Bashīr (d. 2014), Fāḍel Maqāmes, Surūr al-Youḥa and Rāshed Sanad. Nowadays, several *mirwās* players are prominent and popular amongst the *ṣaut*

community, such as Muḥammad al-Ḥamad, 'Abdullah Saffāḥ, Jawād al-Shaṭṭī (d. 2013), Hilāl al-Thawwādī, and Sālem bin 'Abdullah.

Violin

During the 1920s, the violin was already involved in the *ṣaut* ensemble in both Bahrain and Kuwait, but references from the time do not provide sufficient detail about the violin before this decade. Only Yūsuf Dūkhī mentions that the violin was known in *ṣaut* in the late 19th century and refers to Alī al-Khaḍar or al-Akhḍar as a master of violin who accompanied al-Faraj (d. 1901), and Khāled al-Baker who was a singer in the 19th century and passed away in 1925 (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter II, Pupils, p.4). Farḥān Bu-Shāyi' is another source who refers to al-Khaḍar. He indicates that he was accompanied by the violin of al-Khaḍar, in the 1920s (Bu-Shāyi', c. 1978). The sources mention two further names who were violin players in the 1920s, Ya'qūb Abdulrazāq al-Naqī (d. c. 1963) from Kuwait and Sa'ad Bu-Sayyūl (d. 1933) from Bahrain (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter II, Pupils, p.4; al-'Ammārī, 1991, p. 321). Unfortunately, there is no recording available for any of the aforementioned performers to know what their style and ability in playing the violin was. The only violin player who performed *ṣaut* in the 1920s and whose recordings are available is Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti. Ṣāleḥ is considered the father of the violin in *ṣaut* and the most prominent violin player in the history of *ṣaut*. The advanced level of Ṣāleḥ in violin implies that the violin players in Kuwait before Ṣāleḥ may have reached a level of technique that was good, and which influenced Ṣāleḥ's capabilities. We know that Ṣāleḥ and also al-Naqī studied violin with al-Khaḍar at the beginning of their playing careers (Dūkhī, 1971, Chapter II, Pupils, p.4), but we

do not know if al-Khaḍar was a good player, nor if he was the only teacher of Ṣāleḥ in Kuwait.

As in the whole Arab region, the violin in Bahrain and Kuwait is called the *kamān* or *kamanjah*. In addition, the tuning of the violin is exactly the same as that in other Arabic music cultures which is D5, G4, D4 and G3, which is a tuning that is known since 1940s, and became more popular later (al-Turkī, 2016). A few violin players use a different tuning (C5, G4, D4 and G3), which is the old Arabic tuning that was widespread until probably the 1960s. However, the number of players who use this tuning is limited and it would appear that this practice is likely to disappear.

Although the violin is considered to be an additional or unessential instrument in the *ṣaut* band, it has a great influence on improvisatory performance in *ṣaut*. Most *taqāsīm* in the *ṣaut* genre, which are found in the *mawwāl* before the *ṣaut*, and in the *tawshīḥa* in the end of *ṣaut* are performed by the violin player. The position of the violin became more prominent through the efforts of Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti, who sometimes took a leading role in recordings of *ṣaut*. His performances for the instrumental refrains in *ṣaut* were full of improvisation that led the other performers, such as on the *'ūd* and *qānūn*, to follow his perspective in formulating the refrain. Ṣāleḥ was able to interpret the improvised singing in *ṣaut*, and possessed unusual skill in following the singers and their unpredictable improvisation. Many of his *taqāsīm* in *tawshīḥa* are like instrumental pieces in themselves which many violin players learn and memorise to utilise in their *ṣaut* performances. Moreover, Ṣāleḥ was the only *ṣaut* singer who played violin rather than *'ūd* during his performance.

Later in the 1950s and onward, many violin players used the Egyptian violin playing style in performing *ṣaut*, and a number of them were Egyptians, such as Najīb Rezqallah (d. 1972) and Ḥamdī al-Ḥarīrī (d. 2002). Nowadays, there are number of prominent violin players in the *ṣaut* community, such as 'Abdullah Khairī from Bahrain and Mubārak al-Misnad and Jāber al-Jāssim from Kuwait.

Qānūn

The *qānūn* is an instrument that has a modest presence in *ṣaut* history, and was not available in the region until the 1950s. Outside the region, specifically in Baghdad, a few performers from the region recorded their songs with bands that contained a *qānūn* player. In 1928, 'Abdullah Faḍālah from Kuwait recorded two Kuwaiti songs for Baidaphon Company, and these records are the first that include a *qānūn*. In the same year, 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti recorded a group of Kuwaiti songs includes an *istimā'* for Odeon Company in Baghdad, with a band containing a *qānūn*. In both sessions of recordings, the *qānūn* player was Ṣayyūn Cohen from Iraq. However, although the content of these recordings were traditional songs from Kuwait, they do not include any *ṣaut*. In early 1937, Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti recorded some *ṣaut* songs, such as *Ṭāla Lailī,* for HMV Company in which the *qānūn* was part of the band. Within a few months, Muhammad bin Fāris and 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti recorded their *ṣaut* songs with a *qānūn* player for the same company, HMV. The *qānūn* player in these three recording sessions is Yūsuf Za'rūr (d. 1969), an Iraqi musician who was a member of the official Iraqi broadcast ensemble, which was headed by Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti at that time, the violin player in these three sessions (al-Kuwaiti, 2014, p. 23). In 1947, Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti recorded a few *ṣaut* songs, for instance *Lawlā al-*

Nasīm, for the BBC Radio, and probably the recordings were recorded in Baghdad. The recordings consisted of the *qānūn* of Za'rūr, and in the last part of the *ṣaut*, known as the *tawshīḥa*, Za'rūr played a *taqsīm* on his *qānūn* which had never been done in the previous recordings.

However, with the exception of the recordings that were made in Baghdad, the *qānūn* was an unused instrument among *ṣaut* performers in Bahrain and Kuwait. The first *qānūn* player from the region was Ḥamad al-Rujaib (d. 1998), who went to Egypt and took private lessons with the Egyptian *qānūn* master Muḥammad 'Abdu Ṣāleḥ in the 1950s (Bashīr, 1990s, p.58). Furthermore, in 1952, two *qānūn* players arrived from Iraq, Fawzī Nājī and Sālem Ḥussain, to join the Kuwait radio ensemble. In 1959, the Kuwaiti government decided to establish a big band and they made agreements with many musicians from Egypt, included Muḥammad Riḍā Ghunaima, who was preferred by the *ṣaut* performers in that time, because of his unique style in performing *ṣaut* (Surayi', 2008, p. 110). In the 1960s, a few Bahraini and Kuwaiti musicians began to study and play *qānūn* seriously and academically such as 'Abdullah Bu-Gheith from Kuwait and Aḥmad al-Fardān (d. 2014) from Bahrain. They participated in *ṣaut* performances whether in the media or in private gatherings (*samra*). Until now, the *qānūn* is present in *ṣaut* but it is not as important as the violin. Present-day *qānūn* players participating in *ṣaut* include Muḥammad al-Ruwaished, Bassām Al-Bolūshī and Ayyūb Khuḍur.

There are further instruments that could be found in *ṣaut* recordings, but their presence depends on whether the performance is happening in a private gathering, which is considered more conventional, or in the public media, which is

unconventional. Instruments like the *nāy* (wooden flute) might be found in *ṣaut*
gathering while instruments like the double bass or cello are extremely rare and
seldom used in *ṣaut* gatherings. Rather they can be seen commonly in TV or other
public media performances of *ṣaut*.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to discuss the instruments that are used in the performance of
ṣaut. It consists of the main instruments, *'ūd* and *mirwās*, and other less common
ṣaut instruments such as the violin. The discussion sheds light on many aspects of
the instruments used, such as the terms, playing techniques, prominent musicians,
and the developments that have happened with regard to the features and playing of
such instruments.

Additionally, the chapter argues about the features of *'ūd hindī*, which is an
instrument that no longer exists in *ṣaut,* and probably disappeared in the 1930s.
Moreover, an attempt has been made to compare it with the *'ūd* that is known today
and the old *'ūd* – the *qanbūs* – that was used in the Arabian peninsula, and which
many researchers claim are the same instrument.

CHAPTER V

VARIATION AND IMPROVISATION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR

UNDERSTANDING ŞAUT

Introduction

This Chapter will address the concept of variation and improvisation in *şaut* in order to explore the areas in which existing research into these practices is lacking. Besides giving an overview of definitions and uses of variation and improvisation in the academic field, the following discussion illuminates the features of creativity in *şaut* that give us, in my opinion, a fresh opportunity to understand it from the perspective of practitioners. A central post of this is the learning processes involved in the *şaut* community, so this Chapter engages with those in some depth.

Improvisation: definitions and methods

The Oxford Dictionary of Musical Terms defines improvisation as "a performance that is spontaneous, on inventive whim, rather than one given from a written or printed score or from memory" (Latham, 2004, p. 87). Similarly, in the Harvard Dictionary of Music improvisation is defined as "the creation of music in the course of performance" (Randel, 2003, p. 406). In addition, C. Snowber indicates that "surprise, wonder, mystery and discovery" as the basis of the improvisation (2002, p. 6).

Discourse on improvisation does not contain a logical typology (Gerson-Kiwi, 1970, p. 66). Because every music type possesses its own characteristics and features, ethnomusicologists try to adopt their own approaches which can cover the improvisers' practices and convey the sound and act of improvisation. Attempts to build a suitable method therefore depend on the type and conditions of the music being studied.

Bruno Nettl and Ronald Riddle (1973, pp. 11-55) studied *taqāsīm*, a non-metric improvised form of Arabic music by analysing sixteen *taqāsīm*. They chose the ones which shared the same *maqām*, and had been performed by the same improviser using two different instruments, the *buzuq* (long neck lute) and the *nāy* (wooden flute). The recordings were taken on different days. The study measured the length of each *taqsīm*, the number and length of every section within each as well as the tone and the modulations to secondary *maqāmāt* or tetrachords. In addition, Nettl and Riddle tried to detect repetition of techniques, such as sequences, to help understand the improvisation process in these *taqāsīm* pieces.

In his thesis about the *'ūd* improvisation of Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī, Kareem Joseph Roustom (2006), tried to find a method that could help him study and analyse the improvisation or *taqāsīm* of al-Sunbāṭī. Roustom discussed elements that are related to the technique of playing *'ūd*, such as the role of the left and right hands. He explained how to transcribe the expressions that are used on the *'ūd*, and found new symbols to assist him in explaining in greater detail the techniques that were used by al-Sunbāṭī, but could not be found in any music dictionary (2006, p. 60). In addition, in the Chapter on transcriptions and analysis (2006, pp. 170-152), Roustom notated

the examples (six pieces of *taqāsīm*), followed by a transcription of the modulations. He also included a discussion of improvisation in the examples, including a table that clarified the length of the phrases in al-Sunbāṭī's music.

However, as Roustom indicates "…the majority of *taqāsīm* are non-metric" (2006, p. 50), which should be considered as the main difference from *ṣaut*. Additionally, the modulations in *ṣaut* are limited, usually to two *maqāmāt*, and this does not need tables, only to present and show the transcription of *maqāmāt* that were used in *ṣaut* example. On the other hand, using the classical style of transcription by notating the music on the score, as Roustom did, is helpful for improvisation in *ṣaut*.

Although the studies of Nettl and Riddle, and Roustom focus on elucidating an Arabic genre of improvisation, the scholars propose a method that deals with just one improviser, allowing him to serve as a laboratory model.

This study of *ṣaut* will be broader than those, reviewing a range of performers from different periods and regions. But the specific approach will be different as well, because the practice, structure, and form of *taqāsīm* are significantly different from *ṣaut* music. *Taqāsīm* is un-rhythmical and is in a non-metric form. Within the same *taqsīm*, the finale notes, number of themes or sections, and their length are variable. The performance of the whole *taqāsīm* melody is usually improvised. On the other hand, in *ṣaut* the practice of improvisation relates to specific rhythms and musical sections. In a *ṣaut* song, the melody is specified and through it, the performer improvises.

A valuable model is offered by Ruth F. Davis in the book, *ma'lūf reflections on the Arab Andalusian music of Tunisia* (2004). The method that is used by Davis relies on various elements such as the text, scale, pentachords ('*uqūd*), and the transcription. Davis suggests or adopts different perspectives, drawing from a number of experts in *ma'lūf* music to illustrate the scale, '*uqūd*, and transcription of the model. She reveals how each expert or scholar recognises, absorbs, and interprets the example of *ma'lūf* that studied. This comparative method that is used by Davis provides inspiration for a similar approach due to a correlation between different versions in *ma'lūf* and *ṣaut*: it is possible to provide transcriptions for each chosen *ṣaut* to analyse and extract the creativity practices. Each example can be studied through different performers, performances, and periods. In addition, the scales (*maqāmāt*) and tetrachords are fundamental in the analyses study, to able to define any change of *maqām* during the performance.

In another important and recent study, Laudan Nooshin (2015) looked at creative practice in Iranian classical music. Nooshin's approach in studying creativity in *dastgah segah* music, was more broad and comprehensive. Nooshin used a comparative approach to analyse the *dastgah* by a number of performers who were of different ages, both singers and instrumentalists. Nooshin collected the recordings from different resources, for instance, live concerts, commercial recordings, and from the Iranian radio broadcasts. The performances analysed contained all the main traditional Iranian instruments.

The method of analysis in Nooshin's study shares some similarities to that of Nettl and Riddle (1973), for example, by discussing the tone and length of certain parts or

sections. However, in order to compare and to understand how Iranian classical instrumentalists improvise in music, Nooshin's study also includes transcriptions of different variations of the same motif or part that been performed by different performers. Nooshin suggests new terms to identify the phrases and parts of improvised performance, to fill the absence of terminology in *dastgah* music, and she also proposed a categorisation for the various permutations. The study additionally includes symbols for a semi quarter tone (*koron*), tremolo (*riz*), exaggerated vibrato (*mālesh*), and other unique techniques used only in Iranian music.

In fact, the approach used in Nooshin's study suggests many elements which could be employed in the analysis of improvisation in *ṣaut*. These include developing new terms to address the lack of suitable terminology in practicing improvisation in *ṣaut*. In addition, in *ṣaut* the comparative approach could be used to analyse improvisation in performances by different improvisers or different recordings by the same performer. This could improve an understanding of how *ṣaut* performers think and improvise during improvisational performance.

Unfortunately, there are no existing theoretical systems to describe the use of tetrachords and *maqāmāt* amongst *ṣaut* performers. Additionally, as will become clear, the approaches and styles used during *ṣaut* performances are unknown or unused in Iranian and Tunisian musics. Therefore, there is a need to construct a method which is suitable for analysis and description of *ṣaut* characteristics.

Another recent text is Anne Rasmussen's (2009) study of Indonesian reciters of the Quran. A Quran master teaches the students melodies and the style to be used, as well as a number of musical phrases that help the student to discover the best way to use certain *maqām*, the typical phrases, and the common variations. Part of the teaching involves instruction in improvisation in accordance with these. The system of teaching described here does not exist in the *ṣaut* field, at least not nowadays. Teacher-student relationships of this kind are very rare: the scope of opportunity to learn *ṣaut* is limited to attending a *samra* (*ṣaut* gathering), or accompanying the singer in percussion or violin. Aside from these occasions, the singer has to learn the style of singing *ṣaut*, including being creative, by himself and does this through listening to *ṣaut* for a long time and accommodating many melodies, variations, and improvised phrases in the repertoire. Rasmussen's description of learning individual musical phrases for improvisation is also absent in *ṣaut*, because each *ṣaut* is a separate example that should be learnt to expand the knowledge of the performer. Rasmussen also demonstrates that teaching is not only about what the reciter should do, but also what not to do. It is usually related to particular aesthetic and cultural considerations, which means that not every change made during a performance will be considered to be creative. The reciter in Indonesia employs different types of vocal ornamentation, such as sobbing, "chopping" and quasi-yodelling, and different types of singing techniques that the student learns, such as trills, vibrato and cadence (*qaflah*). Many of these ornamentation types have never been used in the *ṣaut* field. But of course, there are ornamentations that are particular to *ṣaut* which will be discussed later, so in a broad sense we find some overlap.

A key figure in discussion of improvisation has been Bruno Nettl, who refers to it in his more recent work as "…the creation of music in the course of performance-exists alongside music that is not improvised but precomposed" (Nettl, 2009, p.186). He expands further on this definition in terms of understanding the values that reflect creativity as being relationships between concept and practice, using similarities and *differences* in the creative field through comparison of the Persian music genre *radif¸* and other improvisatory music forms in south India and the Arabic world. He works to determine or explain the terms that describe the phases of improvisatory practice, how improvisation can be learnt, and the motives that encourage the musician to make the improvisation. Nettl is keen to understand how musicians learn to improvise in *radif* music. He reveals that musicians learn *gushehs*, which are "melodies characterized by a typical tonality and characterizing motif", and change their order in the *radif*: this is improvisation in *radif* music. Nettl illustrates different methods of using *gushehs* in various *dastgahs*, by changing or manipulating their order, or utilising parts of them. The notions that surround *gusheh* are a way to understand improvisation in *radif* (Nettl, 2009, p. 185, p. 192, p. 195). As will emerge below *ṣaut* and *radif* converge through the practice of changing the order of the sections in a song.

Variation and improvisation in şaut

Wherever the ʿūd takes me

I start by introducing an incident that gives some indication of how we should approach improvisation in *ṣaut*. It dates back to an evening in the late 1990s when I was involved with a group performing *ṣaut* songs. At that time I was still a beginner

and unfamiliar with many particulars of the *ṣaut* genre. At some point between songs

the singer was searching through his song notebook for a suitable *ṣaut* poem to

perform. This was a manuscript that been written by the singer himself. As I tuned

my violin, the *mirwās* players were preparing their instruments by tightening the

ropes and beating the skin to find the ideal sharp percussive sound. As we were

doing this, someone from the *mirwās* players' group asked the singer to find a *ṣaut*

which was, as he described it, military, or on the theme of battle (*ḥarbī*). It was my

first encounter with this term, and I did not understand it as I was only familiar with

other *ṣaut* types like *shāmī*, *'arabī*, and *khāyalī*. However, later on I came to

understand this common term, which refers to a type of *ṣaut* that is fast paced and

involves singing in a high register. The singer, if I recall correctly, was Ibrāhīm al-

Khashram, and his response was very quiet. He answered without hesitation, using

an expression which roughly translates as, "whatever the *'ūd* brings" or "wherever

the *'ūd* takes me" (*ellī yeṭal'a-l-'ūd).* He then began suddenly playing on his *'ūd*, and

the *mirwās* players and myself as a violin player followed his lead in

accompaniment. The music of the *'ūd* in this opening part was unclear, and for about

30 seconds there was a *maqām* to be heard, possibly *bayātī*, and with a *shāmī*

rhythm, but the music did not relate to any specific *ṣaut* piece. It was composed of

completely improvisatory instrumental phrases, and I simply tried, with my violin, to

be as close as I could to his improvised rhythmic music on *maqām bayātī*, by

chasing his notes, up and down (see Fig. 3. 14.). Nevertheless, gradually the music

became clearer and the melody of a *ṣaut* song emerged. As a result, all of us as

performers, the *mirwās* and violin players, became more confident and harmonious.

This practice and this phrase (*ellī yeṭalʿa-l-ʿūd* [wherever the *ʿud* takes me]*),* were my introduction to the improvisatory tradition in *ṣaut*. Until then I had improvised along with the others during performances, but I had never thought of that as improvisation – it was simply a part of playing. That day revealed a separate playing event that was not a piece of *ṣaut*. The singer had begun the *ṣaut* without any idea about the melody that he was proposing to sing. Except for the *maqām* and the rhythm that were apparent, the music was totally ambiguous. But the singer believed that he was being obedient and submissive to his *ʿūd*, which is reflected in his choice of phrase "wherever the *ʿūd* takes me". Al-Khashram was touching the strings as if trying to find any message from his *ʿūd*, any suggestion or inspiration. In other words, he dealt with the *ʿūd* as an originator of improvisation notions. The statement and the act of the singer were how I came to understand the relationship between the performer and improvisation in the *ṣaut* community.

One might ask, how can the *ʿūd* have the ability to lead the singer to choose a *ṣaut* through this improvisatory section? Although many *ṣaut* singers use the same phrase and practice, none of them have clarified the structure of such improvisatory beginnings. They never comment on how the *ʿūd* can suggest a *ṣaut*. However, there are small clues that could offer an explanation. During the playing of the *ʿūd*, the improvised phrases may contain several notes that are similar somehow to a melody found in the *ṣaut* repertoire. Here the singer will recognise or remember a certain *ṣaut* song, and then he will decide to follow his *ʿūd*'s "suggestion" and perform what he noticed through this elusory improvised entrance. Viewed from this perspective, despite the implication of the phrase, the singer is responding to a musical moment and memory as opposed to the *ʿūd*.

However, there is another aspect that is important to note. The *maqām* used in the improvisatory music is not always the *maqām* of the *ṣaut* to which it leads. So the singer can use the improvisation as a way to lead those present to expect one *maqām*, but eventually present them with another. This gives the singer total control over the musical setting, affirming his role as a leader. It is also a causative element in performance, whether it leads smoothly onwards with a *maqām*, or creatives an expressive disjuncture when the *maqām* of the song is different. Improvisation can be a fundamental component in generating, not only modifying or adding to, the *ṣaut* song. Improvisation activity that precedes the emergence of the *ṣaut* song itself shapes how the song itself enters, and is heard.

Although there is a belief that there is a *ṣaut* repertoire that is surrounded by improvisation activities, this example shows that it possible to go further beyond the notion of surroundings. From this example, we realise that improvisation is not a result of an act of elaboration, but it is also a causative element in performance. Improvisation in this example was a fundamental component in creating, not only modifying or adding to the *ṣaut* song. Therefore, improvisation activity could precede the emergence of the *ṣaut* song itself.

Why study variation and improvisation in ṣaut?
Variation and improvisation practices are central to *ṣaut* performance and as such, are an essential element that should not be excluded from any study of the *ṣaut* genre and repertoire. Many studies of *ṣaut* refer to the importance of improvisation but

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most do not discuss the method of improvisation activities in any depth, nor illustrate their constitutive role.

A notable exception is the work of Mubārak al-ʿAmmārī, who described *ṣaut* as an improvisatory musical genre, referring to the terms improvisation, ornamentation, and creativity, through the performance of Muḥammad bin Fāris, a prominent Bahraini *ṣaut* performer. However, this study is rather generalised, and lacks an attempt to clarify the motives, styles, processes, and many other elements that should be considered when offering a comprehensive view of the meaning of creativity in *ṣaut*. Al-ʿAmmārī does refer to the fact that Bin Fāris never sang a *ṣaut* in a way that was similar to another, even if they were in the same *maqām* and similar in phrase, because his singing style was different from one *ṣaut* to another (1991, pp. 223-224). However, when considering the similarity in *maqām*, phrase, and melody between the examples that been sang by Bin Fāris, al-ʿAmmārī does not clarify what connects and what separates these "similar" examples. Thus, even this study failed to address many crucial questions that could lead to understanding the features of improvisation in *ṣaut*.

Broadly speaking, one might ask why *ṣaut* singers tend toward variation rather than simulation, and how such singers become so creative. What it is about the *ṣaut* circle that encourages the *ṣaut* performers to find such a character in variation and improvisation? Furthermore, one may seek to understand in what way terms like "composition" and "improvisation" are problematic concepts in regards *ṣaut*. How does the variation and improvisation in *ṣaut* converge with other cultures and subcultures and how does it diverge?

The reasons for studying the features of variation and improvisation in *ṣaut* are not simply the absence of similar studies in this field, but crucially are because of its integral role in the practice of *ṣaut*. Studying variation and improvisation as a process will lead to understanding other concepts as reflected in *ṣaut* as a culture, such as reciprocal influence between performers, developments in the *ṣaut* form, identity, resistance to modernism, and affiliation to the *ṣaut* community. Within the *ṣaut* community, the generally accepted view is that there is a strong correlation between *ṣaut* as a concept and variation and improvisation as a practice. The culture of variation and improvisation is deeply embedded in the art of *ṣaut*, so much so that distinguished performers can often improvise subconsciously. Such is the pervasiveness of the skills involved in different forms of variation and improvisation that it can be said to be one of the sole reasons for the successful preservation of *ṣaut* in its traditional form. This has led to a view among many performers and listeners that any *ṣaut* repertoire performed without variation and improvisation is a semi or pseudo *ṣaut* or perhaps not a *ṣaut* at all.

In the late 1950s, a number of Kuwaiti young performers, such as ʻAwaḍ Dūkhī and Saʻūd al-Rāshed, began to perform *ṣaut* with a big band that contains many other instruments, which is influenced by modern popular Egyptian music style and never been used in *ṣaut* before. The musicians in this big band played from scores, which had the effect of reducing the scope, or at least greatly reducing the improvisatory elements considered a fundamental aspect of *ṣaut* by the community, because the scores standardised the performance. Improvisatory practices like changing the melody or *maqām* and repeating verses, which would naturally happen during

singing, are impossible to present with this "standardised" ṣaut. The singer must

commit to what is written in the score, otherwise the large band will not able to

accompany the singing.

While described as ṣaut, it is not considered traditional by the community, nor do

members acknowledge it as their own. Purists, who support the traditional or the

hereditary style of performing ṣaut, believe that the standardised presentation of old

ṣaut belongs only to academic institutions and the media (television and radio), and

they reject it on an aesthetic level as tedious. For them, the melody and rhythm are

not enough to represent ṣaut: the spontaneous creative elements are crucial.

Traditional performers who resist standardised ṣaut prefer to call it ṣaut muṭawwar

(a developed ṣaut). They refrain from using adjectives such "old", "traditional" or

"original" to distinguish the form they practice: this is simply "ṣaut".

Why performers use variation and improvisation

There are several potential motivations behind the keenness and commitment to use

variation and improvisation in ṣaut, some of which have been explored by

researchers. A number of performers seek to entertain and enchant or to be under the

effect of wāhis, a colloquial term similar to the Egyptian term ṭarab; roughly

translated these terms describe the stirring of emotion by the songs (Shiloah, 1995, p.

12). The state of wāhis could occur as a response to or through interaction with the

other performers (musicians and percussion players), or the audience. The effect of

wāhis on the performer could be a high level of integration with every component of

the performance, the music, lyrics, instrument (usually an 'ūd), musicians, dancers

(*zaffānah* or *zuwāfīn*) and audience. The performer who reaches this level is described as *mistahwis* or *mingherem* and is able to create something new within the traditional *ṣaut*, and to improvise spontaneously. The performer who is *mistahwis* could also act oddly, in rare cases, and it is probably a result of the ecstasy-like state (*mghayyib*), which is the peak of the enthusiasm in performing or an advanced situation of *wāhis*.

'Abdullah Saffāḥ, a distinguished Kuwaiti *mirwās* player, told me several times about the legendary Bahraini *mirwās* player, Surūr al-Youḥa, who whilst sitting, edged or crept as he forward when he became *mistahwis*. This is unusual as *ṣaut* tradition requires all performers to sit on the floor, and not to move around during the performance. Saffāḥ points out that when al-Youḥa displayed this type of behaviour, he usually presented an advanced level of improvisation on *mirwās*, which Saffāḥ describes as extraordinary (*khārij 'ādah*). Therefore, this concept of *wāhis* could be interpreted as both energy and intelligence that released as an unusual act or improvisation.

Other *ṣaut* performers are motivated to use variation and improvisation to break the monotony of a performance, due to the simplicity and repetitiveness of most *ṣaut* songs. This makes the monotonic *ṣaut* more active. Another theory however, supported by fieldwork as we will see later, is that there is an association between each distinguished performer and their improvisational style. A strong improviser would have the ability to make a *ṣaut* his own and be known for his style. Consequently, amongst these masterful performers it is unlikely to find significant

overlap in style. The reason for this maybe said to be the finite repertoire of *ṣaut*, replenished consistently through the elements of variation and improvisation.

Al-Khashram, the well known *ṣaut* singer in Kuwait offers a related interpretation for the need for improvisation. He says that in his case, he struggled to be independent from any other *ṣaut* performer, and that he insisted on being free and individual, having influence as a master in *ṣaut* (al-Khashram, 2013). This statement could be compared with of the notion of freedom, which is a concept similar to that found in jazz culture (Racy, 2009, p. 316).

The method of learning

Although there is an obvious relationship between the performer in the *ṣaut* community and the variational and improvisational elements that he uses during performance, the discourse of *ṣaut* on the principles of improvisation is mostly absent. *Ṣaut* performers rarely engage in a debate involving the why, when, who, or how concerning improvisation. A number of them consider that the music of *ṣaut* is free from any type of change, which may imply there is no improvisation in *ṣaut*. They refer to any type of change or improvisation as an element that is part of or derived from the style (*ṭaur* or *islūb*) of the performer. In the *ṣaut* community, *ṭaur* and *islūb* are a package of elements that establish the character of the *ṣaut* performer, for instance, creativity and aesthetics. Other words that refer directly to improvisation, such as *irtijāl* (improvisation) or *ibdā'* (creation), are in limited use. Other performers cite intelligence and talent as the source of the variation and improvisation. It is important to note that the community of *ṣaut* in Kuwait is secular

or rational. In general, members do not believe in divine, spiritual, or any hidden power as a source or motive to improvise and innovate, and many of them think that it is an intellectual process.

The methods of learning ṣaut

Before I suggest a hypothesis about teaching and learning improvisation, there is a need to first clarify the method of teaching and learning the *ṣaut* songs within the community, because there is an overlap between learning *ṣaut* and learning how to improvise, as will be shown later.

<u>Tutor and student</u>

Nowadays, the method of learning *ṣaut* is different from that used in the prerecording era, i.e. before the release of the first records of the local singers in 1927. So far as we know, at that time the only way to learn *ṣaut* songs was to meet a singer. There is no research explaining how the professional or expert singers taught the beginners, but it is possible to find a few clues of older teaching processes mentioned in interviews with the older *ṣaut* performers. One method of learning was by taking lessons in exchange for money or other items. Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti, who was a tobacco seller in 1920s, indicated that Yūsuf al-Baker taught him *ṣaut* pieces in exchange for cigarettes and sometimes for money. In addition, Muḥammad bin Samḥān had agreed with Maḥmūd to teach him *ṣaut* pieces and the payment was an *'ūd* (al-Gharīb, 2003, p. 103; pp. 108-109). Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti indicated clearly that he began his education in music with Khāled al-Baker, who taught him *'ūd* and *ṣaut* songs. The first song that Ṣāleḥ learnt it is *Yā Badī' al-Jamāl*, which is a *ṣaut shāmī* (al-Kuwaiti, c. 1978). Currently, it is rare to find any singer that gives lessons,

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whether for free or for a form of payment, in the ṣaut community. This is possibly due to the availability of ṣaut songs recordings and the trend of using them for learning.

Learning within the family

Many ṣaut performers have learnt ṣaut within their family, from their fathers or brothers. There are many examples like Khāled (a singer), Muḥammad (a *mirwās* player) and Yūsuf al-Baker (a singer), Muḥammad bin Fāris (a singer) and his brothers, ‘Abdullaṭīf (a singer) and Ṣaqer (a singer and *mirwās* player). The method of learning ṣaut within a family is still practised, and it is the only current method available that allows the expert performer to teach through advice or perhaps formal lessons. The examples are numerous in both Bahrain and Kuwait, for instance, Muḥammad Zuwayid (a singer) and his son Yūsuf (a singer), Ḥamad Khalīfa (a singer) and his son Ṣalāh (a singer and *mirwās* player), ‘Abdullaṭīf al-‘Arrūj, his son Sa‘ūd (d. 1980) (a singer), and his two grandsons ‘Alī (a singer), and Jamāl (a *mirwās* player).

Most learners in the beginning have no opportunity to regularly attend a *samra* of ṣaut and play with expert performers, as the gathering is a closed and private affair. Conversely, a beginner who is related to an experienced ṣaut performer, either his father, brother, or in rare cases other relatives, has the privilege to accompany him as a *mirwās player*, or attend any rehearsal or training in the house as a listener. Thus, this type of learning in the most part is not by lessons or a tutor and student dynamic, but by accompanying and practicing ṣaut constantly for years. This pupil has the opportunity, usually unavailable to others, to see a performer during his practising,

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preparing, and modifying of *ṣaut* songs. This established practice of attending and accompanying is an efficient process for the student to naturally understand the style of singing, playing, thinking, and many other requirements in *ṣaut*. Additionally, he has the possibility to ask about any detail, act, or idea during the performing *ṣaut*.

Most performers who acquired their knowledge and experience in *ṣaut* through the family, are advanced, accurate, sophisticated, and traditional, and perhaps a small number of them possess an independent singing character or a style that is separate from their elders. Nonetheless a number of these performers possess imagination and many are good imitators. Yūsuf al-Baker, who learnt *ṣaut* by his brother Khāled, had the opportunity to record and hear his voice for the first time when he was over 80 years old. When Yūsuf listened to his voice, he felt pleased and stated happily "as if I am hearing my brother Khāled" (al-Juweihel, 1995). This statement may suggest that the singing style of Yūsuf was really similar to his brother, and Yūsuf was unconsciously imitating him. However, the appearance of imitation within this method, caused by the beginners who rely on only one source to acquire their knowledge from their fathers or brothers, is an insufficient way to recognise and discover the many different processes and practices of improvisation in *ṣaut*.

Accompanying professional performers

This structure of learning is the most influential, because it includes two levels of learning, namely theoretical and practical (or observation and application). It can be described as consistent or constant and involves attending the *samra*. Many *ṣaut* performers, not only singers, spent years as a part of the audience, listening, observing, interacting by clapping and dancing, and participating by singing as a part

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of the choir. Later, they could begin to learn practically by performing ṣaut, whether playing *mirwās* or *'ūd* and singing. They would then move on to imitating, and singing what was remembered from what was heard from the expert performer. This method of learning is the most successful process, and already taught many distinguished ṣaut performers, who spent years accompanying a singer in their beginning. In Bahrain, Ḍāḥī bin Walīd was a *mirwās* player for Bin Fāris, and Muḥammad 'Allāyah was also a *mirwās* player for Bin Fāris, Bin Walīd, and Zuwayid ('Allāyah, n.d.). In Kuwait, al-Mukhāyṭa was a *mirwās* player for Khāled al-Baker and many other singers (al-Yāqūt, 1964). This old practice is still ongoing and, many singers active today began performing ṣaut as *mirwās* or violin players. One of the most important ṣaut singers today is Ibrāhīm al-Khashram, who told me that he was a *mirwās* player of Rāshed al-Ḥemilī in 1960s, before he shifted to singing.

The notebook as a transcription tool

A further element that could be considered as an aspect of learning ṣaut is the use of notebooks. Many performers own a collection of ṣaut texts, and they usually write the lyrics in a notebook or a collection of papers. The origins of the poems vary, mostly deriving from the repertoire, but there is a continuous and constant renewing process happening in ṣaut in the search for new poems, which are suitable to the ṣaut character. The performers were (and remain to this day) using varying procedures to find new texts, for example the singer of 19th century 'Abdullah al-Faraj was keen to search the literature books and poem collections to find new texts for his ṣaut pieces (al-Baker, 1960s). His high quality of education, wealthy family, and easy access to India, helped him to buy these books. In that period, late 19th century, the availability

of books in the region was limited and expensive, and there was no single book store or public library in Kuwait in that time. On the other hand, al-Faraj wrote a number of poems of his own to use in *ṣaut*, as he was also notable poet. A different method for finding new poems was used by Muḥammad bin Fāris. In early 1910s in Bahrain, Bin Fāris met an expert performer from Ḥejāz region named Abdulraḥīm Ḥejāzī, and committed to his notebook many poems that were not known in the *ṣaut* repertoire in that time (Zuwayid, c. 1976). Muḥammad Zuwayid has an unusual story about his own attempt to gain a collection of texts. In his youth, in the 1920s or 1930s, Zuwayid visited Oman and during a *samra* with a group of local musicians, he found a manuscript that was full of poems. At midnight, Zuwayid stole the manuscript and left Oman by ship in the morning. Zuwayid later justified his theft and said, the Omani owner was not a musician and he refused to sell it to me (Zuwayid, c. 1976; Zuwayid, n.d.). These examples show the strong desire to find new texts, but also the obstacles faced.

There is no reference for any *ṣaut* performer who used a notebook or papers during a *samra* from the late 19th century until approximately the mid 20th century. Possibly, due to the importance and value of the text collection or the notebook for the *ṣaut* performers, they did not like to lose their own collection, or perhaps they shielded it from being copied by other performers. It is important to point out that there were a number of performers who never owned a notebook because they were illiterate, such as Ḍāḥī bin Walīd ('Allāyah, n.d.), or because they were blind and incapable of using texts, such as 'Abdullah Faḍālah. Recently, it is has become common to see one or more notebooks in every *samra*. There are many public and private libraries, book stores, and lately many websites have been published that provide hundreds of

poems. Therefore, the attitude towards the notebook is changed completely today, and most *ṣaut* performers prefer to read and sing from their own. However, the tradition of singing from memory or not reading from a notebook still exists among the new generation, for example Salmān al-ʿAmmārī and Ṣāleḫ al-Jerayid.

This practice of owning a notebook is important to learn *ṣaut* not only historically, but also in the present day community. Historically, there was no transcription system to preserve the melodies of *ṣaut*. As we saw in Chapter I, after the availability of recording and until the 1950s, it was not easy to record for companies: it required that one find a sponsor and travel for a long journey to Iraq or India or another country to record maybe a few *ṣaut* pieces. Thus, the opportunity to record a *ṣaut* was not easy, and the number of performers who got the chance to do so was small. In the pre and early recording era, the best way to learn more *ṣaut* songs was by meeting other performers and listening to their singing. Since repeating the *ṣaut* was unavailable in that time, writing the text was and remains one form of many for learning *ṣaut*, and it will assist many to learn and remember the melody of a *ṣaut* or at least some of its features. The improvisatory elements will adopt a space to fill the gaps of the *ṣaut* piece.

Inheriting *ṣaut* texts as a notebook or a collection of papers is a type of inheritance of *ṣaut* knowledge, because the notebook is not only about the poetry but it is more the cumulative knowledge of performers. Personally, if I get a chance to see the notebook of ʿAbdullah al-Faraj for example or Muḥammad bin Fāris, it will be a chance to learn something new about *ṣaut* and about their singing. The notebook will lead me to recognise the style of poems that are preferred, and why they chose

certain verses or neglected other verses. In addition, there would probably be annotations about the text or the melody of *ṣaut*. However, there remains an argument against reading text during singing. Salmān al-ʿAmmārī stated once that he does not like to read during singing, because it is restricting (al-ʿAmmārī, 2015). This would mean probably reading during the singing which reduces imagination and improvisation. It seems to be however, a personal statement, because the *ṣaut* scene includes many performers who provide improvisatory performances and read from the notebook in same time.

Recordings as tools for self-study

When the *ṣaut* recordings began to emerge on the market in 1927, the method of learning changed, as people had the ability to buy a 78rpm record of *ṣaut* and listen to it many times. The availability of recordings made different notions appear or expand to become more common. The listener, whether they were a fan of *ṣaut* or a learner, had the ability to repeat the song as much as they liked, and listen to *ṣaut* songs everywhere, not only in a *samra*. However, the recordings contributed to imitation in *ṣaut*. Zuwayid was probably the first performer drew from *ṣaut* recordings in the late 1920s and who actually learnt *ṣaut* from them. Two of his four records available today, documenting his first recording session in 1929, were probably imitations of ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti recordings, which appeared in 1927 and 1928. Additionally in 1935, Zuwayid recorded *ṣaut Yā Malʿab al-Ḥay* (Zuwayid, 1935) which sounds like a copy of *ṣaut Yā Wāḥid al-Ḥusn* (Bin Fāris, 1932) which was recorded in 1932 by Bin Fāris. Apart from these few records of Zuwayid, the influence of records on the *ṣaut* singers in the 1920s and 1930s was limited. This is most likely because performers had already established their own

character in singing, and the experience that they gained during the prerecording era was solid and sufficient to exceed the influence of the recordings. It might also be the case that they did not get used to listening to recordings, and they continued to interact with others by listening and attending *samrāt* (plural of *samra*).

Recently, the availability of recordings has founded a new and popular method for learning *ṣaut*. Many musicians gained their knowledge by listening to the recordings and imitating the style of expert *ṣaut* performers. For the majority of *ṣaut* performers and fans, recordings of *ṣaut* are the first step to discover, listen, recognise, love, and understand *ṣaut* as a genre and practice. Therefore, beginners use this type of method as an entrance to the *ṣaut* world. The beginner will start by simulating different singers, and discovering the difference between different performers and styles. It is a basic style of learning, to encourage the player to proceed further to learn more and probably to try to find other beginners to share what was gained from the recordings. Since this style of learning is individual and usually takes place far from the *samra*, it could be considered a preparatory method of learning. Then the learners move later to a different and higher level of education by attending and participating in *samra*, this time possessing some knowledge of *ṣaut*. The aim of these types of study is to acquire as many songs of *ṣaut* as possible. This method works to expand understanding of the difference between different styles of *ṣaut* of the student, because each expert singer has a collection of pieces sung in his style. In addition, one of the greatest benefits of learning by the recordings is the easy access to notions, styles, melodies, and features of singing that are no longer used nor can be found in a current day *samra*. Recordings are the only way to understand how *ṣaut* songs have been performed and modified by performers who are no longer living or

performing. For example, the style of Ḥamad Khalīfa, who stopped singing in 1980, is still influential among the new generation of performers and listeners due to his uniqueness, and the availability of his recordings.

But, how to learn to use variation and improvisation?

During many years of the learning process, the beginner focuses on learning two chief components: the melodies of *ṣaut* and how to perform the *ṣaut*. However, learning the melodies is not a matter of studying a core repertoire, because there are many forms, improvised elements, and different versions for each *ṣaut* song. Thus, in the beginning, the performer will try to recognise the differences between songs. Later, he will begin to discover the differences between performers for the same *ṣaut* song, which means his knowledge in *ṣaut* is expanding. When he begins to perform *ṣaut*, usually the singer will attempt to imitate a famous and an expert singer. Imitation is an essential element helping to develop a character in *ṣaut*, where the beginner learns and applies many singing techniques and features that he may have found through his attempt to imitate others. The imitator might strive to improve and modify what was varied or improvised by others, and repeat this with more detail which makes the piece part of his own vision in performing and put him on the first step to finding his own style. After years of imitating, many of the imitators will develop their own style in changing, modifying, and developing the old *ṣaut*. Most new styles are derived from another style, usually the beginner influenced by the performer who he has already imitated. It might be the case that the new style is affected by several different styles, which means a performer has a bigger scope of songs and details of singing to draw upon.

To establish a style in singing *ṣaut* requires the ability to vary and improvise, which in turn need an accumulation of knowledge in the *ṣaut* genre gathered through many years of listening, performing, imitating, and mainly by discovering the differences between performers in general and within a certain *ṣaut* song.

Naturally, artistic standards are varied, and the range of ability to improvise or use improvisatory elements between performers is large. A number of the current *ṣaut* singers are quite advanced in understanding, discovering, and practicing the components of improvisation. Other singers have a more limited vision, and are less productive and imaginative. Thus, during a long duration of accompanying many *ṣaut* performers in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar, I noticed that a number of performers exceeded the learning level and they work to imitate others. Because they do not care for the accuracy of imitation, I found that they are trying to create something new to replace or cover what is missing during their inaccurate imitation. In other words, part of the rendering is an imitation, and the other part is at most new, which make this performer a creator and imitator in the same time.

However, in the absence of a systematic approach to teaching improvisation, a crucial question should be addressed: how can we theorise the ways that performers of *ṣaut* vary and improvise so easily and significantly? Despite the fact that aesthetics and singing techniques play such an essential role in creative practice within traditional *ṣaut*, it is not common for performers to speak in depth about what is desirable or acceptable with regards to these, nor why. Indeed, one might describe the principles or rules by which a performer practices as hidden or unspoken, even deliberately withheld. In *ṣaut*, just as in many other genres, the concept of

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"improvisation" needs to refer to a practice that develops relationships between recordings, texts and performances, rather than an opposition between texts and improvisations. In the next Chapter, I present a model of analysing *ṣaut* that attempts to demonstrate this fluidity in a series of recordings.

Variation vs improvisation vs creativity

At the end of the chapter, it is important to discuss the question of whether the term improvisation accurately represents the musical modification that happens in *ṣaut*. In examining the old recordings, which date back to the 1930s and 1940s, it is difficult to know whether the added elements were instantaneous improvisation or have been prepared beforehand. In the beginnings of the 20th century, the opportunity to record was very rare, and would happen only once every few years. It might have been the case that the performer repeated the same *ṣaut* ten times or more, and we do not know for certain how much he modified his performance every time he sang the same *ṣaut* before recording. I tend to believe that what was recorded in the 78 rpm records era was an accumulation or the result of long years of practice and gradual change. Yet, the question remains unanswered in this research until new evidence arises relating to the details of the early records or of any record company.

Similarly, in critically examining contemporary recordings and performances of *ṣaut*, it is difficult to ascertain whether the changes in the *ṣaut* are necessarily understood as improvisations. However, as an ethnomusicologist, I believe it is best to take into consideration and critique if necessary the words and descriptions of the performers when it comes to studying any aspect of their music. It is important to understand the music tradition from within its discourses and terminology. Most of

the performers that I met for the purposes of research and whom I accompanied as a musician, insist that *ṣaut* is an improvisatory (*irtijālī*) type of music using the word *irtijāl* to describe their performances. A number of them such as Ibrāhīm al-Khashram and Rāshed al-Ḥemely denied that they practice, prepare, or rehearse before the *samra*. According to them, anything that emerges during the *samra* is an instantaneous creation. Consequently, the use of the word «improvisation» in this chapter is mainly based on the discourse of the musicians I interrogated. But from an ethnomusicological perspective, one should question the use of this concept (*irtijāl*) by the Gulf musicians, especially in view of the prestige this word has in Arab musical culture. The concept is relatively new to the region and dates from the development of modern academic teaching. So, we do not know exactly how the musicians were expressing such realities before the last three or four decades. Moreover, we should be cautious about applying this foreign concept uncritically to contemporary practice. It is clear that some musicians today do have a more conscious approach to variation than their elders. Thus, it is possible that some of them actually do extemporise in performances of *ṣaut*, while what others do could more accurately be described as "variation" in the sense of being pre-composed.

In addition, regardless of the accurate definition of creativity in *ṣaut*, the performer always uses the same range of tools, styles, and techniques to deliver an element of creativity in his *ṣaut* performance. The next chapter will focus on uncovering the tools and techniques of creativity in *ṣaut*.

CHAPTER VI

TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Analysing vocal performance as the central element of ṣaut

As argued in the previous Chapter, although *ṣaut* is characterised by practices that could be understood as "improvisation", this concept as often used does not do justice to the practices of bringing *ṣaut* to life. Thus, the following discussion proposes a fresh analytical approach to understanding the systems of improvisation, variation and composition in the *ṣaut* genre. It will focus primarily on vocal practice, because this is the most crucial driving element in *ṣaut*. Structurally, this can be traced in the fact that *ṣaut* is inspired by poetic structures in Arab literature, and by the fact that the singer is always leading the performance.

Before beginning, however, I offer an introductory clarification of the structure of *ṣaut*. Because of a deficiency in terms that describe the content of *ṣaut* songs in the *ṣaut* community, it is necessary to assign a specific name for each part: this allows us to analyse broadly and flexibly the various improvisatory practices in *ṣaut*, the core theme of this thesis. The proposed terms will facilitate the analysis section.

The structure of ṣaut content

There is a similarity in structure between the main content in *ṣaut* and the poems that are used within the *ṣaut* repertoire. It is therefore useful to have an understanding of the formation of poems before discussing the structure of the *ṣaut*. This similitude as well as the new terms that will be used to explain the parts of *ṣaut* help to explain

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how I have developed my approach. As has been mentioned previously in Chapter III, there are two main genres of poetry in *ṣaut* - the classical Arabic poems (*fuṣḥā*) and the Yemeni vernacular poems (*ḥumainī*). Poems in the *fuṣḥā* genre (*qaṣīda*) contain a different number of verses (*beit*; pl. *abyāt*). Each verse is divided into two equal parts or hemistiches (*shaṭer*). The first hemistich is referred to as *ṣadr*, while the second is referred to as *'ajz* (Holes and Abu Athera, 2011, p.7). As to poems of the *ḥumainī* type, the verses can be divided into two equal or unequal hemistiches. There are also verses in *ḥumainī* poems which contain three or four hemistiches in each verse (Ghānem, 1987, pp. 119-125).

A primary technique of composing in *ṣaut* is to follow the structure of the poems used. Although each *ṣaut* piece can be divided according to the divisions used in poetry and described using terms like "poem", "verse", "hemistich", and "word", in this dissertation different terms will be used to melodically explain the structure of *ṣaut* thus avoiding any misinterpretation and overlap with poetic terms. Therefore, *ṣaut* songs will be considered using terms like "piece", "section", "theme" and "motif", rather than poem, verse, hemistich, or word. "Melody", "version" and "instrumental refrain" will also be used. I introduce each of these terms individually in what follows.

<u>Ṣaut piece and piece of ṣaut</u>

These terms will refer to a *ṣaut* song which contains the whole content of the *ṣaut*, the *tawshīḥa*, and other creative elements such as improvisations and ornamentations. The same piece of *ṣaut* can be performed in different *maqāmāt*, with different lyrics or rhythm, and based on different finale tones. For example, *ṣaut*

piece X is based on the *maqām ḥijāz* (see Fig. 6.2) and its metre is four beats (*ṣaut shāmī*) in recording A, while in recording B the same piece is based on the *maqām bayātī* (see Fig. 3. 14.), with a six beat metre (*ṣaut 'arabī*), and probably differing lyrics. Despite the difference in rhythm, *maqām*, lyrics, and *tawshīḥa*, (potentially fundamental elements in other music cultures, but not in the field of *ṣaut*) we will understand such cases as examples of the same "piece". Apart from the *ṣaut* performers and the expert listeners, many people have no ability to recognise the same *ṣaut* that has been performed using different elements such as *maqām* or lyrics; they classify it as a different and independent *ṣaut*. It is not easy to explain why it is still the same *ṣaut*, because *ṣaut* as a practice is very generative. Like many other musical genres that are grounded in improvisation, *ṣaut* relies on a local musical culture that is difficult to be understood by those who did not grow within this culture. However, there is the "melody" element that could help to specify two different examples as the same *ṣaut* piece, which will be defined later in this Chapter.

Version in ṣaut

Many *ṣaut* pieces can be performed whether by the same or different performer in various recordings, with differences in rhythm, *maqām*, types of improvisation and other elements. *Ṣaut* that has such differences will be known as having a different "version". The term version will not refer to the appearance of different lyrics, because the study focuses primarily on musical elements. The use of the term "version" requires us to specify a particular recording of each *ṣaut* piece as the main or original version, while others will be defined as different from it. However, this is somewhat arbitrary, as researchers and *ṣaut* performers do not specify any version as

a main or original. For the purposes of analysis, it nevertheless seems necessary to choose a recording or a version and to use it as the chief source for each example that will be studied and analysed in this dissertation. I will generally take the recordings of Yūsuf al-Baker as the main sources because he was the only recorded performer who learned ṣaut in the late 19th century. Although he recorded as late as 1952, and was probably affected by changes around him, his relatively unornamented style stands out among recordings, indicating a distinct style.

Melody in ṣaut

This is a term that refers solely to the main and fundamental tune that makes up the ṣaut piece. The term "melody" does not involve other parts in the ṣaut piece such as tawshīḥa, ornamentations or improvisations. Therefore, the melody alone is the skeleton of ṣaut, and is enough to create a ṣaut piece. Other creative elements or tawshīḥa are not enough to create a ṣaut piece without this fundamental melody. Most ṣaut pieces consist of one or two melodies. Exceptions to this are very rare, but the ṣaut Layāliya Baʿd by Yūsuf al-Baker, for example consists of three. Moreover, each ṣaut that contains two melodies, for convenience I refer to them here as A and B, can be performed in three different ways. The first is to perform both A and B melodies during the ṣaut singing. The other possibilities are to play only the A melody during the ṣaut singing and disregard the B melody, or to play the B melody and disregard the A melody. In the ṣaut community, if a singer performs only the A melody, for instance, and does not use the B melody, other singers present will not play the same A melody again, or even B with a different poem, because the etiquette of ṣaut performance dictates that there should be no repetition of the same melody in the same samra. In fact the singer who chooses to repeat the same ṣaut

runs the risk of implying that the previous performer had not been successful in his execution of the melody. Singers may also prefer to avoid playing the B melody in the same *samra*, because they believe that this act would constitute repetition, despite the difference in the two melodies. The reason for this is the belief that both melodies, A and B, could be performed together as one *ṣaut*, and separating them would not make each melody a new or independent *ṣaut*. The only exception to this is when the same melody is repeated but with a different rhythm by the same, or an alternative performer.

It is important to note that using A and B to refer to the different melodies inside a *ṣaut* piece does not mean that the A is the essential melody while B is less important. Additionally, the A melody is not always performed at the beginning of singing in *ṣaut*, and B does not always come later during the *ṣaut* performance. Therefore, all the possibilities exist, in that the A melody could be used more than the B melody and vice versa, and the A melody could be at the beginning of the *ṣaut* singing or the reverse. However, the order of the letters (A and B) to distinguish the melodies in a *ṣaut* piece is just to regulate *ṣaut* and identify that there are different melodies, and merely to indicate how a source has performed a particular *ṣaut*. In most of the *ṣaut* repertoire, regardless of the number of hemistiches in the verse, whether two, three, or four, the *ṣaut* needs only one line or a verse, to present a complete melody, with the other verses usually repeat the same melody. In a *ṣaut* piece that contains two melodies, the first appears through a verse, while the other appears in a different verse. A melody that is composed of two verses is very rare in the *ṣaut* field. (One example is *ṣaut Marra Bī Weḥtarash* by Yūsuf al-Baker). This mono pattern of composition will be referred to in the dissertation as a "one-melody" *ṣaut* piece. The

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other pattern of composing involves a ṣaut piece that contains two or more different melodies, and will be referred to as a "multiple-melody" ṣaut piece.

Section in ṣaut

I take this term to mean the melodic material used during one verse of the poem. If for example, a ṣaut piece contains five verses, this means it has five sections. In analysis, I will refer to the various sections as numbers 1, 2 etc. As above, I will use letters for melodies: A will refer to the first melody in the ṣaut piece, while B will refer to the second melody. Thus a melodic structure could be represented as: section 1A, section 2A, section 3B, section 4A, and 5B. To expand on this example, there could be five sections, the A melody being used for the 1st, 2nd and 4th section, and the B melody for the 3rd and 5th. The main difference between the term "melody" and "section" is that the "melody" is used to refer solely to the skeleton of the ṣaut, which does not include additional elements, like tawshīḥa. On the other hand, "section" refers to the structure of verses, plus all other additional elements (elaborations as we will see), all of which are important to analyse in order to clarify the improvisatory practices in a ṣaut performance.

Theme in ṣaut

Each melody in a ṣaut piece has at least two parts, and mostly with different musical phrases. Each part inside the melody will be referred to as a theme. I will refer to the first theme by using the letter i, while ii will refer to the second theme. In addition, there are melodies in ṣaut that contain three or four themes. In such a case, there is the possibility of using two themes within the same musical phrase. The last theme in the melody must be based on the finale notes of the ṣaut piece, and other themes

may be based on the finale notes or on a different note. However, in a melody that consists of three or four themes, I will refer to each theme with a number in addition to the letter, to understand the process of repeating the themes inside the melody, e.g. we might have theme i1, theme i2, theme ii3. The importance of themes is to recognise the technique for changing the melody by using improvisation or variation within the same ṣaut piece, or by comparing it with the same ṣaut piece, whether in the same or different recording.

Motif in ṣaut

I will use this term to refer to the smallest part of a ṣaut piece. It contains a few notes or one bar of the theme. The term "motif" is used to refer to the different types of improvisation or variation embodied in a performance including ornamentation, and appears mostly through the musical setting of one or two words.

Instrumental refrain in saut

Finally, I will refer to an "instrumental refrain" when discussing music that acts as a link between one line and another, or between one section and another. It acts primarily as a musical repetition of the main ṣaut vocal line.

Understanding the creativity practice in ṣaut: analysis

In 2013, I was invited to play the violin and sing ṣaut in Bahrain with a group of Bahraini performers. Rāshed Zuwayid, a well-known Bahraini ṣaut musician, participated in the event. That evening I was spontaneously inspired to sing a ṣaut that has traditionally involved six beats, in four beats, perhaps because he was there.

I had previously heard him perform it in this way during a televised programme on the TV Bahrain channel. It was not the first time I had attempted to change the meter of this *ṣaut* from six to four: the first time had been in Kuwait a few years earlier, but I had not attempted it since. When performing the first attempt, I encountered many problems with the rhythm which in turn led to other issues, such as extending the words beyond the phrase. Also, whilst the melodic elaboration should be both related to the main melody of the *ṣaut* but possess something new that develops logically, both these qualities were absent in my first rendition. The second attempt was much better, and the main characteristic feature of what I sang and played was drawn from a version recording by another musician, namely Muḥammad Zuwayid. I used the same text and *maqāmāt* that had been used in his version, drawing some of his ideas about the *ṣaut* formation, and other ideas from my own experience. I am not sure if people in the *ṣaut* community could see the link between my version on four beats, and Muḥammad Zuwayid's old version on six beats, but I am sure that my attempt to perform this *ṣaut* in a particular melodic shape was based on what I heard from Muḥammad Zuwayid.

My strategy of drawing different elements of *ṣaut* from various sources is absolutely central to the culture of *ṣaut* today. For example, in a *samra* of which I heard a recording, Ḥamad Khalīfa asked his friends: "Do you want to listen to an old or a new *ṣaut*?" One of the audience replied: "What do you mean by a new *ṣaut*?" to which Khalīfa answered: "New *ṣaut*, my *ṣaut*." (Khalīfa, n.d.). When Khalīfa performed one of the *ṣaut* songs that he considered new it was well known as part of the traditional repertoire. But it included two new elements: the text was new and

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had been written by the performer himself, and the style of performing represented the performer's style and perspective within the *ṣaut* tradition.

In this Chapter, I suggest that this is not only typical of today's practices, but rather, characterises the history of *ṣaut* over a longer period. By discussing a range of historical recordings of a particular *ṣaut*, I can explore the relationships between each rendition and the ways in which they draw from one another, as well as how they differ quite drastically. The aim is to demonstrate both how individual *ṣaut* songs are defined and developed between players and singers, and how to understand this as a creative process. In earlier Chapters, I have argued that individual *ṣaut* songs are not defined in the same way as individual songs and pieces in other Arab traditions: here I offer empirical analysis to demonstrate this in detail.

There are three main challenges in determining the method of transcription to be used: the quality of the recordings, the rich varied and improvisatory form of *ṣaut*, and finally the style of the notation.

The material of most of the analysed examples was originally recorded on 78rpm records, which is an old form of technology that suffers from the low recording quality and the noise of the surface of the records. Many of these records are in very bad condition because of the long usage, which makes understanding everything happening in the recording a matter of difficulty. Although I am used to listening to the 78rpm records, the absence of other copies of the same record makes me doubtful sometimes concerning what I hear.

The way ṣaut is presented, specifically by distinguished performers, is quite particular which means it is not easily understood by people who do not belong to the community. Firstly, there is an absence of a logical or understandable order for the parts or content of the ṣaut, that is to say the form of singing. This will be discussed in greater depth later. The modulation from one maqām to another is sometimes possible, and at other times the same example might not contain these modulations. Finally, the ornamentations and the style of singing usually affect the shape of the ṣaut. In many examples, all these features can be found combined in the same section in the ṣaut. Therefore, this complexity in performing ṣaut confuses many listeners and sometimes researchers, because the same ṣaut melody can be changed from one performance to another. It is possible to find that a talented performer presents each verse in ṣaut adding something new by using the elements of variation and improvisation. However, the aim of this thesis is not to reveal all the elements of improvisation in ṣaut, but to demonstrate that improvisation is a central feature in ṣaut and has its own principles, by investigating a number of the improvisational elements.

Fundamentally, one can identify three methods of transcribing variation. The transcription can be very detailed and contain all of what is heard in the example. Few scholars choose to follow this style of transcription as it is cumbersome to transcribe and read (Hood, 1972; Bartok, 1976; Nettl, 2005). Béla Bartók indicates that "even the most simple tunes cannot be transcribed exactly" and that the transcriber must always improve and change the methods of work in order to accomplish such a difficult task (Bartók, 1976, p. 174; Nettl, 2005, p. 75). Ter Ellingson indicates that "the best transcription, which conveys the most essential

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features of the music, may be the most difficult to read". In the same reference, Alan Merriam points out that it is assumed that the ethnomusicologist "has available to him accurate methods of transcribing musical sound to paper, but this is a question that is far from resolved" (Nettl, 2005, pp. 75-76). Mantle Hood considers the complicated texture in performance as one of the problems that confronts the transcriber (Hood, 1972, p. 51).

The other proposed style of transcription is the skeletal or schematic style. This type of transcription is basic and was known mainly in early ethnomusicological works (for example, see the transcriptions in *Description de l'Égypte* book). Beside its simplicity, this skeletal transcription cannot clarify the influence of variation and improvisation because it will be hidden or unclear. It is suitable for whoever knows the music, but other people will not understand the goal of the notation.

A third method of transcription lies in the middle ground between the two previous styles of transcriptions. This style of transcription, which is not too detailed and not skeletal, was mentioned by Hood when he was working on transcribing a piece of music with his teacher Kunst (1972). They both individually worked at the same time on transcribing the same piece. Hood's notation was full of detailed music because he was considering everything in the process of transcription, including the ornamentation. His teacher's notation on the other hand was less detailed, and at the same time was closer to the sound, according to Hood (1972, p. 54). In his article "Some Problems of Folk Music Research in East Europe", Bartók provides different types of transcription. His transcriptions are full of details and ornamentations, see example 9 (1976, p. 184). In other examples, Bartók presents transcriptions that are

less detailed with limited ornamentation, see example 6 (1976, p. 180). Furthermore, there are few transcriptions by Bartók without demonstration of any ornamentation, which mostly show the basic shape of the melody, see example 10 (1976, p. 185). Bartók used different types of transcriptions or different levels of accuracy in transcribing what is heard in the songs. In my case, my transcription method is close to the idea that has been provided by both Hood and Bartók. My aim is to present a transcription that is as close as possible to what is heard in the recording. Yet, I aim to avoid producing an unreadable notation by transcribing elements like ornamentation that are not directly related to my study and objectives.

This method is capable of showing the type of improvisation that I aim to discuss, without showing other elements, specifically ornamentations, which avoids overly complicated notation. But, disregarding the ornamentations or any other unnecessary variation element does not mean presenting a skeletal transcription, which would definitely not adequately express my argument about variation and improvisation and therefore not convince the reader.

My transcriptions contain only a verse from each example, which is enough to clarify the enquiry, which is the method of improvisation. These particular verses have been chosen because I believe that they contain something new in the examples that I study, whilst other verses possibly would not reveal anything different from other examples, or would not help in presenting a new view of improvisation. Therefore, the selected verses help to demonstrate ways that a *ṣaut* melody can be modified by improvisational techniques.

Variation and improvisation processes in *ṣaut* take several different forms. One of the most prominent of these can be compared to composition. But rather than outright invention and creation of a new melody, this form involves gradual modification that endows the *ṣaut* with a slightly different shape, allowing it to become more complicated or advanced as a melody. A highly generative and evolutionary method, it occasionally makes the relationship between the oldest and newest versions hard to discern. Analysis of these intermediary versions is sometimes required to understand the connection between them and suggest their common ancestry.

Please find CD attached to the thesis, to listen to the examples.

Example I: Qāl Ibn al-Ashqar and versions

The first *ṣaut* example described is one such case of a generative piece of which there are a number of versions with diversities in many aspects including shape, *maqām*, and rhythm. This *ṣaut* is one of the most popular amongst performers, and it is found in all periods of *ṣaut* recordings. The earliest rendition examined below dates back to 1927, and the most recent has appeared during the writing of this thesis. The motivation of a performer to present a new version of an old *ṣaut* is not necessarily due to the simplicity of a piece, but may be due to their capacity for imagination, or as a way to finding their own character as performers. Hence, the process of adjusting and developing is demonstrated in the example below in both its older, simple versions, as well as the more advanced, complex versions.

In the case of the *ṣaut* that I have selected here for study, the differences are evident-not only between a performer from, say, Bahrain and Kuwait, or between one performer and another in the same region and period, but there are also different versions belonging to the same performer. During my study, I found at least ten prominent renditions of the same example, meaning ten different perspectives for the same *ṣaut*. There are a great many more available. I have selected these ones because each of the perspectives represents the character, capability, and imagination of the performer, and uses different elements or strategies to adjust the *ṣaut*. As a collection, they enable me to explore my theory of improvisation within the *ṣaut* culture. The nine versions are based on two main *maqāmāt - ḥussainī* and *ḥijāz* - and there are versions using both *maqāmāt*. For reference, see Figs. 6.1 and 6.2 for the *maqāmāt*, and Figs. 6.3 and 6.4 for the rhythmic patterns of the versions in either six beats (*'arabī*) or four beats (*shāmī*).
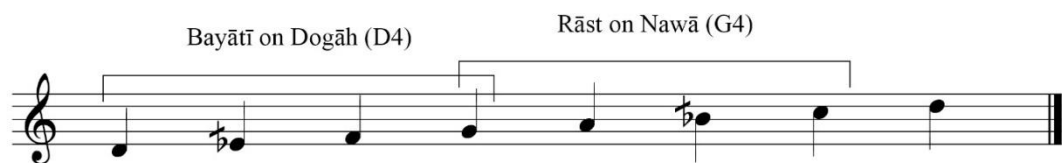
Fig. 6.1. Scale of the maqām ḥussainī on D4.

Fig. 6.2. Scale of the maqām ḥijāz on G4.
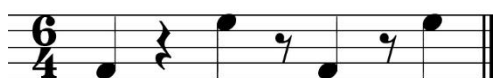
Fig. 6.3. The ṣaut 'arabī rhythm, six beats.

Fig. 6.4. The ṣaut shāmī rhythm, four beats.

<u>Version no. 1</u>

The oldest recording I have traced refers to the *ṣaut* I am discussing as *Qāl Ibn al-Ashqar*. It dates from 1927 and was made by Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti, who was a well-known and established violinist, in Baghdad, Iraq, for Baidaphon Records Company. Saleh was the singer and violinist, accompanied by his brother Dāwūd on the *'ūd*, and Sa'ūd al-Yāqūt, a *mirwās* player, known among the *ṣaut* audience as Sa'ūd al-Mukhāyṭa. The rhythm of *ṣaut* is *'arabī*: six beats. The *maqām* of this version is *ḥussainī* on D4 and consists of two themes, i and ii, and each one is repeated twice in every section. At this stage, the *ṣaut* counts as a one-melody *ṣaut* piece, because there are just these two themes. See Fig. 6.5.

Fig. 6.5. Transcription of version no. 1, Qāl Ibn al-Ashqar, includes verse "Etruk Hawā al-Bīḏ Jemlah Wetba' el-Asmar - Wen Sāylok Fī Hawāhum Asmar Kidhā Khallah" performed by Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti in 1927.

The performer follows a strict order when presenting this *ṣaut* (theme i is played and repeated, then theme ii is played and repeated), making it the least intricate in the group of versions we are comparing. It is possible to describe it as a repetitive melody that consists of two themes; the first is always based on the fourth note of the *maqām*, which is G4, and the second is on the first note, which is D4.

Version no. 2

This version was recorded in 1929 by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti in Cairo for Odeon Record Company. 'Abdullaṭīf's sole accompaniment was an *'ūd* player, Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti. The performance does not involve a mirwās or any other type of percussion, due to the lack of experts in *ṣaut* rhythms in Egypt. As a result, the meter during singing occasionally gets lost. I have modified the meter of singing to fit with the rhythm of *ṣaut 'arabī* for the purposes of developing the structural discussion here. The 'Abdullaṭīf version has many similarities with the first, that of Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti, such as the text, *maqām* and rhythm. It is also a one-melody piece. However, the main difference appears in the content of theme ii. One can describe this as having a slight melodic difference, or having a different type of ornamentation. See Fig. 6.6.

Fig. 6.6. Transcription of version no. 2, Qāl Ibn al-Ashqar, includes verse "Khalloh Yamshī Wohu el-Maskīn Yetfakkar - Līman Newā Bā Yeṣallī Ḏayya' el-Qiblah
" performed by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti in 1929.

Version no. 3

In the same year that Version no. 2 was recorded, 1929, Muḥammad Zuwayid from Bahrain went to Baghdad to record for Baidaphon Record Company. He was accompanied by Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti on *'ūd*, Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on violin, and Sa'ad

Bu-Sayyūl on *mirwās* (Zuwayid, c. 1976; Zuwayid, n.d.). Zuwayid recorded the

same piece of *ṣaut* with considerable differences, reforming the content to create a

more complicated and lively rendition.

Fig. 6.7. Transcription of version no. 3, Salām Yā Zein, includes verse "Yaḥyā 'Omar Qāl Anā Ṣādaft Fīl Bandar - Ad'aj Mudalmaj Muhaj Da'jāj al-A'yāna" performed by Muḥammad Zuwayid in 1929.

The same *maqām*, *ḥussainī*, is present at the start. But the finale tones is changed

from D4, as in the previous versions, to G4. The poem sung is also new, namely

Salām Yā Zein, which was not known in the *ṣaut* repertoire in that time (Zuwayid, c.

1976). Although the *ṣaut* became higher and sharper in singing, due to the

transposition, Zuwayid expanded the range of the melody even more to hit the upper

tenth note, which is B♭5, while in previous versions, it reached only the eighth higher

note. In addition, he created more variety: in the older renditions, the performers

always repeated the first theme twice and the second twice. Here in the third version,

Zuwayid did not follow this repetitive structure, not always performing themes

twice. Moreover, when he did repeat a theme, Zuwayid tried to perform it

differently, through ornamentation. In other words, in Zuwayid's recording, theme i1

is always dissimilar to theme i2. In Fig. 6.7 above, I demonstrate variation between

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repetitions of theme I schematically (in the later parts of this Chapter, I will explore ornamentation in much more detail).

In this version, Zuwayid performs the *ṣaut* in a singing style that seems dissimilar to previous versions. The ornamentations and improvisations that Zuwayid used made his version quite different from, or unrelated to the others. However, there is still a concrete link between all of these three versions, which suggests that they all came from the same *ṣaut* origin. That link is the instrumental refrains between the verses. Rather than drawing from Zuwayid's sung melody, as normally occurs in *ṣaut*, it is highly reminiscent of the singing in the first version. See Fig. 6.8, and compare with Fig. 6.5 above. I propose that the musicians that accompanied Zuwayid committed to playing the first version as an instrumental refrain in this version because they had an awareness of the connection between the different versions.
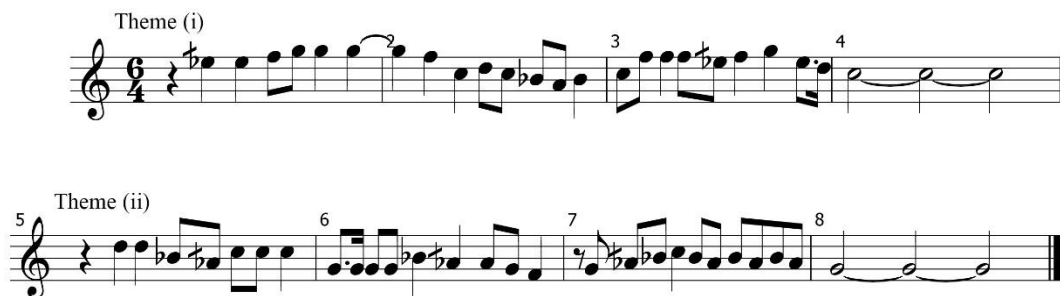

Fig. 6.8. Transcription of the instrumental refrain in the version no. 3, Salām Yā Zein, performed by Muḥammad Zuwayid in 1929.

The fact that the musicians recalled the melody of version 1 exemplifies how changing the sung melody of a *ṣaut* need not mean that the resulting *ṣaut* itself is new. Those within the *ṣaut* community understand the continuity, and perceive the common origin.

<u>Version no. 4</u>

This version is also by Zuwayid, who revisited the *ṣaut* with a different vocal style and using a different text, namely *Lān al-Ṣakhar*. The recording was made in 1935, by Odeon Record Company in Bombay, India. The violin player was Faizullāh Taghioff, and the *mirwās* player was Muḥammad ʿĪsā ʿAllāyah (ʿAllāyah, n.d.).

In comparison to the record he made in 1929, the range of this 1935 rendition is smaller and the ornamentations are slightly more limited, simpler and easier to achieve. This is perhaps a sign of diminished singing ability, or merely an individual case of inconsistency on the day of the recording. The simplicity may account for the popularity of this version amongst the performers even today. Apart from a slight change in the melody, and reduced singing range, there is nothing new that can be studied as an advance on the earlier one. However, it is a further model demonstrating how the singers work to present different versions of the same *ṣaut*. See Fig. 6.9.

Fig. 6.9. Transcription of version no. 4, Lān al-Ṣakhar, includes verse "Yā Yūsuf el-Ḥusn Yaʿqūb al-Bukāʾi Laqad - Aṣlaytanā Min Ṭawīl el-Hajr Nīrānā" performed by Muḥammad Zuwayid in 1935.

All the versions that been discussed so far have common elements, whether text, *maqām*, rhythm or melodic shape. Structurally, they have much in common too: despite the differences between each recording, whether significant or minor, the

performances are all repetitive. Most sections in each rendition are similar, and the diversity between one section and another within the same version is also minimal. The next five versions I discuss, however, show a significant change in various elements, and greater variety in singing style, as well as in the handling of *maqām* and rhythm.

Version no. 5

In 1936, Muḥammad bin Fāris travelled from Bahrain to Aleppo to record his songs for Sodwa Record Company. The band included two musicians, Ilyās Fannūn the Syrian violin player, and Juwhar al-Najdī, the *mirwās* player (al-'Ammārī, 1991, p. 141). In this session, Bin Fāris recorded *ṣaut Lān al-Ḥaṣā*, which is his version of the *ṣaut* under discussion here. According to Mubārak al-'Ammārī, a Bahraini historian, this recording came about as a response to a recording made by Zuwayid, a pupil of Bin Fāris, when he recorded *ṣaut Lān al-Ṣakhar* in 1935. Apparently, Bin Fāris was dissatisfied with the quality of Zuwayid's rendition in this *ṣaut*, and he criticised Zuwayid for replacing the word *al-Ḥaṣā* with *al- Ṣakhar*, both synonyms for rock or gravel. Therefore, Bin Fāris decided to record this *ṣaut* again, to demonstrate how to perform this *ṣaut* (al-'Ammārī, 1991, p. 143). Within contemporary *ṣaut* culture, version no. 5 belongs to the same *ṣaut* as all the versions discussed so far. It is understood as the singer's corrective response to Zuwayid's recording. However, the similarity may be difficult to appreciate when the *ṣaut* is examined technically.

Bin Fāris' version is highly innovative and sophisticated. It consists of ten sections, each of which is different from the others in structure or rendition. It also includes a

modulation that is not found in any earlier versions (in Fig. 6.10 below it is the B♮, which implies *bayātī* on A rather than the prevailing *bayātī* on G). Also, in the previous recordings, the first theme begins on the fourth note or the eighth note, and the theme ends on the fourth note again. Bin Fāris, on the other hand, uses two more forms for theme i, the first ending the theme on the first note of the *maqām*, see Fig. 6.10. and the second beginning the theme on the fifth note; he holds this note for a whole bar before ending the theme on the fourth note, see Fig. 6.11.

Fig. 6.10. Transcription of version no. 5, melody A, Lān al-Ḥaṣā, includes verse "Lan al-Ḥaṣā Willadhī Ahwāh Mā Lānā - Allāhu Akbar Yā Sīdī Mā Aqsāk Insānā" performed by Muḥammad bin Fāris in 1936.

Fig. 6.11. Transcription of version no. 5, melody B, Lān al-Ḥaṣā, includes verse "Bil Qous Qad Ṣābanī Yā Sīdī Rīmun Lahu Sharakun - Min A'yunin Qad Ḥawat Seḥran Wa Hattānā" performed by Muḥammad bin Fāris in 1936.

Technically, then, version no. 5 is entirely distinct from versions 1-4. In versions no. 6 through to 9, we can trace its elaboration. None of these has a strong discernible musical connection to versions 1-4. The singer and musicians of version no. 5 bridge

the change I have identified, not only through the corrective response, but also by combining music from versions 1-4 with music from versions 5-9.

It is important to note that there are ongoing performances of this *ṣaut* that do draw more explicitly from versions 1-4, and they are part of the same *ṣaut* as well. My concern here, however, is in finding versions that illustrate the development of the transformed version.

<u>Version no. 6</u>

This recording was made in about 1947, when Muḥammad Zuwayid went to India to record for a company called Oneon. He was accompanied by Faizullāh Taghioff and an unidentified *mirwās* player. Zuwayid recorded this *ṣaut* again but in a different way from what both he and others had done before. The name of the *ṣaut* in this case is *Yaḥyā 'Omar Qāl Fī al-Bandar*, and it consists of eight sections. Each one is different and is notable for a certain element, whether the *maqām*, ornamentation, or the melody of the section and theme. As a whole, the recording fluctuates between *ḥussainī* and *ḥijāz* as *maqāmāt*, or between *bayātī* and *ḥijāz* as tetrachords. Through this recording, Zuwayid demonstrates multiple possibilities for elaborating the various sections. For example, he presents the first theme in section 5 on the *ḥijāz* tetrachord G4 (first note) whilst in the other versions, this theme was mostly on the *rāst* tetrachord. Theme ii is sometimes on *bayātī* G4, as performed by others previously, or *ḥijāz* G4, which is also not done by the other previous singers.

This attempts to use modulations between *maqāmāt* may be inspired or related to the note that was included once time in the fifth version by Zuwayid's master, Bin Fāris,

which is in a different *maqām*. This shift will be explored more below, when I discuss how multiple *maqāmāt* are implied within a single theme of melody. See Figs. 6.12, 6.13 and 6.14.

Fig. 6.12. Transcription of version no. 6, melody A, Yaḥyā ʿOmar Qāl Fi al-Bandar, includes verse "Yaḥyā ʿOmar Qāl Fī al-Bandar Sikan Weddī - Wa Ṭāb Lī Masmerī Amsīt Fī Rāḥā" performed by Muḥammad Zuwayid in c.1947.

Fig. 6.13. Transcription of version no. 6, melody B, Yaḥyā ʿOmar Qāl Fi al-Bandar, includes verse "Badkhel Bek al-Nakhl Yā Sīdī Wanā Waḥdī - Hādhā al-Jafā Fīk Walā Lak Nafs Sammāḥa" performed by Muḥammad Zuwayid in c.1947.

There are some sections in this version that bear similarities to what has been analysed in version no. 5, Fig. 6.11, suggesting that Zuwayid continued to use Bin Fāris as a reference point after he passed away in 1947. For example, in the other versions, usually the sections include two themes, the first based on the fourth note of the *maqām* and the second on the first note, whilst these two versions include sections where both the themes based on the first note. In addition, both recordings begin theme i with the fifth note, and finish it on the fourth, and they both begin theme ii with the sixth note, and end it on the first note, which had not been done

before. It is likely that in this version Zuwayid is trying to vary a theme that has been suggested by Bin Fāris, in version no. 5. The main difference here is that sometimes Zuwayid presents theme ii on *ḥijāz*, not on *Bayātī*, as presented by Bin Fāris. See Fig. 6.14.

Fig. 6.14. Transcription of version no. 6, melody C, Yaḥyā 'Omar Qāl Fi al-Bandar, includes verse "Min Youm Amīr el-Ghawānī Qid Khaṭar 'indī - Yetmashā Bel Ful Wafī al-Kādhī Wa Teffāḥa" performed by Muḥammad Zuwayid in c.1947.

Version no. 7

In these last versions, I address how contemporary singers perform this *ṣaut*, in order to consider its relationship with recordings made between 1927 and 1947. In a *ṣaut* gathering (*samra*) one may come across any one of these aforementioned versions, but only rarely. The most common version that is known nowadays and is prevalent in *samrāt*, however, is closely related to the recording I discuss as version no. 6 here. This was made in Kuwait by Ibrāhīm al-Khashram on 1993, and the title is *Bū 'Alī Qāl.* Al-Khashram was accompanied by three *mirwās* players; Hanī al-Mawwāsh, 'Abdullah Saffāḥ, and Salmān al-'Ammārī. In this recording and many other subsequent recordings, the *ṣaut* is still six beats, *'arabī*, but the main *maqām* is *ḥijāz* (see Fig. 6.2), with a slight overlapping with the *bayātī* tetrachord (al-Khashram,

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1993). This is a development of the style of combining *maqāmat* that was initiated by Bin Fāris, but using different ones to those presented in combination by Zuwayid in the sixth version. See Fig. 6.15.

Fig. 6.15. Transcription of version no. 7, Bū ʿAlī Qāl, includes verse "Yallī Lah el-Khad Fuḏḏa Bedhahab Maṭlī - Wel Yās Mayyās Wel ʿAynīn Qattāla" performed by Ibrāhīm al-Khashram in 1993.

This version is influenced by version no. 6, which is performed by Zuwayid. The similarity can be seen through a few elements, such as the *maqām*, (both use *ḥijāz* and *bayātī*), and the concept of shifting between the *maqāmāt* are similar, as they both modulate from one *maqām* to another within the same theme.

Version no. 8

In the mid-1980s, Rāshed Zuwayid performed this *ṣaut* with a significant difference, adopting a four-beat rhythm (*shāmī*) to perform the *ṣaut* instead of the one in six (*ʿarabī*). Moreover, the melody was more broken up with long rests in Zuwayid's performance. This may be a result of the change of the *ṣaut* meter from six to four, which makes the process of inserting the melody into a different rhythm difficult: in fact, the lyrics do not fit with the rhythm in this rendition. The *maqām* of the *ṣaut* was purely *ḥijāz* (see Fig. 6.2), and there was no overlapping with the *bayātī*

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tetrachord or the *ḥussainī maqām*. However, the structure is quite constant; there are two different sections, the first contains two themes and both are based on *ḥijāz* G4, whilst the other involves two different themes, the first based on *rāst* C5 and the second on *ḥijāz* G4. See Figs. 6.16 and 6.17.

Fig. 6.16. Transcription of version no. 8, melody A, Bū 'Alī Qāl, includes verse "Bū 'Alī Qāl Keif el-Qalb Bā Yeslā - Qad Bāt el-Aghyād Yeṣabbeḥ Beit Kaḥḥālā" performed by Rāshed Zuwayid in 1980s.

Fig. 6.17. Transcription of version no. 8, melody B, Bu 'Alī Qāl, includes verse "Yallī Lah el-Khad Fuḏḏa Bedhahab Maṭlī - Wel Yās Mayyās Wel 'Aynīn Qattāla" performed by Rāshed Zuwayid in 1980s.

Version no. 9

This version is a recording of my own from 2013. I was accompanied by 'Abdullah Khairī (violin), Ayyūb Khuḏur (*qānūn*), and three of *mirwās* players, 'Alī Othmān, Sālem 'Abdullah, and Hilāl al-Dhawwādī. As the gathering was in Bahrain, most of

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the band were Bahrainis, apart from the *qānūn* player, who is Kuwaiti. I outlined to this recording's story at the start of this section. In terms of the development of *maqāmāt*, the feature of this version is an overlap between *ḥijāz* and *bayātī*, as it was with Muḥammad Zuwayid in the sixth version; however, the repetitions are varied, because the order of modulation between *maqāmāt* is dissimilar to what had been done by Muḥammad Zuwayid. On the other hand, the difference between this version and version no. 8, both based on the four beat rhythm (*ṣaut shāmī*), is that the rendition in the eighth is more careful, accurate, stuck in one *maqām*, and contains many gaps during the singing. Whilst, in this version the performance is freer, with fewer gaps in singing and probably similar to what is usually happening in original form on six beats, and also fluctuates in changing the *maqām*. See Figs. 6.18 and 6.19.

Fig. 6.18. Transcription of version no. 9, melody A, Yaḥyā 'Omar Qāl, includes verse "Yaḥyā 'Omar Qāl Fī al-Bandar Sikan Weddī - Wa Ṭāb Lī Masmerī Amsīt Fī Rāḥā" performed by Aḥmad alṢālḥī in 2013.

Fig. 6.19. Transcription of version no. 9, melody B, Yaḥyā 'Omar Qāl, includes verse "Min Youm Amīr el-Ghawānī Jid Khaṭar 'indī - Yetmashā Bel Ful Wel Chādhī Wa Teffāḥa" performed by Aḥmad alṢālḥī in 2013.

There have been significant changes in the form of this example since 1927, and without tracing the development of the creative elements through each version, the connection relating the oldest and newest renditions is lost. It is not possible to argue on musical technical grounds that the first recording, which is on *maqām ḥussainī* (see Fig. 6.1) and *ṣaut 'arabī* rhythm, is similar or derived from the same origin of the last version, which includes two *maqāmāt*, *ḥussainī* and *ḥijāz* and *ṣaut shāmī* rhythm, without going through the other versions. Therefore, many researchers and listeners have a notion that certain versions of this example are separate and different pieces. For instance, Ibrāhīm Ḥabīb, a researcher and *ṣaut* performer from Bahrain discusses the first and fifth versions of this example, and does not make any association between them. He states clearly that Bin Fāris composed two *ṣaut* pieces, *Lān al-Ḥaṣā* (the fifth version), and *Yā Bāhī al-Khad*, that was recorded by Ḍāḥī bin Walīd and not studied here. He considers these two versions to be different pieces by the same composer (Ḥabīb, 2003, p. 77). In addition, Ghannām al-Deikān, a researcher and composer from Kuwait, discusses *Qāl Ibn al-Ashqar* (the first version) as a *ṣaut* that is composed by 'Abdullah al-Faraj, and discusses the same

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ṣaut melody (*Yā Bāhī al-Khad*), which is different in text and shape, as a *ṣaut* that is

not attributed to a known composer. This demonstrates that he did not see any

relation between these versions and refers to them as different *ṣaut* pieces (al-

Deikān, 1998, pp. 162-164). My own method allows us to understand the repertoire

differently, and I continue to elaborate it in the next example.

Example II: Mā Tendhurū Damʿatī Sālat and versions

The next example I wish to discuss is named *Mā Tendhurū Damʿatī Sālat*, as per the

name of the *ṣaut* that is performed by Yūsuf al-Baker. A number of the creative

elements which are involved here overlap with those discussed in the previous

example, *Qāl Ibn al-Ashqar*. Chiefly, both examples share the feature of a *maqām*

change in melody. However, there are two main differences in this example. First is

the treatment of *maqām*, because there is an absence of modulation between two

maqāmāt. This example demonstrates a commitment to using only one *maqām*

during the performance of any version, in contrast with the previous example where

there is a freedom to modulate from a particular *maqām* to another within the same

version. Second is the use of two unequal meters in poems. The longer metre

typically fits with the length of the melody, but the shorter has a small gap in the first

theme of the melody. The short meter influences the singing style, because it creates

a gap at the end of the line, and the performer works to fill it by using ornamentation.

In other words, the length of a poem and its relationship to the metre can lead to a

degree of variation due to its contribution in encouraging the performer to fill the

gaps. In this example, the transcriptions of *ṣaut* versions are accompanied with the

words of the verses, to demonstrate how the length of the poem contributes in

formulating the shape of the melody, and how the performers work to fill the gap in the short verses.

In the current example, the process of gradual modification is clearer than the previous example, enabling the reader or musician from outside the *ṣaut* community to recognise the process of change occurring between one version and the next, Although this melody is still popular and in demand amongst listeners of *ṣaut*, there are just four main different versions, which is small in comparison with the previous example. Other recordings of this *ṣaut* are mostly similar, influenced in some way by the four main versions, possibly as descendants or imitations of them.

The four main versions of this example as described below share some common features. For instance, the type of lyric is always in colloquial Yemeni, which known as *ḥumainī*. In addition, the type of melody is usually described as *ṣaut raddādī*, as the singing consists of a call and response between the singer and the choir or listeners. Furthermore, there is no variety in the rhythm of this *ṣaut*, and it is always played on six beats (*ṣaut ‘arabī*). Three different *maqāmāt* that have been used to perform the different versions of this *ṣaut*, namely *neirz rāst*, *kerdān*, and *muḥayyer*, see Figs. 6.20, 6.21, and 6.22. Therefore, as in the previous example, it is not easy to identify how the first version relates to the fourth, without looking at those that are intermediate.
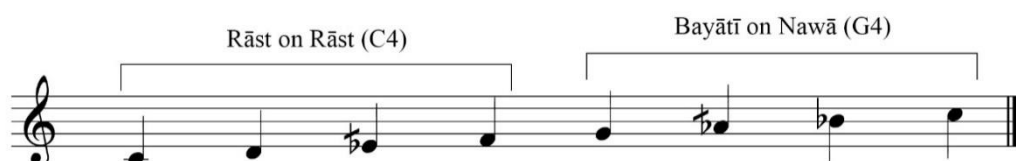
Fig. 6.20. Maqām neirz rāst on C5.
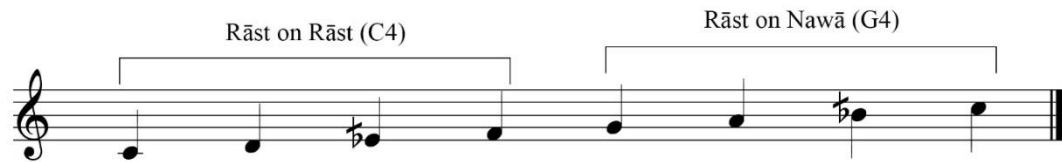
Fig. 6.21. Maqām kerdān on C5. The maqām is similar to rāst but it read from up to down.
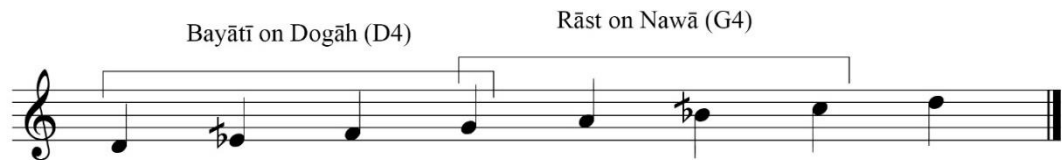
Fig. 6.22. Maqām muḥayyer on C5. The maqām is similar to ḥussainī but it read from up to down.

Version no. 1

This version entitled *Mā Tendhurū Damʿatī Ṣālat* was performed by Yūsuf al-Baker, whose only accompaniment was his brother Muḥammad (d. 1953) on *mirwās* (al-Baker, n.d.). The version is a private recording that was made either in 1952 or 1953 in Kuwait, and is therefore not the earliest stylistically, amongst the versions that have been selected to be analysed. The shape of the melody and the vocal style in this recording probably represents the form of this *ṣaut* as it was performed in the 19th century, because the performer, al-Baker, had been a musician since the last decade of the 19th century, and was known to be the only student of ʿAbdullah al-Faraj, (d. 1901). Therefore, I suggest this version is in effect the earliest, despite it not being the oldest recording. The *maqām* of this version is *neirz rāst* on C5, which is the only version in this example on this *maqām*, see Fig. 6.23.

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Fig. 6.23. Transcription of version no. 1, Mā Tendhurū Damʿatī Sālat, includes verse "Subḥān Man Zayyanak Be-l-Khāl - Yallī ʿAyūnak Naʿsāna" performed by Yūsuf al-Baker in 1952 or 1953.

The version is a one-melody *ṣaut* piece, and consists of two themes, i and ii, which are always based on the first note of the *maqām*, C5. In his version, al-Baker presents a systematic order when performing and develops it over four sections. The first theme is always played and repeated, and the second theme is also played but then repeated twice in each section. The only exception occurred in the first section of this version, which begins with theme ii without going through theme i. Al-Baker plays and repeats it. The singing of al-Baker offers limited details regards to the other versions in this example, because both the melody and rendition are simple and mostly repetitive.

Version no. 2

This version is the oldest recording available for this *ṣaut* piece and is called *Māla Rīm al-Falā*. It dates from 1929, and was made by ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti in Cairo, Egypt, for the Odeon Records Company (el-Koueti, 1929). Two musicians accompanied ʿAbdullaṭīf in this recording namely the *ʿūd* player Maḥmūd al-

Kuwaiti, and Sāmī al-Shawwā, who was a Syrian-Egyptian violin player. The recording does not involve any percussion. The ṣaut is of one-melody and consists of two themes: i, which is usually performed twice, and ii, which is performed two or three times in this version. The *maqām* of 'Abdullaṭīf's version is *kerdān* (see Fig. 6.21), based on C5, and is similar to *maqām rāst*, which is based on C4. See Fig. 6.24.

Fig. 6.24. Transcription of version no. 2, Māla Rīm al-Falā, includes verse "Wajhuh Farīd-l Jamāl – Be-s Seḥr le-l Nāsi salab" performed by 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti in 1929.

There are two differences that should be considered when comparing the recording of al-Kuwaiti and al-Baker. Initially, the second version uses a different *maqām*, *kerdān*, which has some similarities with the *maqām* of the first version, *neirz rāst* (see Fig. 6.20). They are both based on C5, and share the same lower tetrachord, *rāst*. One difference is in the higher tetrachord which is *bayātī* on *maqām neirz rāst*, and *rāst* on *maqām kerdān* (see Fig. 6.21). The other difference is the metre of verses in the second version which is shorter than that of the first particularly in theme i. There is a gap that appears in the end of theme i in the version by al-Kuwaiti. Therefore, he would repeat the last word in the verse or use the expression '*yā sīdī*'

to fill this gap. In theme ii, 'Abdullaṭīf used these same words, usually before he repeated theme ii for the first or second time. The aim of using this phrase would have been to act as a link between the themes, not to complete the musical sentence as in the first theme.

Version no. 3

This version, *Māl Ghuṣn al-Dhahab*, can be described as the most popular version amongst *ṣaut* performers, and it is frequently played in *ṣaut* gatherings and drawing on numerous poems, both in Bahrain and Kuwait. The performer in this version is Muḥammad bin Fāris from Bahrain, who recorded it in 1932 for His Master's Voice Company (HMV) in Baghdad, Iraq. Bin Fāris was accompanied by two musicians from Kuwait, the violin player Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti and the *mirwās* player Ḥamad Bu-Ṭaibān (d. 1933) (El Fares, 1932; al-'Ammārī, 1991, p. 138). The *maqām* of this version is *muḥayyer* D5 (see Fig. 6.22). The version is a one-melody *ṣaut* piece and it consists of two themes, the first based on C5 and the other on D5. See Fig. 6.25.

Fig. 6.25. Transcription of version no. 3, Māl Ghuṣn al-Dhahab, includes verse "Māl Ghuṣn al-Dhahab - Mawlā-l Banāna-l Mukhaḍḍab" performed by Muḥammad bin Fāris in 1932.

Through his recording, Fāris transformed some significant elements in the shape of the *ṣaut* shape. The most important and obvious modification in this version is the use of *maqām muḥayyer* on D5, which is part of the *bayātī* family, instead of *kerdān*

or *neirz rāst*, which are derived or part of the *rāst* family in the previous versions. In consequence, theme i in this version is based on C5, as in the previous versions, whilst theme ii is based on D5. The metre of the verses in this version is short, similar to that which was used in the second version. The *ṣaut* includes twelve sections, each section performed slightly differently. Fāris' improvisation in singing can be clearly heard in the end of each hemistich or at the end of theme i and ii. He mostly avoided the techniques of ornamenting that had been used by 'Abdullaṭīf to fill in the gap at the end of theme i through either repetition of the last word or using the linking phrase *yā sīdī* each time. In Bin Fāris' rendition, he never repeated theme i, which is done in both previous versions. Instead, Bin Fāris extended the length of the last word in the hemistich, connecting theme i with theme ii, making a gap before the last word not after it as usual in version no. 2. Yet sometimes he did not fill the gap in this recording, which should be considered as a break of continuity in the tradition. In theme ii, Bin Fāris sings it and repeats it once or more, and uses different expressions as linking words to repeat the theme, such as *yā sīdī*, *oh*, and *wallah*. It is possible to say that the concern of Bin Fāris in this recording was to present different notions to fill most of the gaps whether in theme i or ii.

In addition, although the version been described as a one-melody piece, after section eight, Bin Fāris repeated the section but without singing theme i. This technique of eliminating theme i and jumping to sing theme ii was practised in *ṣaut* before Bin Fāris. For example, the al-Baker version begins in this way, and, as will be discussed broadly later in this Chapter, 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti performed the *ṣaut* piece *Ḥarrak Shijūnī* (el-Koueti, 1928), beginning with part of theme ii. However, it seems that whilst traditionally this method was used in the beginning of the *ṣaut* pieces, as in al-

Baker's version, Bin Fāris' innovation was to use this technique during the singing. He used this same technique in many other ṣaut pieces, both in the beginning or during the ṣaut, such as *Yā Wāḥid al-Ḥusn* (Ale Khalifa, 1932), and *Qāl al-Muʿannā* (El Fares, 1932).

Version no. 4

This fourth version is a recording was made by another Bahraini singer, Ḍāḥī bin Walīd, and is the the ṣaut *Marra Bedwī Ṣaghīr* (Bin Walid, 1932). It finds a place within this example despite its distinct shape and approach of singing. Bin Walīd was accompanied by Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on violin, and may have been accompanied on *mirwās* by either Bu-Ṭaibān or Mullā Saʿūd al-Mukhāyṭa, see Fig. 6.26. The *maqām* of this version is *muḥayyer* D5, see Fig. 6.22. From the period of 1920s and 1930s, the versions we have that were based on C5 were performed by Kuwaitis, and the versions that were based on D5 were performed by Bahrainis; but there is no evidence as to whether if this is coincidence or intentional distinction of the time.

Fig. 6.26. Transcription of version no. 4, Marra Bedwī Ṣaghīr, includes verse "'Athba Akhḍar Khaṭar - Ba'd-l 'Ashiyah Mu'addī - Kellemā Ṣār Fattān" performed by Ḍāḥī bin Walīd in 1932.

This version shares some similarities with the other Bahraini version in no. 3, because the first theme is based on C5 and the other on D5. The main difference can be found in the structure of the first theme, which is completely different from all the

previous versions. Theme i is expanded in range, which reached F5 in the other recordings, and sometimes G5 in Bin Fāris' version. Bin Walīd on the other hand hits A5 in most of the sections, which is till now, seldom found in the other versions of this *ṣaut*. Additionally, Bin Walīd's expansion of theme i appears through a new melody.

This new version that was offered by Bin Walīd was a result of a developing process, deriving in particular from version no. 3. This can be surmised, since they both share the same *maqām*, and the instrumental refrain in this version is similar to the singing and instrumental refrain in version no. 3. Bin Walīd's rendition is mostly repetitive as he does not tend to break the routine, unlike his predecessor Bin Fāris. Rather, his magnificence lies in his style of singing and the harmony and coherence created between theme i, which is new, and theme ii, which is old. The monotony of performing the sections is broken by using linking words between the hemistichs. In *ṣaut*, a linking word is usually a word that is not related to the text, but in this version Bin Walīd repeats the last word in the verse as a linking word instead. This differs from the way in which 'Abdullaṭīf in version no. 2 repeated the last word to fill a gap because the repeated word was part of the melody, and did not link the verses. Also, in version no. 2 the repetition of the last word in the verses was found in theme i, whilst in version no. 4 it is always found in theme ii. In addition, in a few sections, Bin Walīd employs an uncommon practice of using two syllables together as a linking word, usually a single word, *'alā or alā*, and the last word in the verse.

In the literature of *ṣaut*, there is no discussion to consider the evolutionary process between the four versions described. In other words, nobody has paid attention to the

similarity and dissimilarity between the Bahraini and Kuwaiti versions. This is not due to any difficulty in recognising the relationship between the versions, but because both Kuwaiti renditions were forgotten or unknown amongst the people of the *ṣaut* community until the late 1990s, when the revival movement began in Kuwait and shed light on versions no. 1 and 2.

Yet, in the 1970s, a Kuwaiti performer named Saʻūd al-Rāshed, recorded a *ṣaut* for the Kuwait state radio, which implied he recognised the existence of a connection between the versions no. 2 of ʻAbdullaṭīf and no. 3 of Bin Fāris. The *maqām* of the *ṣaut* is *kerdān* (see Fig. 6.21), as in version no. 2, and al-Rāshed's style of singing is similar to that of ʻAbdullaṭīf, but the text of the al-Rāshed recording is *Māl Ghuṣn al-Dhahab*, which is used by Bin Fāris in version no. 3. Before the 1990s, during which the Kuwaiti versions were generally ignored, al-Rāshed probably sent messages to his contemporaries that are still perhaps pertinent to us today. Namely, we must note how Bin Fāris' version of the *ṣaut* differed from his own contribution and that is important to be aware of and try to discover the correlation between the two versions to understand how the process of development resulted in a change to the shape of this melody.

A different story involves my activities in the late 1990s, when I was accompanying ʻAlī al-Masʻūd, a *ṣaut* performer in a *samra*. Al-Masʻūd performed a number of *ṣaut* pieces, and one of them was similar to version no. 2, which I have described as a neglected version, but he used a different text. During this time, I was working enthusiastically to discover old versions that nobody cared about or knew. Therefore, I was pleased with this recording and subsequently uploaded it to an online musical

forum. The uploaded file was accompanied by a comment regarding the relation between this new recording and the version of 'Abdullaṭīf, which is largely unknown. After a few months, I received a call from the performer, al-Masʿūd in which he told me that he had never had the chance to listen to the recording of 'Abdullaṭīf, and what he did in this recording was a result of his own intellectual process. He decided to do something new in the version of Bin Fāris, by shifting the *maqām* from *muḥayyer* to *kerdān*, to became similar to version no. 2. This destroyed my supposition about the relation between al-Masʿūd and 'Abdullaṭīf, but it contributed to and probably confirmed or the observation that the change in *maqām*, which happened between versions no. 2 and 3 was an intellectual or a logical development, because there were different performers who used the same methodology in development independently of each other and in different periods.

It is worth mentioning that this example of *ṣaut*, which is always based on *ṣaut 'arabī*, six beats, has been used in a different genre of music in Kuwait. In 1960s, Rāshed al-Jīmāz, a Kuwaiti singer from the generation of 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti and Muḥammad bin Fāris, recorded *Yā Leitinī 'Obaidekum Doum*, which is type of *'āshūrī* [14] genre, for Kuwait state radio station (al-Jīmāz, n.d.). The metre of the rhythm was six quavers, rather than six crotchets of *ṣaut 'arabī*, and performed by percussion instruments called *ṭār* (pl. *ṭīrān*) and *ṭabul* (pl. *ṭubūl*), without using the *'ūd* or *mirwās*. In his song, al-Jīmāz mixed between the Bahraini and Kuwaiti versions, and it was based on D, as performed by the Bahrainis, and the seventh note was flat, as in the first version. Al-Jīmāz added a new element to his version to make it suitable for the *'āshūrī* genre, which was to speed up the singing to make it fit with

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14 - It is a wedding type of music performed usually by men.

the six quavers beats metre of the song. This *'āshūrī* model shows that it is possible to utilise the *ṣaut* melodies and adapt them for a different genre of music, and add something new to the shape or form of the melody if the performer has an awareness of the principles of *ṣaut* and the ability to develop the song in their own style.

The discussion of these different *ṣaut* versions leads to a recognition of the process of development in this example, which is based on performing the piece in different *maqāmāt* and not modulating the *maqām* in the same version. This example involves repeatedly using linking words or phrases to ornament the themes and fill the gaps in a different way each time, a practice that was very limited in the previous example. Whilst this example is limited in terms of the addition of new melodies within the structure of a *ṣaut* piece, version no. 4 proves that this idea is not absent from the mind of the *ṣaut* performer.

Example III: 'Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl and versions

In this example, I will address the most general practice of variation or improvisation that exists in the performance of *ṣaut*. It might be preferable to call it "re-ordering of the *ṣaut* structure" and some degree of this improvisation can be found in all multiple-melody ṣaut pieces. It seems that the number of music genres that practice a similar tradition of freedom are limited, although one example would be Persian *radif* music. According to Nettl (2009, pp. 185-195), the improvisation found in *radif* music happens by manipulating the order of *ghushehs*, which is "melodies characterized by a typical tonality and characterizing motif". However, until now, the literature dealing with Arabic music has not questioned whether this type of improvisation found in *ṣaut* is also known in other Arabic music genres.

The number and system of musical sections or themes within every genre in Arab musical repertoire can be clearly identified. In the *basta* music of Iraq, for instance, multiple-melody songs usually begin with a melody A, followed by a melody B, which will be repeated several times until the end of the song (Ḥelmī, 1984, p. 14). In the case of a *ṣaut* piece that contains multiple-melody and involves distinct performers, it is impossible to find a systematic usage of sections. There is no way of identifying any melody within the *ṣaut* as being the first or second, or as the major and minor melody in terms of importance, as usually, when improvising in *ṣaut*, the performer offers an unexpected order of sections during his performance. In other words, the common order that can be found in Arabic music, such as songs beginning with section 1A, followed by section 2B, then section 3B, until the song ends with section B or section A, is completely unknown in *ṣaut* tradition.

Through the example of *'Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl,* the following discussion will be used to highlight the fact that there are many possibilities in terms of the order that the theme A or B in any *ṣaut* piece can be played. The performer may start the *ṣaut* with a melody that can be named for the purposes of this study A, followed by a melody that will be known as B, such terms are not necessarily applied in literal terms within the *samra*. It may be the case, in a different recording, that the same *ṣaut* could start with melody B, followed by A. In addition, melody A is not necessarily followed by B. Rather, it could be 1A, 2A, 3A, and then 1B, or the performer may begin the *ṣaut* with 1B followed by 2B, then 1A etc. In *ṣaut*, one melody could be the major or dominant one in a particular version, or it could be the minor one in another. The paradox is that there are some performers who might

decide to perform only melody A, and not go on to use B in their singing, or who

perform B only without A. However, this seldom happens as in this case, the *ṣaut*

would be changed and become a one-melody *ṣaut* piece. Nevertheless, the same *ṣaut*

could contain two melodies or only just one melody. This freedom means that, with

the exception of those *ṣaut* pieces that are built on only one melody, there can be

multiple structures possible for each *ṣaut* piece. All options depend on the

improviser's imagination and vision. As a violin player, I know that before each

singing section that there are two possibilities that the singer will follow, either

melody A or melody B. Therefore, I am always ready to play one of these two

melodies on the violin. This requires a high degree of concentration to identify the

melody or to decide which melody the singer is going to use as quickly as possible.

The example that been chosen for discussion below contains a few elements that are

common in all versions of the same one example as will be seen later. The *maqām*

that has been used is *ḥussainī 'ushairān*, which is a *maqām* commonly used in the

ṣaut repertoire, see Fig. 6.27.

Fig. 6.27. Scale of the maqām ḥussainī 'ushairān on A3.

The metre of this piece is six beats, *ṣaut ʿarabī*, but sometimes, albeit rarely, it is performed in four beats - *ṣaut shāmī*. All versions in this example however, are based on *ṣaut ʿarabī*. The example consists of three versions that were performed by the same performer. This will help us to investigate the extent to which the performer has the freedom to follow different structures for the same *ṣaut* in different recordings.

In this example, the approach to analysing the versions is quite different from to what has been done in the previous examples. I will transcribe the two melodies and define each with the symbols A or B, so that I can refer to them later during the discussion of each version, rather than providing transcriptions of each version separately. In the previous examples, one or two sections picked from every version was enough to discover the similarities and dissimilarities between the versions. However, to analyse this example requires us to investigate the content of all the versions, which means about 48 sections, in order to recognise the concept of re-ordering the *ṣaut* structure, and how it changes from one version to another. However, providing transcriptions of 48 sections that are mostly similar melodically, except for the ornamentations, is unnecessary. I believe that we can understand how the order of the melodies in *ṣaut* is changing constantly with a clearer illustration, by using the symbols A and B followed by a number, to identify how many times they have been used in each version, rather than providing notations for the same melodies over tens of pages. In addition, the transcription contains the skeleton of melodies A and B, while other types of improvisation and ornamentation will be omitted. This includes repeating the themes and the linking words. This allows us to deliver the idea clearly to the reader by focusing only on the re-ordering concept,

without overlapping with the other improvisatory practices, which are not required in this example.

The example that I call *'Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl*, relates to the oldest recorded version, representing the common shape of this *ṣaut*, which was and remains well-known amongst *ṣaut* performers. It contains two melodies, A and B, and each melody consists of two themes. The first theme is always based on G4, while the second is based on A4. See Figs. 6.28 and 6.29.

Fig. 6.28. Transcription of 'Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl, melody A.

Fig. 6.29. Transcription of 'Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl, melody B.

Version no. 1

This recording, *'Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl*, is not only the earliest recording of this example, but is also the oldest or the first recorded song to be issued commercially, whether on the part of Kuwaiti or Bahraini performers (Ḥabīb, 2003, p. 7). The vocalist performer is 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti, and the band that accompanied him consisted of three musicians from Kuwait - Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on violin, Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti on *'ūd*, and Mullā Sa'ūd al-Mukhāyṭa on *mirwās*. The recording was done in Baghdad in October 1927 for the *Baidaphon* Company (Kwiti, 1927).

In this recording, 'Abdullaṭīf utilised the two melodies, A and B, transcriptions of which have been provided above, through eight sections. The order of the sections is A, B, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 2B, 6A. This version shows that there are six sections of A, and two of B, which means the predominant melody is A in this example.

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<u>Version no. 2</u>

In 1927, 'Abdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti was in the *Baidaphon* studio in Baghdad, surrounded by his band, the *'ūd* player Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti, the violin player Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti, and the *mirwās* player Mullā Sa'ūd al-Mukhāyṭa, when he decided to record this piece again, but with a different text, *'Alemtum Be'annī Mughram* (Kwiti, 1927). It was a strange decision because, except for these two recordings, the history of *ṣaut* recordings in the 78rpm era does not include any two recordings of the same *ṣaut* piece recorded in one session by the same performer. The only explanation I can suggest is that the recording in version no. 1, which is the first recorded *ṣaut* song ever, was a demo recording: neither the singer nor the band as a whole had ever been in a recording studio before that day. Therefore, it is possible that 'Abdullaṭīf recorded the same *ṣaut* piece again, but with a different text, because he did not know that the company would publish all the records.

In this recording, 'Abdullaṭīf used a different order of sections during his singing. These were A, B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 4A, 3B, 5A, 4B, 5B. The illustration of the sections order shows that there were ten sections in this version, beginning with A and followed by B then A, as in the earlier version, whilst the rest of the sections are different. In addition, the number of sections A and B are equal, five for each melody, which is different to the previous version, in which the A sections were dominant.

<u>Version no. 3</u>

The performer in this version is still ʿAbdullaṭīf al-Kuwaiti, and what makes this version unique is that the three musicians, Ṣāleḥ, Dāwūd, and Saʿūd, all of whom participated in the previous versions, are also playing in this recording. In 1928, ʿAbdullaṭīf came back to Baghdad to record a number of his songs, but this time, for the Odeon Record Company. This happened within a year of the previous recordings. In this session, ʿAbdullaṭīf recorded this *ṣaut* piece with a different text, *Ohail al-Naqā Qalbī*, which consisted of eight sections with a different form; A, 2A, 3A, B, 4A, 2B, 5A, 6A (el-Koueti, 1928). It begins with A, as in the previous two versions, but is followed by another A. There are two B melodies, which is similar to version no. 1.

 As mentioned, this is a unique chance to analyse three versions of the same *ṣaut* piece, involving the same performer, band, location, and within the same brief recording period. Even though the three versions have a different structure or form for each version, it is possible to find a few similarities. For example, the performer started all versions by using melody A as an introduction to the singing. Additionally, melody A is dominant in the three versions, while the function of B is like a melody that is used to break the monotony of the singing. Apart from the limited matching in the first three sections in version no. 1 and 2, there is an unsystematic pattern with regard to the use of the melodies in the rest of the versions. Furthermore, the similarities that have been found in the previous three versions are not seen in the next versions.

Version no. 4

In 1932, Mullā Saʿūd al-Mukhāyṭa, or Mullā Saʿūd al-Kuwaiti as his name appears on the record label, went to Baghdad and recorded *Anūḥ Edhā al-Ḥādī*, for the HMV Company (El Koweiti, 1932). He was accompanied by musicians, Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on violin, Ḍāḥī bin Walīd from Bahrain on *ʿūd*, and Ḥamad Bu-Ṭaibān from Kuwait on *mirwās*. In this version, the performer demonstrates a completely different perspective when it comes to performing this *ṣaut* piece. Mullā Saʿūd omits melody A from his version, and performs only melody B through nine sections; B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B, 8B, 9B. Mullā Saʿūd neglects melody A, which is the major or most prominent melody in ʿAbdullaṭīf's recordings, and builds a *ṣaut* from melody B that is generally a minor melody in ʿAbdullaṭīf's versions. Moreover, due to the fact that Mullā Saʿūd formulated the whole recording only in melody B, the concept of re-ordering the *ṣaut* structure in this example generally appears not to have existed.

Version no. 5

In 1937, Maḥmūd al-Kuwaiti recorded *Laqad Khabberānī Anna*, for the HMV Company in Baghdad (al-Kuwaiti, 1937). The band consisted of three musicians, Ṣāleḥ al-Kuwaiti on violin, Yūsuf Zaʿrūr al-Ṣaghīr (d. 1969), who is an Iraqi, on *qānūn*, and probably Dāwūd al-Kuwaiti on *mirwās*. Unlike the previous versions that have been discussed here, and in contrast to version no. 4, Maḥmūd eliminated melody B from his performance, and adopted only melody A in five sections; A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A. This version has no reordering for the sections because it is a one-melody *ṣaut* piece.

<u>Version no. 6</u>

This is the only version performed by a Bahraini singer, in that all the previous

versions were performed by Kuwaitis. This *ṣaut*, *Anūḥ Edhā al-Ḥādī*, is the same

text as in version no. 4, but the performer Muḥammad Zuwayid, provided a different

structure. The recording involved two musicians, ‘Abdullah Faḍāla from Kuwait on

violin, and Rāshed bin Sanad from Bahrain on *mirwās* (Zuwayid, 1950s). The

recording was made in Bahrain in 1950s. This version consists of multiple-melody,

and it is distinctive from what been discussed before, because it begins with melody

B rather than A. The version consists of eight sections; B, 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B,

A, 7B. Among these eight sections, there is only one section incorporating melody

A, which means there is a great dominance in the form of B, and is unlike what

‘Abdullaṭīf provided in his three multiple-melody versions.

A crucial question should be asked here: if the performers of versions no. 4 and 5

adopted only one melody and neglected the other, and the melody that has been used

in version no. 4 is B, while it is A in version no. 5, then what relates these two

versions, or why are they categorised here, and by the *ṣaut* community, as the same

ṣaut piece?

Although the performers in the *ṣaut* community define no. 4 and 5 as two versions of

the same *ṣaut* piece, the shape of the *ṣaut* contains obvious evidence that shows the

relationship between these two different versions is close. The main difference

between the two melodies is situated within theme i, and each theme has a different

shape. However, theme ii in both melodies is the same, and this similarity supports

the common perspective that existed amongst people in the *ṣaut* community, which

is to refer to both of them as the same *ṣaut* piece.

This table below aims to summarise the re-ordering the *ṣaut* structure through the

versions that have been studied by demonstrating how the same *ṣaut* can be

performed as one melody or as multiple-melody pieces. See table. 6.1.

Version no. 1	A	B	2A	3A	4A	5A	2B	6A	-	-
Version no. 2	A	B	2A	2B	3A	4A	3B	5A	4B	5B
Version no. 3	A	2A	3A	B	4A	2B	5A	6A	-	-
Version no. 4	B	2B	3B	4B	5B	6B	7B	8B	9B	-
Version no. 5	A	2A	3A	4A	5A	-	-	-	-	-
Version no. 6	B	2B	3B	4B	5B	6B	A	7B	-	-

Table. 6.1. A table shows the difference between all versions of ‘Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl example.

Conclusion

Variation and improvisation are a practice that develops in many different ways

within the *ṣaut* genre. Moreover, it is impossible to separate the *ṣaut* as a song or

melody from what has been added through variation and improvisation.

Consequently, there is no *ṣaut* recording that could be defined as an original or

authentic version. The mechanism of variation and improvisation based on a few

devices such as modulation can be found in other improvisational cultures. However,

it is more restricted, organised and limited in *ṣaut*. In the *‘Awādhel Dhāt al-Khāl*

example, variation and improvisation appear in a re-ordering of the *ṣaut* structure,

involving the use of an unsystematic order as a means of arranging the melodic parts

in the *ṣaut*. In the *Mā Tendhurū Dam‘atī Sālat* example, the method of variation or

improvisation is based on performing the *ṣaut* again in a different *maqām* and

sometimes using a different meter in terms of the lyrics. These help the performers to change the shape of the *ṣaut*. *Qāl Ibn al-Ashqar* is a strong example of the effect of freedom, improvisation and modification in *ṣaut* through other patterns of techniques: by modulation, by changing the rhythm meter, and by the shape of the *ṣaut*. The modulation in this *ṣaut* is simple, mostly from *ḥussainī* to *ḥijāz* and vice versa, which is a simple, or simpler, than what is happening in other Arabic improvisational practices. However, the complexity associated with modulation in *ṣaut* is about when and how the performer can modulate. In addition, the difficulty of improvisation in *ṣaut* is to practice the improvisation while sticking to, or considering, the rhythm or the length of the melody in *ṣaut*, which is unusual in other Arabic music.

CONCLUSION

With a few exceptions, research into the genre of *ṣaut*, whether pursued in the Gulf or the West, has concentrated on certain traditions that have been in practice from the late 1950s to the present day. In both discourses, there has been a clear preoccupation with *ṣaut's* more obvious elements, including its rhythms, texts and instruments. Consequently, such studies have not ventured with any real depth into the many other principles and practices that enrich *ṣaut* performance. One key example is improvisation that, as a phenomenon in *ṣaut*, has been rarely studied or only in a limited way. The main discourse amongst *ṣaut* performers and musicians, on the other hand suffers from an absence of explanation of many of its important elements and codes, endowing their practices with an unspoken and mysterious ethos. A few performers demonstrate improvisation and elucidate their ability in performance in words, which confirm their own reputations as knowledgeable practitioners of this exclusive genre. However, these accounts do not offer much insight into their artistic or creative visions nor indeed how they have acquired the skills to perform *ṣaut* properly.

If we acknowledge that improvisation is a concern among some contemporary musicians, the analysis of the first recordings of the 20th century reveals rather a tendency towards variation resulting in different versions of the same song, but not necessarily that the different versions were created spontaneously, at the time of the recording. After all, the existence of many different versions, which cannot be linked to one original version, is the rule for most of the oral traditions in human cultures. In order to ascertain whether the different versions are evidence of improvisation we

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must ask whether the transformations and modifications were actually created 'in the course of performance' (Nettl, 2009, p.186; see above, p. 206) or whether they were created through a long process of repetition and variation in daily practice. The answer is that we don't know, and we will probably never know, because we lack the necessary contextual information.

In this dissertation, I have tried to expose what is hidden or unspoken, and to explore the less apparent features, principles, and forms that each reveal much about *ṣaut* and its uniqueness as a genre. The interviews conducted with established performers, available in various types of published and unpublished media, as well as my own fieldwork interviews have helped to delineate a number of issues not examined widely in previous studies. The biggest challenge during this thesis however was addressing the many principles and features that currently exist in *ṣaut* performance but are not mentioned in the aforementioned sources, or discussed by the practitioners. I have therefore devised and utilised a novel approach to extract and study these features by investigating the recordings, relying also on my observations as a practitioner who has accompanied many *ṣaut* performers for over 20 years, as well as my perspective as an ethnomusicologist.

In addition, I have concentrated on a historical account of the genre as a guide with which to understand not only its prehistory and emergence, but also to trace the process of development that has influenced most of the elements involved in *ṣaut* practice, and encompasses principles, forms and content. One fundamental contribution has been evidence showing that most of the contents and practice that we know of today, which have been considered by many scholars to be only

attributable to *ṣaut*, were different or had a different function in other historical periods. For instance, the current rhythms bear no similarity to those which existed in the late 19th century, neither in shape nor meter; certainly the present-day *mirwās* player would find it impossible to accompany another *mirwās* player from the late 19th century. Through this historical study, I have attempted to substantiate a new notion that insists *ṣaut* is not an invariable genre, rather it is developing quietly through the years.

As an ethnomusicologist, I discovered and further explored many features in *ṣaut* that I did not consider when I was a *ṣaut* performer only; my position as a researcher guided me to observe the practice of *ṣaut* using a different perspective. The task of defining the hitherto undiscussed elements was a challenge in itself; performers do not usually need to explain any of the terms they use as it is part of a common culture and natural performance environment. *Jā'dah* is one of the most important terms, but has never appeared in any *ṣaut* studies prior to this. It is a single word which embodies all that is required to refer to a performer as a high quality *ṣaut* singer. *Ellī yeṭal'a-l-'ūd* (wherever the *'ūd* takes me) is one of the phrases used that shows the dominance of improvisation as a concept and a practice in *ṣaut*. It also shows the awareness of the audience, other musicians, and performers of the existence and significance of variation and improvisation in *ṣaut*, even if they do not refer to it by name. The phrase is the sum of the experience, cognisance, capability, courage, and all other elements present in the moments that follow the uttering of this phrase. I have therefore tried to discuss it rigorously to reveal the hidden meanings of this common expression.

In chapter I, recordings are the focus of discussion as they are a significant source that all other chapters in the dissertation rely on. To understand how the performers worked to develop *ṣaut* and modify it over the years, there is a need to use different types of recordings that belong to different eras. The discussion clarified that certain formats of *ṣaut* recording are more important than others in for the purposes of this dissertation. This importance is elucidated by as much as the sources allow, the circumstances that surrounded the recordings. The chapter also includes abroad discussion about the era of the 78rpm records as the type of recordings that was the most generative for *ṣaut*, whilst also discussing the companies, singers, and musicians involved.

Chapter II deals with *ṣaut* as a term that can be found in musical contexts of various periods, regions, and which carries different meanings. It is a term that denotes any songs of the Abbasid period, as well as a local song in Yemen. In Bahrain and Kuwait, the term *ṣaut* has separate meaning and form, and it relates to a specific repertoire, instrumentation, rhythm, and other features that makes *ṣaut* different by definition to the Abbasid or Yemeni contexts. This historical investigation comprises also the hypotheses that deal with the history of *ṣaut*. The discussion shows that there are many methodological faults in these hypotheses, which casts serious doubt on their accuracy and credibility. A new hypothesis is presented that requires examination of the content of *ṣaut* besides historical evidences and sources. It follows the premise that the influences that can be found in *ṣaut* are derived from Indian and Yemeni music, and suggests Abdullah al-Faraj, a student of Indian and Yemeni musicians, was a founder of this genre. The theory states that *ṣaut* was established in the 19th century by utilising particular features that were already

known in Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, but within a new performative context and adoption of new creative notions, I argue this proves the correlation of *ṣaut* with the music of the region and its diversity at the same time.

Chapter III discusses the musical types that were found within the *ṣaut* genre, which includes the three rhythmic types: *ṣaut shāmī*, *ṣaut ‘arabī*, and *ṣaut khayālī*. While *istimā‘*, *khitām*, and *mawwāl* are part of the *ṣaut* genre, they are not described as *ṣaut*. The rhythmic system of all three rhythmic types (*shāmī*, *‘arabī*, and *khayālī*) has developed significantly since the late 1800s to become far more complex. Additionally, *tawshīḥa*, which is part of *ṣaut shāmī* and *‘arabī*, comprises many melodies, some of which have been forgotten or are not practised or known as *tawshīḥa* today. Both the role and content of the *tawshīḥa* have been through different phases, and its importance has gradually increased to become one of the features of *ṣaut* today.

The instruments are discussed in depth in Chapter IV, revealing that there was a different type of *‘ūd* a hundred years ago called the *‘ūd hindī*. The *‘ūd* that is used today in *ṣaut* and other Arab musical genres was known by Kuwaitis at that time as *‘ūd shāmī* before the *‘ūd hindī* disappeared. Subsequently, the *‘ūd shāmī* became known solely as the *‘ūd*. The *mirwās*, which is the percussion instrument of *ṣaut*, was connected to different rules in the early days of *ṣaut* practice. It is probable that before the 1950s, the *ṣaut* performer was accompanied by only one *mirwās* and rarely two. Today, a *ṣaut* band includes three or more *mirwās* players. This study reveals how expansion in the number of players instituted new traditions based on the number of *mirwās* drums in the band.

In chapter V, improvisation and variation are introduced as a central notion that accompanies each part of *ṣaut*, and is practised unconsciously by the performers. The importance of variation and improvisation lies in their ability to prevent monotony in *ṣaut*. It is the tool used to develop novelty in a *ṣaut* repertoire. This is essential, as the composition of new *ṣaut* songs has ceased, most probably since the 1930s. Furthermore, most of the masters of *ṣaut* own a unique style in performing, and these styles usually centre around how improvisation and variation are employed in their performance.

The method of learning in itself enhances variation, and sometimes, improvisation in *ṣaut*. The apprentice should learn different renditions of the same *ṣaut*, which have been performed by other established performers. These are considered to be valuable sources that help the learner to accumulate experience, and establish a base on which to improvise, leading him later to find his own version for that *ṣaut*.

Chapter VI presents analyses and transcriptions of renditions of the same *ṣaut* delivered by different performers. These analyses offer support to the notion that there is an unspoken method in using improvisation in *ṣaut*. Within what I have termed a *ṣaut* piece, there is broad space allowing a certain freedom of delivery. This freedom is restricted by the existence of certain elements and notions derived from the traditions of *ṣaut* resulting in particular conduct and aesthetics suitable to the genre. Most importantly, my analysis reveals that it is not possible to separate *ṣaut* as repertoire and *ṣaut* as variation and improvisation. There are no original versions.

This ethnomusicological thesis is a foundational study, which addresses the main principles as well as the history of ṣaut. It is hoped that it might encourage other scholars to investigate further features of *ṣaut*, and provide a useful basis to ongoing studies. A few theories that are known as controversial and have potentially been misunderstood have been revisited in this thesis with new evidence; this could help other scholars to enhance such hypotheses through more investigation, including, for example the boundary of Yemeni influence in *ṣaut* and its role in *ṣaut's* origins. This study suggests that *ṣaut* historically has not always been the same, and it was different in terms of performance and principles from one period to other. This notion is usually not examined by scholars, who present *ṣaut* as a genre that has been relatively stable from one era to the next.

Before I began my study, my research plan in terms of scope was much wider than that which has been discussed in this thesis. Many factors restricted the examination of topics within *ṣaut* and made research into them impossible at this stage. One of the most important subjects concerning the *ṣaut* community, which can be found in most discussions amongst *ṣaut* performers, is the nature of the difference between Bahrain and Kuwait in performance of *ṣaut*. Although this question has been examined many times, whether by researchers or musicians, it remains unresolved and an ambiguous issue. There is no serious study, which reveals the differences and commonalities between those two schools or styles in *ṣaut*. Furthermore, many scholars from both countries approach *ṣaut* as a matter of national propriety, which significantly influences their scholarship. This topic was a concern for me and I did in fact spend a long time investigating the similarities and differences to explore and delineate the Bahraini and Kuwaiti styles. However, it was difficult for me to discuss

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it properly within a chapter, and with the limited time I had. I believe that this topic and others, such as the dominance of the Bahraini style upon Kuwaiti *ṣaut* performance, and the recently diminishing state of ṣaut practice amongst performers in Bahrain, requires a different project. Additionally, the shortage of sources and the limited number of *ṣaut* performers in Bahrain were obstacles to a deep examination of several aspects of traditions and rituals in *ṣaut* in Bahrain. Therefore, the term "community" in this thesis comprises mostly the performers of Kuwait, because I could not find a current community of performers in Bahrain. This finding might be contested by Mubārak al-ʿAmmārī, the Bahraini researcher, who stated that there is a *ṣaut* community in Bahrain, but it is small and limited (al-ʿAmmārī, 2013). Moreover, the practice of *ṣaut* before the appearance of Muḥammad bin Fāris, considered the founder of the Bahraini style of *ṣaut*, is as yet shrouded in some mystery and the resources available do not easily lend themselves to exploration and understanding of *ṣaut* at that time. This scarcity also affects the study of *ṣaut* in the 19th century, about which the most of the details come from Kuwaiti references.

Although ornamentation is a prominent element in the practice of variation and improvisation, the limitation on time and sources pushed me to focus on particular aspects in improvisation practice and examine ornamentation limitedly. In addition, the process of development in *ṣaut* is discussed in the thesis through three historical stages, the 19th century, the records period, and present day. However, it would be better to explore the process of development through each decade, especially from the 1930s onwards. This would help to identify the differences in traditions and performance in *ṣaut* and probably to discover more about the process. Unfortunately, this approach is not feasible now, as it requires more research and sources that are

not currently available. An additional obstruction is the political situation in many Arab countries. It is a challenge to visit Syria and Iraq to find out more details about the records industry. The existing discussion about the relationship between *ṣaut* and Yemen is not broad enough but regrettably it is almost impossible to expand it right now, due to the civil war underway.

In the late 1950s, a new pattern of *ṣaut* compositions appeared in Kuwait and brought many new elements that could not be found in the traditional *ṣaut* of Kuwait and Bahrain. This new *ṣaut* was influenced mainly by Egyptian music, which was the style that dominated the music scenes in Kuwait at the time. This music also needs a study to explore definition of it, its relation with the traditional *ṣaut*, what makes it *ṣaut*, what the *ṣaut* community think about it, and its importance as a part of the cultural identity of modern Kuwait or Kuwait after the oil boom.

Although I have been one of several researchers who have examined the history of *ṣaut*, this history is in fact still unclear or uncertain. To explore more about this history, it needs to be discussed not only within the context of Arabic music but also as that of the Indian Ocean. This music began before the oil boom, and in that time the whole Gulf region relied mostly on trading via the seas, generally with India. This association dates back many centuries and has influenced the life of Gulf society, especially Bahrain and Kuwait, in all aspects of life. Music is one of these influenced aspects and this thesis demonstrates a small side of this, but more studies in this field might reveal greater detail about this connection.

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