

Tarab

and the ART
of MUSIC

2018
GREGORIAN
&
1439 - 1440
HIJRI
CALENDARS

ARAMCOWORLD.COM
AramcoWorld

west to Malaysia in the east, and from Kazakhstan in the north to Somalia in the south. Notably these include •••• in Persian music and •••••• in Spanish music.

Europe encountered Arab music through many routes, but perhaps most importantly through the legacy of Ziryab, a ninth-century Baghdad émigré in al-Andalus, now southern Spain. Arriving in Córdoba in 821 CE, he helped spark a flowering of music that today echoes in a Moroccan music style that some call Tarab Andalusi. Currently linguists dispute whether or not “tarab” is the root word for “troubadour.”

Beginning in the 1800s, Arab musicians assimilated Western instruments—primarily fretless, tonally versatile violins, violas, cellos and basses. It did not fundamentally affect the aesthetic of tarab, and the best Arab and Arab-influenced musical performances, then as now, almost regardless of region or genre, remained nearly always highly interactive events.

A resurgence of Arab music occurred in the early 20th century with independence. The advent of mass media and recording technology—including the flowering of now-classic Egyptian musical films—brought up the question, still argued, of whether or not a recording can elicit genuine tarab.

Today, as satellite and digital media allow the music from Arab and neighboring cultures to flow around the world at an unprecedented pace, tarab remains like a heartbeat, in the words of Syrian master musician Muhammad Qadri Dalal, “the connection between performers and audiences.” 🌐

Kay Hardy Campbell (kayhardycampbell@gmail.com) writes frequently on Middle East cultural topics. In 1997 she founded, with Simon Shaheen, the annual Arabic Music Retreat, which she continues to co-direct. She also plays the ‘ud.

TAQSIM *and* TARAB

Ethnomusicologist Jonathan Shannon notes that one particular way Arab musicians create tarab is by improvising outside rhythm or meter, and then returning to it. This improvisation is elemental to Arab music, and it is named *taqsim* in Arabic (pr. tahk-SEEM; plural *taqasim*). A musician can play a *taqsim* almost anywhere in a piece: at the beginning to introduce it, in the middle between verses or at any time players take turns playing solos.

In a *taqsim*, a musician creates a melody that explores a sophisticated network of modes or scales called *maqamat* (pr. mah-kah-MAHT; singular *maqam*). Many *maqamat* feature microtones, notes that occur between neighboring notes in Western scales. A great player must know how to play a wide, creative variety of *taqasim* within any given *maqam*, and how to transition among several *maqamat*.

To end a *taqsim*, the performer must resolve it masterfully, often with a tarab-creating burst of energy that can be subtle and tender or expansive, even showy.

70 Muslims from Makkah to Madinah, where Muslims first attained religious and political autonomy. The hijra thus occurred on 1 Muharram of the year 1 according to the Islamic calendar, which was named “••••” after its epoch. (This date corresponds to July 16, 622 CE, on the Gregorian calendar.) Today in the West, it is customary, when writing hijri dates, to use the abbreviation AH, which stands for the Latin •••••••••••••••• “year of hijra.”

Because the Islamic lunar calendar is 11 days shorter than the solar, it is therefore not synchronized to the seasons. Its festivals, which fall on the same days of the same lunar months each year, make the round of the seasons every 33 solar years. This 11-day difference between the lunar and the solar year accounts for the difficulty of converting dates from one system to the other.

THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR

The early calendar of the Roman Empire was lunisolar, containing 355 days divided into 12 months beginning on January 1. To keep it more or less in accord with the actual solar year, a month was added every two years. The system for doing so was complex, and cumulative errors gradually misaligned it with the seasons. By 46 BCE, it was some three months out of alignment, and Julius Caesar oversaw its reform. Consulting Greek astronomers in Alexandria, he created a solar calendar in which one day was added to February every fourth year, effectively compensating for the solar year’s length of 365.2422 days. This Julian calendar was used throughout Europe until 1582 CE.

In the Middle Ages, the Christian liturgical calendar was grafted onto the Julian one, and the computation of lunar festivals like Easter, which falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, exercised some of the best minds in Christendom. The use of the epoch 1 CE dates from the sixth century, but did not become common until the 10th.

The Julian year was nonetheless 11 minutes and 14 seconds too long. By the early 16th century, due to the accumulated error, the spring equinox was falling on March 11 rather than where it should, on March 21. Copernicus, Christophorus Clavius and the physician Aloysius Lilius provided the calculations, and in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII ordered that Thursday, October 4, 1582, would be followed by Friday, October 15, 1582. Most Catholic countries accepted the new “Gregorian” calendar, but it was not adopted in England and its colonies until the 18th century. Its use is now almost universal worldwide. The Gregorian year is nonetheless 25.96 seconds ahead of the solar year, which by the year 4909 will add up to an extra day. 🌐

The late **Paul Lunde** was a senior research associate with the Civilizations in Contact Project at Cambridge University and author of more than 70 articles for *AramcoWorld*.

CONVERTING *Years and Dates*

The following equations convert roughly from Gregorian to hijri and vice versa. However, the results can be slightly misleading: They tell you only the year in which the other calendar’s year *begins*. For example, 2018 Gregorian begins in Rabi` II, the fourth month of hijri 1439, and ends in that same month in hijri 1440.

Gregorian year =

$$[(32 \times \text{Hijri year}) \div 33] + 622$$

Hijri year =

$$[(\text{Gregorian year} - 622) \times 33] \div 32$$

Online calculators can be found by searching “Gregorian-hijri calendar calculator” or similar terms.



On the cover: The pear-shaped, fretless ‘ud was popular in Arabia from the seventh century •• and remains the “Prince of Tarab,” centerpiece of any Arab ensemble. Ancestor of the European lute, it evolved at the hands of innovators like Ziryab, spectacular protégé of the leading Abbasid court musician Ishaq al-Mawsilii of Baghdad. Ziryab became his teacher’s rival and in 821 moved to al-Andalus, now southern Spain, where he established a music school. He added a fifth string to the ‘ud, and he played it with an eagle feather or talon—causing the previously used wooden plectrum to be discarded by ‘ud players thereafter, to this day. Cover art: watercolor on paper by Norman MacDonald (macdonaldart.net).

CONCEPT AND EDIT: RICHARD DOUGHTY. ASSISTANT EDITORS: ARTHUR CLARK, ALVA ROBINSON. PHOTO RESEARCH: JOHNNY HANSON. ART DIRECTION: KAY HARDY CAMPBELL, ANA CARREÑO LEYVA. CAPTIONS: KAY HARDY CAMPBELL. DESIGN: GRAPHIC ENGINE DESIGN STUDIO. PRINTING: RRDONNELLEY / WETMORE.



January

RABI` II 1439 – JUMADA I

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Kaifi Azmi, Indian Urdu poet and lyricist, born 1919	<i>Ay Qap</i> , Kazakh journal in Arabic script, published in Russia 1915					Turg'un Alimatov, Uzbek master musician of <i>shashmaqam</i> , born 1922																																																																												
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Akhmet Baitursynov, Kazakh intellectual and writer, born 1872																																																																																		

Hand clapping is an important percussion instrument in folk music styles across the Arab and Islamic world. In Morocco and the Arabian Peninsula, clappers create a loud resonant popping sound called *tasfiq* or *safaqa*. Tasfiq accompanies the performances of the Gulf art music style called *sawt*. During music interludes in *sawt* songs, a lead clapper starts and stops a chorus of clappers that create lively syncopation.



February

JUMADA I – JUMADA II

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Akbar, third Mughal emperor, begins reign 1556		Dame Nemat Shafik, British American economist, born 1962		Abdul Wahhab-Um Kulthum collaboration "Inta Umri" premieres 1964		Bangladesh Language Movement marks preservation of Bengali 1952		Zeb-un-nissa, Mughal princess and poet, born 1638		Arab Colombian singer Shakira born 1977		Chagatai poet Ali-Shir Navai born in Herat 1441																																																																					
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Traveler Ibn Batutta born in Tangier 1304						Jambyl Jabayev, Kazakh poet, composer and singer, born 1846																																																																											

On the front top register of the British Museum's 4,500-year-old Standard of Ur, a box ornamented with lapis, shell and red limestone mosaic found at the Mesopotamian city of Ur, south of Baghdad, Iraq, a man plays a finely crafted lyre decorated with a bull's head. He performs at what appears to be a court occasion, and behind him stands a woman, perhaps a singer. The box was discovered in 1927 and 1928, and the site also yielded four actual lyres—including one much like this one—that are considered to be the oldest existing string instruments. Today, numerous local and regional variants of lyres are played in East Africa, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.



March

JUMADA II – RAJAB

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Gurbannazar Eziwow, Turkmen national poet, born 1940

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Traveler Nasir Khusraw begins seven-year journey 1046

Baha ad-Din ibn Shaddad, biographer of Saladin, born 1145

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Composer and vocalist Muhammad Abdul Wahhab born 1902

Cairo Congress of Arab Music convenes 1932

Harun al-Rashid, patron of the arts, born 763

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Janadriyah, annual Saudi cultural festival, inaugurated 1985

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Philosopher Maimonides born in Córdoba 1138

Plucked and hammered zithers—lap harps built on a wooden box—like the *qanun* in the Arab world and Turkey, and the *santur* in Iraq and Iran, have deep roots in the region and are key instruments in art music ensembles today. The qanun has 75–78 strings, with three strings tuned to each tone. The player plucks the strings with his or her index fingers using tortoiseshell picks, or plectra, held in place on the fingers by metal rings. Microtones are achieved using small, moveable metal bridges called *'urab* in Arabic and *mandal* in Turkish. Moving these bridges allows the qanun player to transition a new *maqam* in an instant.



April

RAJAB – SHA`ABAN

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One of the most versatile percussion instruments, a *riqq* (or its larger variant, a *daff*) can hold its own as the sole drum in an Arab art music ensemble. With its delicate skin, traditionally made from fish or goat, and its lightweight cymbals of brass, in the hands of a skilled player a *riqq* can produce both complex classical rhythms and rousing folk beats. This image of a wooden-inlaid *riqq* is depicted amid the traditional architecture of Chinguetti, Mauritania, once a vibrant trading hub of West Africa and a center of culture and scholarship.

Ottoman "starchitect" Sinan born 1489

Terjiman, pan-Islamic newspaper, begins circulation in Russia 1883

First Quarzazate (Morocco) International Film Festival opens 2016

London Times praises humanitarian gift from Ottoman sultan to Irish people 1847

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, renowned Arab accountant, born 1938

Mamluks admitted to French Imperial Guard 1815

Kazakh singer D. K. Kudaibergen named "Most Popular Asian Singer" 2017

Koroğlu, an opera based on the Turkic heroic epic, premieres in Baku 1937

MARCH 2018

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June

RAMADAN – SHAWWAL

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Beirut becomes first Arab country to host World Environment Day 2003

Abu Bakr, first caliph of Islam, begins reign 632

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Kyrgyz poet, *Manaschi* and folk singer Tagolok Moldo born 1860

'Id al-Fitr

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Musician Abdul Halim Hafez born 1929

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Qutub-ud-Din Aibek, founder of Sultanate of Delhi, begins reign 1206

Nasri Shamseddine, Lebanese singer and actor, born 1927

Today's Western oboes descend from a family of loud, double-reed instruments usually played outdoors, including the shawm of medieval Europe and the *zurna* or *sumay* of the wider Islamic world. The *zurna* was an integral part of the Ottoman *mehter* marching bands, and it is still played at celebrations across the Arab world, Turkey, Greece and the Balkans. In Malaysia, the ornately carved and painted *serunai*, a cousin to the *zurna*, accompanies shadow puppet performances that remain popular today.



July

SHAWWAL – DHU-AL-QA`DAH

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Raha Moharrak becomes first woman from Saudi Arabia to climb the seven summits 2017

First London Shubbak Festival kicks off 2011

First Jameel Prize awarded 2009

Singer and child advocate Raffi born in Cairo 1948

Hamza el Din, composer and 'ud player, born 1929

Algerian singer Cheb Mami born 1966

Charlemagne receives an elephant from Caliph Harun al-Rashid 802

Philosopher Ibn Al-'Arabi born in Seville 1165

First Marrakesh International Film Festival opens 2001

This painting is based on an original gold luster-glazed dish produced in 11th-century Cairo during the Fatimid period, a time when ceramic objects were often decorated with scenes and activities. This dish portrays a female musician playing a two-stringed instrument without a plectrum. While many other music-related designs from the period feature the larger, pear-shaped 'ud, this instrument's compact, tulip-like design is reminiscent of the *robab* of East Tajikistan in Central Asia—evidence of how both music and instruments flowed freely along the Silk Roads.



August

DHU-AL-QA`DAH – DHU-AL-HIJJAH

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Arabist and humanist Josephus Justus Scaliger born 1540												Kyrgyz national singer Mirbek Atabekov born 1986																																																																											
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		Halal Science Center opens food research labs in Thailand 2003				Bahrain declares independence 1971																																																																																	
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		Mo Farrah becomes first Briton to win four Olympic golds 2016				'Id al-Adha																																																																																	
						Yarrow Mamout, American freedman, manumitted 1796							Salif Keita, "Golden Voice of Africa," born 1949																																																																										
15	26	16	27	17	28	18	29	19	30	20	31	NOTES: _____ _____ _____																																																																											
Physician and polymath Al-Razi born 865				Sitar virtuoso Vilayet Khan born 1928																																																																																			

Military and ceremonial bands of the Ottoman Empire, called *mehter*, featured ranks of kettledrums and large, hand-held crash cymbals. The largest drums were played on camelback, and their deep booms inspired the troops and intimidated their enemies. These instruments so fascinated Europeans visiting the Empire that European composers adopted the instruments during an 18th-century craze for everything Turkish. By 1825 kettledrums and crash cymbals were integrated into both the European orchestra and marching band. Today descendants of the mehter band can be found in nearly every large American high school and heard during nearly every holiday parade.



September

DHU-AL-HIJJAH – MUHARRAM 1440

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Mexican American actress Salma Hayek born 1966

Al-Biruni, "Father of Geodesy," born 973

Algerian Amir Abd el-Kader born 1808

Gazi Malik, founder of Tughlaq dynasty in India, begins reign 1321

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Prophet Muhammad begins Hijra 622

Kathem al-Sاهر, "Caesar of Arabic Song," born 1957

Treaty of Erdine signed, concluding Russo-Turkish War 1829

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Algerian Rai-rocker Rachid Taha born 1958

Launch of Djerbahood Project in Er-Riadh, Tunisia 2014

Farhad Darya, Afghan singer and composer, born 1962

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Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proclaimed 1932

Saudi singer Ibtisam Lutfi born 1951

The world's oldest and most universal instrument—the human voice—is also considered the most powerful vehicle for inducing *tarab*. In modern times, Egyptian vocalist Um Kulthum, who was born in 1904 and lived until 1975, is most often cited as a preeminent vocalist with the power to lead her audiences to profound, sustained *tarab*. Born the daughter of a Qur'an reciter, she was a masterful interpreter of poetry in song. Two of the many other leading *tarab* vocal artists include Egyptian musician Abduh al-Hamuli (1836–1901) and Syrian singer Sabah Fakhri (1933–).



October

MUHARRAM – SAFAR

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			World's largest falcon hospital opens in Abu Dhabi 1999																																																																																						
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	First Fez Festival of World Sacred Music kicks off 1994						Cairo Opera House opens 1988	Amr Diab, first Arab artist to make pop music videos, born 1961		Royal Opera House in Muscat, Oman, opens 2011		Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Pakistani qawwali superstar, born 1948																																																																													
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	Jahangir, fourth Mughal emperor, begins reign 1605						Turkish pop star Tarkan born 1972			Egyptian composer, singer and actor Farid al-Atrash born 1910																																																																															
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							Abadi al-Jawhar, Saudi 'ud player and composer, born 1953			Tatar Romanian statesman and composer of Ottoman-styled music Dimitrie Cantemir born 1673																																																																															
19	28	20	29	21	30	22	31	SEPTEMBER 2018 <table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>								1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30							NOVEMBER 2018 <table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td></tr> </table>						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		NOTES: _____ _____ _____
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Rimsky-Korsakov's <i>Scheherazade</i> premieres in St. Petersburg 1888																																																																																									

In the 13th century CE, King Alfonso X of Castile in Spain produced a book of more than 400 songs in praise of the Virgin Mary. Known for his patronage of music, Alfonso assembled court musicians that included Muslims, Jews and Christians. The manuscript illuminations are one of our most vivid sources depicting musical contact between Hispano-Arab and European cultures. The woodwinds, like the shawm, or double clarinet, and bagpipes, resemble the *zurna*, *mijwiz* and *habban* of the Middle East. The illustration of an Arab and European musician playing long-necked lutes, *top left*, particularly captures the era's storied cross-cultural music-making.



November

SAFAR – RABI` I

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						Epic poem of Bani Hilal tribe proclaimed masterpiece of intangible heritage by UNESCO 2003						Lebanese singer Sabah born 1927																																																																										
3	11	4	12	5	13	6	14	7	15	8	16	9	17																																																																									
						Malaysian singer-songwriter Yuna born 1986		Egyptian literary giant Taha Hussein born 1889																																																																														
10	18	11	19	12	20	13	21	14	22	15	23	16	24																																																																									
						Lebanese singer Fairuz born 1935						Composer and master of classical Kurdish music Kayhan Kalhor born 1963																																																																										
17	25	18	26	19	27	20	28	21	29	22	30																																																																											
Egyptian vocalist and actress of Syrian origin Asmahan born 1912										Abdulbasit Abdussamed, Egyptian Qari, passes away 1988																																																																												

When the violin, viola, cello and bass appeared with Western musicians in the 19th century, Arab and Turkish musicians adopted them. Today, they are found throughout the region. In some Moroccan ensembles, including those specializing in *Tarab Andalusi*, music said to have roots in al-Andalus, violinists and violists play their instruments on one knee, the way their ancestors once played the smaller, two-stringed *rabab*. In the rest of the Middle East, the viola and violin are played under the chin, Western-style.

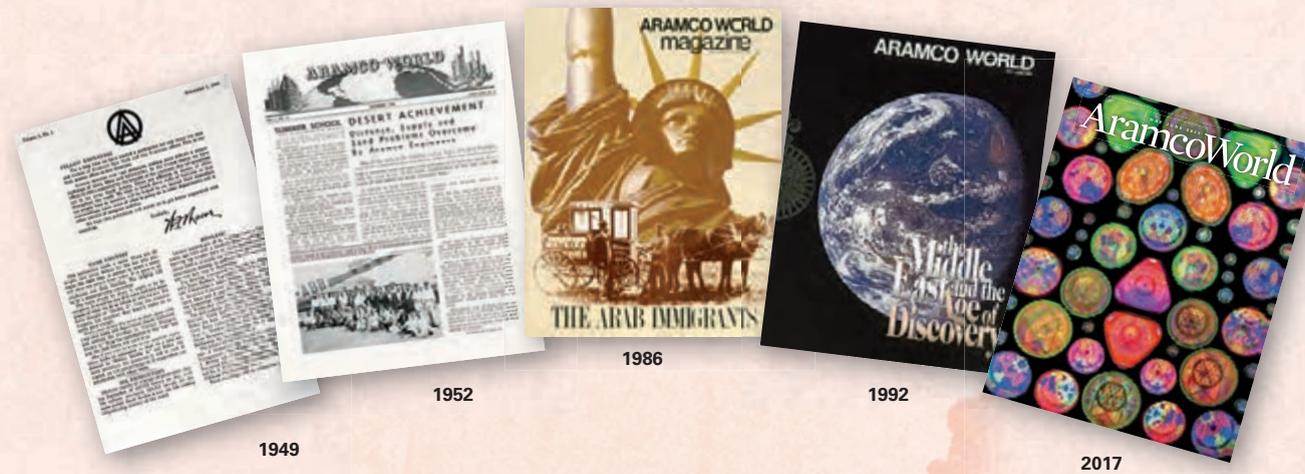


December

RABI` I – RABI` II

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		Bangladeshi muslin weaving included as masterpiece of intangible heritage by UNESCO 2013											
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Premiere of "Arab Idol" television show 2011								Lebanese singer Majida al-Rumi born 1956		Polymath and author on music theory Al-Farabi born 950			
9	16	10	17	11	18	12	19	13	20	14	21	15	22
								Author of Turkish national anthem Mehmet Akif Ersoy born 1873		Rock star Frank Zappa, son of Greek Arab Sicilians, born 1940			
16	23	17	24	18	25	19	26	20	27	21	28	22	29
		Verdi's <i>Aida</i> premieres at Khedival Opera House, Cairo 1871		Christmas									
23	30	24	31										

The *tar*, or frame drum, is made from animal skin stretched over a wooden frame, and it is played across the Islamic world. Women have played this instrument to accompany singing in celebration for centuries. In some areas, such as Iran, Pakistan and India, metal chains or small "jingle" bells are attached to the inside for more complex sounds and opportunities to display virtuosity. In the Arabian Peninsula, folk groups use tars in a range of sizes to produce different tones and to add depth to syncopated rhythms.



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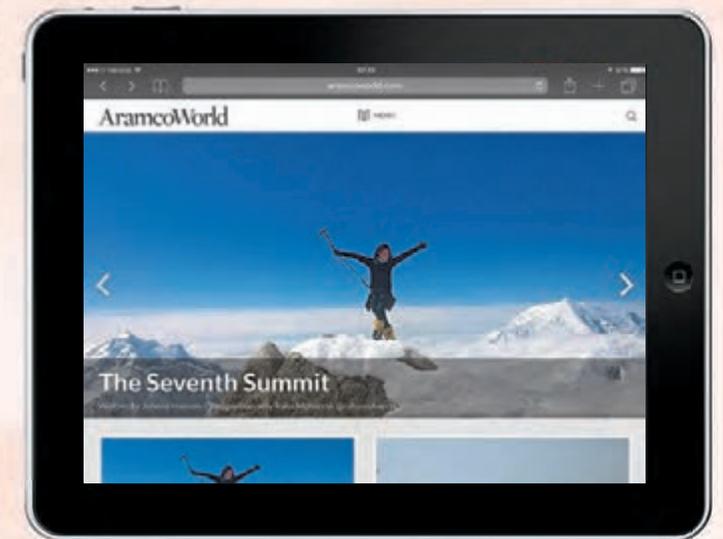
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In November 1949, the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) published the first issue of an interoffice newsletter named *Aramco World*. Over the decades that followed, as the number of Americans working with Saudi colleagues in Dhahran grew into the tens of thousands, *Aramco World* grew into a bimonthly educational magazine whose histori-

cal, geographical and cultural articles helped those American employees and their families appreciate an unfamiliar land. Today, *AramcoWorld* continues to be published on digital and print platforms by Aramco Services Company in Houston, Texas, on behalf of Saudi Aramco, since 1988 the national energy company of Saudi Arabia. Our mission remains education,

the fostering of cooperation and the building of mutual appreciation among the increasingly interconnected cultures of East and West. All back issues are searchable and downloadable without charge, and selected photographs from past issues are also available, at photoarchive.saudiaramcoworld.com.



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