eclipse
HAMZA EL DIN
This is the fourth album by Hamza El Din, pioneering oud master from the Sudan. Also a singer and composer, Hamza is an emissary bringing to new audiences the pleasures and subtleties of Arabic music and of the folk music from his home in Nubia. Although Nubians, whose language is as richly poetic as Arabic and much like what was spoken in ancient Egypt at the time of the Pharaohs, have always used music to express themselves, the only indigenous instrument among the people of the upper Nile is a drum called the tar, prized for its three-dimensional resonance. (In Pharaonic temples there are hieroglyphic representations of people playing the tar). Recognizing that a new medium was required to express the changing traditions of Nubians, Hamza went to what is now the Arab Institute of Music in Cairo to study the oud, which was not used in Nubia until he introduced it. A precursor of the lute ("Arabic 'al oud") through Moorish influence in Spain, the oud historically has been used in Middle Eastern music only as accompaniment to a singer; as a composition instrument, or in ensembles. Hamza has developed its use as a solo instrument by elegantly combining Arabic music with his own.

1 Helalisa (Nubian song) 3:36
Lyrics—Mohye Ed deen H. Sherif
Music—Hamza El Din

2 The Visitors 9:47
Lyrics—Abdell Ghanni El Khalby
Music—Hamza El Din

3 Ollin Arageed 8:00
Hamza El Din

4 Your Love Is Ever Young* 18:30
Lyrics—Ahmed Rami
Music—Raadhi As soomabati
Arrangement—Hamza El Din

5 Mwashah 3:54
*Traditional, arrangement by Hamza El Din
*Um Kalthoum: Performance model for
"Your Love Is Ever Young"

Oud, dundek, vocals, handclaps: Hamza El Din
All songs performed and composed by Hamza El Din
Helalisa (Nubian Song)

This song is sung by someone who is working his shaddouf, a water-pulley irrigating device on the Nile. The rhythm of his pulling is determined by the rhythm of the song. It is a love song begging a migrating pelican to carry the man's greeting to his beloved, praying to Allah, the Carrier of that which cannot be carried, to help him bear his burden of love, as he raises his burden of water to his fields.

The Visitors

In 1965, a year after my people had moved from our village to escape the rising water from the Aswan High Dam, I returned home to visit. Feeling uncomfortable in a new place, I went traveling throughout the Middle East till I arrived in Baghdad. Sitting in the garden of a small hotel on the Euphrates, I saw that the opposite shore of the river looked just like my flooded home. I realized what I had been looking for in traveling. I felt at home and I stayed. "The Visitors" is a poem in Iraqi Arabic, composed in honor of his friend's fiancee by Abdell Ghanni El Khalili after a period of 10 years in which he had been obliged to stop writing poetry. A third friend had published the poem in his weekly magazine, and there in the garden of the hotel they were celebrating the rebirth of the poet. A fourth friend had published the poem in his weekly magazine, and there in the garden of the hotel they were celebrating the rebirth of the poet. I accepted their invitation to join them, and setting the first line to music in a Nilotic mood, I sang it for them. They were delighted and in the days following didn't leave me till I finished it. The composition came as a mixture of Iraqi maqam Egyptian melody, and Sudanese pentatonic, ornamented with a Nubian flavor. The composition itself has a flexibility of rhythm, a kind of singing poetry, and was the work of a new friendship.

The Visitors

I carried the word to my home
And to the melodious bird nesting
in the wall crevices:
The night and the lovers united
in convivial talk, jasmine
perfume and a heavenly nectar.
I carried the word to my study and
penned it into my journal.
Adding to my many memoirs,
When I announced the good news
to them,
They were joyously intoxicated with
the happy tidings of the union.
And with the return of the visitors,
Our home will be misted with
perfume, lights and flowers.
Joy wells in my heart.
As the spring shoots sprout
in the field,
I return singing to the betrothed
and to love.
So that all the world may dance
on my kithara.

ollin arageed

A Nubian percussion performance, played for a person only once in a lifetime—at the celebration of a first wedding—the rhythm composed of three different beats on the tar, accompanied by a melodic handclapping, feet beating on the ground, and, traditionally, singing and the noise of women's jewelry in their soft movements to those rhythms.
Um Kalthoum (1902–1975) was a great Egyptian singer, beloved as “the twinkling star of the East” by all who know Arabic music. Her musical training began with her father who recited the Qur'an in the local mosque and directed a singing group which performed on religious occasions. Disguised as a boy since public performances by girls were frowned upon, Um Kalthoum was the lead singer in her father's group until she was discovered and made her first record at age eleven. She is the only person to bridge classical and contemporary Arabic music so successfully. Her song lyrics ranged from the poetry of Omar Khayyam to the best of contemporary writers; throughout her career the finest composers and musicians wrote and played for her. Ahmed Rami, a long-time companion of hers, wrote the lyrics for this song, and As'soombat composed the music.

YOUR LOVE IS EVER YOUNG

Now that my heart has been at peace for so long,
Why do you reawaken our love again?
This is sinful of you, leave my heart at peace, undisturbed.
When we were still close, had you rejected me,
It would then have been easy for us to be reconciled,
But the span of time made my heart deprived,

Inured to suffering for want of you,
Now it is as though your heart is longing,
Feeling the pain in my heart for you.
You will flame the fire of anticipation,
Which you extinguished before by your own hand.
If I could forget the past
And if I could bear the price of recapturing time.
I would discover another lifetime to relive the past.
When we are together, you are accusing and I accepting.
It is hard for me to speak as if our love is past,
Since it exists as it was, and now even more strongly.
I remind you of the nights past,
Describing and imagining how heavenly they were.
You are the joy and ecstasy,
And you are the pain and agony.
And what is love, except these all?
As time passes by, year after year,
Your love is ever young.
I could forget the past joys which have scarred my heart.
I will be awake nights whirling over memories of our past.
I would that I could forget the past
And its pain which left its burn in my tears.
If this is memory, tears will stream down.
From the overwhelming joy of your memory,
You to whom I have devoted my life,
Yearning for your devotion in return.
You are the joy and ecstasy,
And you are the pain and agony,
And what is love, except these all?
As time passes by, year after year,
Your love is ever young.
Oh, you! That your love lives in my heart.
Within the shadow of unity
You are imagination; you are the spirit;
You are the companion of all wishes.
Time will come and go, and you remain the eternal love.
How can I say how it was in the past?
In the past, tomorrow was in the future.
And the present will pass before we notice it.

When I am with you in a trance in your sea of love,
I do not notice what is passing from my life.
Whether you accept or reject me,
You alone will be in my mind.
As the one I shall always love,
As I have loved in the past.
You are the joy and ecstasy,
And you are the pain and agony,
And what is love, except these all?
As time passes by, year after year,
Your love is ever young.

MWASHAH

This is a classical traditional piece for teaching voice from the time of the Moors in Spain.

MWASHAH
When the gossamer nymph appears,
My beloved’s beauty drives me to distraction;
Surrender
Surrender
When I am enraptured by a glimpse,
My beloved’s beauty is a tender branch caught by the breeze;
Surrender
Surrender
Oh, my destiny. My perplexity.
No one can comfort me in my misery.
In my lamenting and suffering for love,
But for the one in the beautiful mirage;
My beloved's beauty drives me
to distraction.

'Surrender
'Surrender

Produced by: Mickey Hart
Recorded at The Barn, Novato, California, January 1978
Engineers: Mickey Hart, Dan Healy
Re-mixed at Studio 'X', Petaluma, California, July 1988
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RCD 10103 AUDIO

Technical Notes:

Eclipse was recorded on a custom Ampex MM 1000.2" 16-track analog tape recorder at 15 IPS. A Neumann model U-37 microphone was used on Hameza's voice, while a 423 Sennheiser dynamic microphone was placed close to the tar. A Neumann KM 84S cardioid microphone was used for the oud and handclaps. This signal was then amplified by an Ultra Sound custom direct-coupled servo'd amplifier.

Remixing was accomplished in July 1988. The 16-track master was mixed using a Studer model A 80, 16 track, through a custom Audiotronics 501 console to a Sony R-D3AT digital recorder. Quantec digital reverberation was used for spatial enhancement.

A "D" to "D" copy was made for editing using a Mitsubishi X 80 digital 2-track. The signal was then converted through the Harmonia Mundi converter from 48kHz to 44.1kHz clock frequency to make it compatible with the Sony PCM 1630 that created the U-matic tape for the final transfer to compact disc. The U-matic tape was also used to create the master for the audio cassettes. The mixdown process was monitored using Meyer 833 studio monitors with sub-woofers.