

**English Transcript:**

**Woman behind camera:** Another subject...aaa... it's very important honestly because people have no information about it, and it's from our Iraqi culture which is the subject of the Baghdadi *Muraba*<sup>2</sup> and Baghdadi *Makam* and I know that you have a very strong knowledge about this subject, honestly.

**Man:** *Makam* originally is called Iraqi *makam*...aaa... because it's not confined to the city of Baghdad only; I mean all the cities in Iraq know it.

**Woman behind camera:** What does *makam* mean?

**Man:** *Makam* is a type of melody ...aaa... and a type of speech that is harmonized in this melody

**Woman behind camera:** uhmm

**Man:** ...aaa. It must...aaa... and it has rhythms, it has a specific rhythm, it has specific rhythm. ...aa.. This is constant and the speech is inconstant.

**Woman behind camera:** Yes.

**Man:** If this is constant...

**Woman behind camera:** Just like songs.

**Man:** Exactly. A constant melody.

**Woman behind camera:** A music scale.

**Man:** A constant specific music scale, and I mean it starts... *makam* basically started from, from, from people's words, I mean without, without music. It started from people's words and from these words, they built based on these words, the way they're said, they composed its rhythm and its *makam* came. So its *makam* is ... a *makam* of this word is the rhythm of this speech in this rhythm.

**Woman behind camera:** Hmm.

**Man:** And that's why it's called *makam*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Makam*: a group of musical notes combined together to form a certain type of Iraqi Arabic music.

<sup>2</sup> *Muraba*: literally, a square; however, in music it is a special type of Iraqi music.

**Woman behind camera:** *Makam*, true. Are there, for instance ...aaa... certain types, different types of *makam*?

**Man:** Each *makam*, each *makam* has a main root and has branches.

**Woman behind camera:** Ummm.

**Man:** In fact, I, my background in *makam* is not big but I listen to *makam* and I always listen to *makam* constantly. I like the Iraqi *makam*. The *makam* is ...aaaa... a root and branches. ...aaa... many *makam* branches lead to the root. So they tell you, this is a branch of *Nahawand*<sup>3</sup> *makam* or that *makam*. This is a branch of *Nahawand makam* or *Sega*<sup>4</sup> *makam*, *makam*...aaa... and *makam* is... one of the oldest music arts in Iraq before modern chants and songs. People used to go to coffee shops and listen to the, the *makam*. And *makam* has its own musical tools. It has its own instruments; it has *santur* and has *joza* and has, sometimes, they use *qanon* and...aa... it has the *takhet*, I mean the musical *takhet* or the ...*takhet*, its choir is two or three men, neat; they sit and sing this *makam* and people would listen.

**Woman behind camera:** Fine; are its singers males only or....?

**Man:** Iraqi *makam* was sung, in general, by men. We have some women who sang the *makam* such as the singer Ma'eda Nazhat<sup>5</sup> and the singer Farida<sup>6</sup>.

**Woman behind camera:** Yes; Farida Mohamed Ali?

**Man:** Farida.

**Woman behind camera:** Farida Mohamed Ali.

**Man:** Farida is, I mean, one of the, the, one of the.... Regarding Ma'eda Nazhat, is, is, is...aaa.. one of the previous pioneer Iraqi singers who sang the *makam* recently, I mean, not so much before her retirement. Farida basically has studied the *makam*; she studied the *makam*. She is one of the people whose voices and talents I appreciate. Now Farida is in Holland of course.

**Woman behind camera:** She was honored more than once because of....aaa... I mean...

**Man:** Yes, talents.

**Woman behind camera:** Her good performance of the *makam*.

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<sup>3</sup> *Nahawand*: a type of *makam*.

<sup>4</sup> *Sega*: another type of *makam*.

<sup>5</sup> One of the famous Iraqi female singers. She was born in 1937 and started singing when she was 13 years old.

<sup>6</sup> Farida is one of the famous Iraqi singers. She was born in 1963 and obtained a degree in the field of *makam* in 1990.

**Man:** Yes, she is an excellent *makam* singer.

**Woman behind camera:** I think she was the first woman to specialize in *makam*; I mean the study of the *makam*, and singing the *makam*.

**Man:** Exactly; she is the first Iraqi woman who studied the *makam* thoroughly and performed it, I mean in a very elegant way. And the *makam* is not sung, it's performed.

**Woman behind camera:** It's performed, true. It's not a matter of singing it because it needs a deep voice.

**Man:** It required specific voice levels and...

**Woman behind camera:** It requires control over the tones because its bases and tunes are different from the, the regular singing.

**Man:** Exactly.

**Woman behind camera:** It requires a very strong voice.

**Man:** And people used to listen to the *makam* and...aaa... the movements of *santur*, the movements of people with the *makam*, the voice, the change in tunes...

**Woman behind camera:** Correct

**Man:** People love to listen to the *makam* during the nights of Baghdad; coffee shops never ran out of Iraqi *makam* bands; there used to be many of them.

**Woman behind camera:** Even their clothes...

**Man:** They used to sing...aaa... most of old Iraqi songs are originally *makam* songs.

**Woman behind camera:** Uhmm.

**Man:** Songs from the Iraqi *makam*.

**Woman behind camera:** True, true. Even their clothes were, were different, I mean. They have the *yeshmag*<sup>7</sup> and they have *deshdasha*<sup>8</sup>.

**Man:** For the *makam* people in general, they preferred wearing the *sedara*<sup>9</sup>.

**Woman behind camera:** Uh-huh, right.

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<sup>7</sup> *Yeshmag*: a type of head turban. It's still worn by some men in Iraq.

<sup>8</sup> *Deshdasha*: a long garment for men.

<sup>9</sup> *Sedara*: A type of a hat. Outdated now; no one in Iraq wears it anymore.

**Man:** With, with a black suit.

**Woman behind camera:** Exactly.

**Man:** And a tie.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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