

A Few Notes on the Notes

Sections. Sections to be repeated are labelled. The opening of the section is notated with a '[' and the close of the section is notated with a ']'. In measures where only a section label is given, you are to play or sing the music for that entire section.

Basic structure. At the beginning, the refrain is repeated three times: solo (section A1), chorus (section A2), and instruments only (section A3). Then the following pattern is repeated twice. First, two verses (section B is a single verse) are sung as a mix of solo with choral responses, as noted. Then the refrain is repeated twice, first as chorus and then as instruments only. In the final vocal repeat of the refrain, solo and chorus sing together. The 'Ya Moulati Ya Lalla' section is not yet added because I don't have the words; if I get the words, I'll add the music for that section.

Maqam. The piece is notated as straight rast on C. But as you can likely tell from listening to the different recordings, the 'sharpness' or 'flatness' of the half-flats varies greatly among singers. At two extremes are Farouk Hicham who sings the melody solidly in rast and Nabila Maan who sings the melody (almost) in the mixolydian mode. Mixolydian is tonally just like ajam, except for the penultimate note which is a half-tone lower than in ajam (in C, B \flat instead of B \natural). Moreover, on some recordings the penultimate note half-flat is used in both ascending and descending, as with Amina Alaoui's orchestra when playing the last four measures of the refrain. For now, let's follow the majority of the recordings and sing and play the third note half-flat a little sharper (i.e., E half- \flat closer to E \natural) and the penultimate note half-flat a little flatter (i.e. B half- \flat closer to B \flat) than we might if we were playing a more Middle Eastern rast. Sometime it would be fun to play the piece a little 'rastier' (a la Farouk Hicham); it has a very different sound.

Melody. The melody for the refrain and verses differs in that the third measure from the refrain is missing from the verses, but in all other respects they are basically the same. With so much repetition of the same melody, the piece might well become uninteresting if it weren't for the use of melodic variants throughout, present in all performances on the recordings. I've stolen liberally from Emil Zrihan for our particular arrangement. Some of the variants are as follows. Measure 3 of the refrain differs melodically depending on whether it is performed by the solo, the chorus, or the instruments only. In the verses, there is call and response among solo and chorus, and the range of the melody is reduced from that of the refrain. Depending upon the range of your instrument, you might choose to play one octave above or below what is written in the notation.

Rhythms. The rhythm cycles for this piece are based on 12/8, capturing both the 4-feel and the 6-feel. Some of the recordings emphasize the 4-feel (Nabila Maan), and some bring out the tension between the 4- and 6-feels (Emil Zrihan) by simultaneously layering them and by emphasizing alternately the 4-feel and the 6-feel, often splitting the emphasis within a rhythm cycle. Some basic 12-beat rhythm cycles for the piece, to be played by different percussion instruments, are as follows:

zils (4- or 6-feel): t t t t t t t t t t t t

riqq (4-feel): d tt t d t t d tt t d t t

tabla (6-over-4-feel): t . t t d . t . t t d .

duf (4-then-6-feel): . . t . d . . . t . d .

