



Living fire group

The fragrance of Kurdish music and song

BY Zeria Shakely

Dady was in a hurry to catch the first bus going to Rinkeby, a suburb of Stockholm, where a seminar on Kirkuk was to be held. I, myself, had decided to meet my friends, Kurds and non-Kurds, near the University tube, to go to the party arranged by Kurdish students in Stockholm, and in between, I would meet other members of the family to attend the concert of Adnan Karim. Such is, sometimes, the cultural atmosphere of Stockholm. The Kurds are amongst the most active communities. There is always something Kurdish going on in this beautiful Scandinavian capital.

The Kurdish singer Adnan Karim and the Living Fire Ensemble, added splendour to the famous Swedish hall of "Sodrateater" when they appeared at the ReOrient Festival in Stockholm. The festival is organised to present music and song from the Orient, although it is often confined to that of the Middle East. Previously have other Kurdish artists participated in the festival, and this year it is his turn, Adnan Karim's.

Saturday 11th of June, Adnan and the Living Fire ensemble filled Sodrateater with beautiful, Kurdish tones for one and a half hours. The Living Fire is a group of six Kurdish musicians who represent traditional and modern instruments, and they are from different parts of Kurdistan.

As I was going to sit down and enjoy the concert I looked around and was happy to see that many Swedish people had attended. The first song performed Biroy paywasti aw nazdara (The eyebrows of that beauty) had a serene introduction that accelerated into the more fast growing song Dilim her aw diley jarane (My heart is the same heart). The concert had a varying programme with calm songs as well as intense and vivid pieces. Adnan Karim's beautiful voice accompanied with Oud (lute), violin, balaban, zurna, dahol, daf (tambourine), tombuk, tar and sêtar, sent shivers up my spine. The culmination of the evening was the Hussein Zahawy's daf solo. The audience showed great appreciation with heavy and continuous applause, whistles and few people even cried out the classical "one more time".



Adnan Karim

<< *I wished that many more people get to experience a concert as colourful and vivid as this one* >>



Adnan Karim and Zaria Shakely

My wish is that the older generation will think as the younger, and not vice versa. I hope that the youth living outside Kurdistan will strive to get knowledge, to obtain scientific education. Everyone needs to know about his or her roots and to be able to build an independent Kurdistan there has to be more knowledge. This we will hopefully have a peaceful Kurdistan."

Leaving the hall on my way to another Kurdish party, the sounds of Kurdish instruments and the mild voice of Adnan Karim were still echoing in my ear. Indeed what remained in my mind after the concert was more than echos. It was the fragrance of music and song; Kurdish music and song.

After the concert I met Adnan Karim according to an appointment arranged at the morning of the same day, and talked to him for a bit. I wondered how his inspiration for his music has changed as he has been living abroad for over a decade. "My 12 years in Sweden have given me new experiences such as musical education" said Adnan, who also emphasised that he has a new vision of Kurdistan; "it is more abundant than it used to be, and by singing in different versions in Kurdish I wish to reach with my art to a wider audience in different parts of Kurdistan and break the artificial boundaries between them."

We continued to talk about his new CD Tafgay Ashq (The waterfall of love) that has a new musical style, in that this time more traditional Kurdish instruments have been used. As I wished that many more people get to experience a concert as colourful and vivid as this one, I asked him when he would be able to perform in London. He wishes to play in London soon, but to get that chance it depends on the circumstances and the possibility of sponsoring such an event. This current concert was possible thanks to the generous support from Swedish cultural authorities.

Many people wished to talk to Adnan Karim tonight. A Kurdish woman forwarded a little note-book and asked him to write a few words in it.

- What words? What shall I write?

- Whatever you want, just words in your handwriting. I'll keep them as a memo.

My last question was if he wished to say anything to the young Kurdish people living outside of Kurdistan. His answer was full of hopes; "In general the Kurdish youth is the greatest hope for the future of our nation. My generation was living under threat but the Kurdish youth today is more independent and have new thoughts and wishes for Kurdistan which will lead to a better life for them.

