

INSTITUTE
ARTICALS

13 OCTOBER
2021



المعهد المصري للدراسات
EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

Egypt: The patriotic song in the works of Sayed Darwish

Usama Haggag



سيد درويش



WWW.EIPSS-EG.ORG

Eipss.EG Eis_EG

TURKEY- ISTANBUL

Bahçelievler, Yenibosna Mh 29 Ekim Cad. No: 7 A2 Blok 3. Plaza D: 64
Tel/Fax: +90 212 227 2262 E-Mail: info@eis-eg.org

Egypt: The patriotic song in the works of Sayed Darwish

Usama Haggag

The song is one of the most important means of guiding people and mobilizing them, where it raises their awareness and instils concepts in many of them.

The importance of linking the patriotic song to successive generations highlight the realization that art has social contents and contexts, in one way or another, so that it cannot be understood and judged without taking such contexts into consideration, given the fact that art cannot be removed from its broader political, social, economic and cultural contexts.

When we recall the works of Musician Sayed Darwish related to the 1919 Revolution, the events of January Revolution (2011) immediately come to mind, where Darwish's songs were prominently present at the Tahrir Square. This is indicative that the January Revolution failed to find a new "people's artist," to express it as Darwish did with the 1919 Revolution before.

The Egyptian situation in this regard is the same as the situation in Tunisia and other countries that have launched popular revolutions during the same period, as these revolutions did not find composers of patriotic songs of the value and weight of Sayed Darwish to express them.

The rebellious people's artist

People's Artist Sayed Darwish is one of the most influential Egyptian musician, where he had a strong influence on the Egyptian patriotic song. Darwish expressed the 1919 revolution in tunes that used to inflamed the patriotic feelings of the Egyptians at the time.

It is noteworthy that the year 1919 was the most productive year in the history of Sayed Darwish, as he composed 75 patriotic songs at the time, a huge production for a composer in one year. This confirms that the real artist is always affected by the political events around him and becomes excited to participate in them through his artistic production.

Sayed Darwish is a revolutionary artist, where "revolutionary" here does not necessarily refer to his choices of political or patriotic songs, but it means his belonging to the project of social change in reality, and his commitment to championing the concerns and issues of those that manage this project

and engaging in their action and change dreams, where he expresses all this within an artistic framework, no matter how.

The great Abbas Al-Akkad described Musician Sayed Darwish as "the leader of composers", as his production was not just a prolific artistic production appropriate for circulation in every era, but in fact, he left us a heritage that relies on the masses and expresses their conscience.

Darwish's theatrical production

Sayed Darwish succeeded in making two qualitative shifts in Arabic music: first, the shift from the "Takht" (the musical ensemble that perform the Middle Eastern music) to the orchestra; second, the shift from rapture to expression, as a result of his association with great poets such as Bayram al-Tunsi, Mohamed Taymour and Badei Khairi, the Salim Atallah theater in its early days, as well as his travel to Syria in 1913, where he had an opportunity to hone his talents.

However, the theater was the first to embrace Sayed Darwish and allowed him to practice his artistic experience, where he presented many theatrical performances that gave him artistic depth as a composer and singer, in addition to his awareness of the drama concepts and their relationship to the theatre. Darwish did not seek to create a state of ecstasy and rapture for the listeners and audience, as much as he sought to express his ideas through music and words.

One of the events that most influenced Sayed Darwish's artistic orientations was attending Opera Aida by Verdi, the famous Italian musician. After attending the show, he said to his friend Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafe'ie': "The music of this Italian made me happy," adding: "I must compose music that shall resonate with the Italian, the Chinese, the French and the German."

Sayed Darwish was fully aware of his role and completely realized its significance, despite his upbringing in a poor popular environment concerned with livelihood, with no margin for the practice of artistic and cultural luxury. Therefore, his concern was primarily patriotic and political, exactly like the great resistance poets that undertook resistance through the poems and words they used to write. Sayyid Darwish was one of the resistance knights, where he used his music as a weapon that was even stronger than the weapons used in war and combat. This is because the stock of patriotic songs presented by Sayed Darwish did lead the Egyptian citizen to directly take up arms in defense of his land to protect his honor and dignity.

Darwish was the knight of the revolution of patriotic songs in Egypt, with the beat of the drums of the First World War (1914-1918). When Britain forced thousands of Egyptians to serve the British army, Sayed Darwish composed and sang the "[Ya Aziz Eini](#)" song, where the song's lyrics were written by Mohamed Yunes El-Qadi, saying: "Oh my dear, I want to go back home... My country, my country, and the authority took away my son."

"El Hilwa Di" symbol of popular image

Sayed Darwish did not leave a basic category of the Egyptian community without celebrating it in the context of his songs. In his short artistic journey that lasted for nearly six years, Darwish produced about 250 song tunes, which shaped the features of Egyptian society with its different classes, including craftsmen, porters and employees.

Sayed Darwish greatly gained popularity among the Egyptian masses because he was keen to use the language of the street and the popular classes, with appropriate words for each group. This was evident in his works, such as the "[Dingi, Dingi](#)" taqtuqa (a genre of light Arabic vocal music sung in regional or colloquial Arabic) within the performance of the "Tahuna Hamra" (Red Mill) novel, the "[Salma Ya Salamah](#)" taqtuqa, and the "[Maliha Gawi El-Golel Al-Ginawi](#)" (the Qina pottery-made drinking pots are very good) taqtuqa included in the "Goluloh" (Tell him) novel, and the "[Shidd El Hizam Ala Wistak](#)" (Tighten the belt on your waist) from the "El Barbari Fil Geish" (The Barbarian in the army) novel, the "[Fein Zay Masr Baladna](#)" (No other country is like our country Egypt) taqtuqa in the "Umm 44" novel, the "[El Kotn](#)" (The Cotton) taqtuqa in the "Fashr" novel, the "Ahu Da Elli Sar" (This is what happened) taqtuqa and "[Ya Blalah Zaghoul](#)" (O Red Dates) taqtuqa, and many others.

Among Darwish's political songs is "[Sabha El-Zibdah, Baladi El-Zibadah](#)" (Fresh Butter, Local Butter) melody in the "Kulleha Yumin" (They're only two days) novel, and "[Ahsan Goyush Fil Omam Goyushna](#)" (Our armies are the best armies of all nations) and "[Ihna El-Gonud Zay El-Osoud](#)" (We are soldiers like lions) in the "Al-Hilal" (The Crescent) novel, "[Oum Ya Masri Masr Dayman Bitnadeek](#)" (O Egyptian, wake up! Egypt is always calling you) in the "Gololu" (Tell him) novel, the "[Ana El-Masri Kareem El-Unsurein](#)" (I'm the Great Honorable Egyptian) in "Scheherazade" novel.

Darwish presented many diverse patriotic songs of a national nature that highlight the peculiarity of the Egyptian society with its different dialects in various governorates, including the "[El-Hilwa Di Amit](#)

[Teigin Fil Badriyeh](#)" (This pretty lady has woken up to knead the bread dough early in the morning)
taqtuqa.

El Hilwa Di Amet Tiegen Fil Badria.

(This pretty lady has woken up to knead the dough early in the morning)

Widdik biyedden Coco, Coco, Fil Fagria

(The cock crows: Coco, Coco, at dawn)

Yala Bina Ala Baballah Ya Sanaieya

(O craftsmen, Let's go and seek our livelihood)

Yigaal Sabahak Sabah El Kheir Yasta Attia

(May your morning be a good morning, Master Attia)

Sayed Darwish, in the novel "Wa Laow" (And even if), starts to draw a simple popular image as an introduction to a major issue, about workers, craftsmen, industry, and capital. Although this topic is not singable at all, but Darwish moves smoothly presenting one category to another, linking all this to the state of the whole country.

Sayed Darwish would have acted like all his precedents of artists who used to sing the same topics focusing on entertainment only and distance himself from the miserable and painful images of an entire people, but he chose to handle a political issue in the first place, which was not the custom of art at the time. However, Darwish was able to make a light taqtuqa, which was at the same time full of melancholy, an immortal piece of art that will remain memorized by generations.

Sayyid Darwish was not interested in flirting with the lady, representing the rural Egyptian lady, like many of our mothers, that was kneading the dough in the morning, but he was inspired by the image and used it remarkably to talk about the misery of a group of people who complain about their concerns to the Lord of the Worlds. And because there are many other categories of people suffering

from the same frustration, he addressed some in his taqtuqa that touched the hearts of the Egyptian people, who used to chant it as if they were expressing themselves while chanting it.

[Teleia El Nahaar](#) *Ya Fattah Ya Aleem, Wil Geib Mafihsh Wala Mallim*

(The morning has come; May God bless our day. However, there's not even a penny in my pocket)

Meen Fil Youmin Dol Shaf Talteem, Zay El Sanaieya El Mazloumin

(Who has been exposed to injustice as much as the poor craftsmen?!)

In fact, this is a new, serious, and daring topic that expresses the conditions of simple people, the craftsmen here for example, as these topics have never been raised before in artistic and lyrical works.

Sayed Darwish's philosophy is that every piece of poetry can be composed and sung, to highlight the idea, view, attitude and feeling that it contains. Sayed Darwish has highlighted the Egyptian folklore as a fine art worth of interest.

He brought art out of the salons to theaters, streets, homes and cafés, where people even chanted his songs in demonstrations. He made singing not limited to the distinguished singers, where the masses used to sing and chant his tunes.

Sayed Darwish used simple sentences in his melodies that mainly rely on popular heritage and folklore, in a modern artistic formulation that gave it a new spirit, where the simplicity of his melodies made them easily repeated and memorized by people:

[Dingy, dingy, dingy](#)

Hamsiba Wi Jali Min Badri, Zay El Saroukh Fi Widani

(It's a catastrophe that has immediately befell me, like the sound of a missile in my ears)

Ma Fi Haga Ismo Masri Wala Haga Ismo Sudani)

(It's nonsense to say "Egyptian" and "Sudanese")

Nahr El Nil Raso Fi Nahiya, Ringleih Fi El Nahia Ettani

(The Nile River's head is on the side and its feet are on the other side)

Fawqani Rouho Fi Dahiya Iza Kan Sibbo Ettani

(The upper side would be lost if the lower side abandoned it)

Patriotic songs that invoke enthusiasm

Many generations of male and female singers, and orchestras performed most of Sayed Darwish's works in the same manner, sometimes with some changes.

Darwish led a struggle against the British colonization in the midst of the 1919 Revolution through the patriotic songs that he composed. His anthems were as fuel for the demonstrators in the streets of Cairo. Darwish also used his operettas on stage to present patriotic songs against the colonial rule at the time.

Sayed Darwish is the best composer of national anthems ever, as Egypt did not know national anthems before his advent. The poet Badi' Khairy described Sayed Darwish's songs, saying that "they infuse enthusiasm in the coward", in evidence of the strength of their influence, even on the coward, let alone the patriotic citizen who adopts the cause of his country and struggles for it.

Darwish composed most of his anthems to the quartet march rhythm, in his anthem: [Oum Ya Masri](#) (Wake up, Egyptian), he used

a triple waltz rhythm, which was a new experience that made some Western analysts admit that he was an innovative and creative artist.

Oum Ya Masri, Masr Daiman Bit Nadeek

(O Egyptian, Wake up, Egypt always calls you

Khod Bi Nasri, Nasri Daiman Dein Aleik

(Achieve my victory, which is always your obligatory duty)

Among the most important works presented by Darwish is the anthem of: "[Biladi, Biladi, Laki Hobbi Wa Fouadi](#)" (My country my country.. You have my love and my heart), whose words were written by Mohamed Yunes El-Qadi, who was inspired by a speech delivered by the leader Mustafa Kamel at the Zinin Theater in Alexandria in 1907.

Sayed Darwish composed the words of Mohamed Yunes El-Qadi in September 1932, about 25 years after Mustafa Kamel's speech:

Biladi, Biladi, Laki Hobbi Wa Fouadi"

(My country my country.. You have my love and my heart)

Masr Ya Om al Bilad, Anti Ghaiti Wal Murad

(Egypt, mother of all countries.. You are my hope and what I want)

Wa Ala Kol Il Ibad, Kam Li Nilik Min Ayad

(And above all mankind, your Nile has the greatest hands)

After composing this masterpiece, Darwish memorized it to the students at the Abbasid Institute to receive Saad Zaghloul upon his return from exile. However, Darwish had died days before Zaghloul arrived. The anthem was performed for the first time on December 17, 1932, in the absence of its composer Sayed Darwish, where it gained wide-range popularity afterwards.

Sayed Darwish is a creative artist that was rebellious against colonization, corruption and slavery. He was a lover of the homeland and freedom, a lover of his art, where he respected the public in the works that he presented to them. Darwish was a renovator, but rather a trigger for an artistic renaissance that lasted for dozens of years, where inspired many generations after him. He has left behind the greatest artistic wealth in the history of Arabic music at all, not only in quantity but also in quality, as each single melody of his deserves study and contemplation.

The topics that Sayed Darwish addressed were never handled by anyone before him. In his era where the function of art was limited to entertainment, Sayed Darwish addressed the feelings of man, his condition, his pain and his dreams. He was able to transfer singing to the broad horizons of

expression, and made great strides towards the wide world of humanity, making this message his life's goal.

Sayed Darwish's songs addressed the Egyptian people, not any the authority, as this trend represented a new voice for the patriotic song, where his songs had a clear and effective role in mobilizing masses of the Egyptian people against colonialism.

After the death of Sayed Darwish, the true patriotic song, whose lyrics and melodies embody the prominent features of the Egyptian person's character, mood and movements, almost disappeared; as Darwish's songs were directed at the Egyptians, not in favor of any ruler, authority or regime. His songs were addressed to the people, owner of the will and power to change.

