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List of Performers:

**Rich Perks (UK)** – Fretless Electric Guitar/ Musical Director

**Faraz Minooei (Iran)** – Santoor

**Sirvan Manhoobi (Iran/US)** – Oud

**Raman Osman (Syria/US)** – Saz & Vocals

**Faisal Zedan (Syria/US)** – Percussion

# Strung Together: A Night of World Music Improvisation



## DIASPORA ARTS CONNECTION

**African American Art & Culture Complex:** Burial Clay Theatre.

726 Fulton St., San Francisco.

Sat, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017: Doors 19:00h

**Diaspora Arts Connection**

52 Golf Club Road

Suite 126

Pleasant Hill

CA 94523



# Strung Together – A Night of World Music Improvisation

Diaspora Arts Connection proudly presents this cross-cultural collaboration featuring a group of musicians, each with a background in a different tradition of improvisatory music(s). Led by UK-based guitarist and composer Rich Perks, musicians from the San Francisco Bay Area (Faraz Minooei – santoor; Sirvan Manhoubi – oud;; Raman Osman – saz; and Faisal Zedan – percussion) will create a night of pure musical magic.

## About the artists:

As both a guitarist and composer **Rich Perks** exhibits a keen interest in anything unusual, progressive and innovative. As well as being an active gigging musician in the commercial industry, he performs much contemporary, experimental and improvised music, specialising in fretless electric guitar. He completed his PhD research at Brunel University in 2013, submitting a portfolio of compositions and accompanying thesis entitled, *Combining Musical Identities Through Composition and Improvisation*. He is a Lecturer in Music Performance at the University of Kent; Lecturer in Popular Music at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (London); and Associate Lecturer of Guitar at Brunel University (London).

**Faraz Minooei** was born in Tehran and began playing santur at the young age of nine. Faraz received his B.A. from San Francisco State University in 2008 as a Nagle Scholar and the first World/Jazz music major with santoor as his primary instrument. Faraz is a performer, composer, ethno-musicologist and teacher. Since 2006, he has lectured and performed at many universities including SFSU, UCI, UCLA, UCSC Stanford University and at the Society of Ethnomusicology.

**Sirvan Manhoubi** started his musical journey at thirteen when he started taking tar and setar lessons under supervision of masters Keivan Saket and Behrooz Hemati. He later became interested in Oud, attending master Arsalan Kamkar's classes and choosing Oud as his primary instrument. He has since studied with Masters: Mohamadrez Lotfi, Mehran Rohani, and Siamak Jahangiri.

**Raman Osman** is a Kurdish composer and master saz player from Al-Hasaka, Syria. He is self-taught and has been playing saz and singing since he was eleven years old. In his youth was exposed to a variety of music and cultural sources like Kurdish, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, Assyrian and others. Raman currently lives in Northern California where he regularly performs concerts of Kurdish music as a solo artist, as well as accompanying artists from various world music traditions.

**Faisal Zedan** has studied and performed a multitude of middle eastern music(s) and has also studied eastern European styles of music from the Balkans, and Greece. After coming to California in 1992, where he met UCLA's noted ethnomusicology professor Dr. Ali Jihad Racy, he was invited to join the acclaimed UCLA Near East Music Ensemble. In 1993 Faisal became a founding member of the Near East music group, *Kan Zaman*.

## About the Music – by Rich Perks

For the past week, the musicians here have collaborated to collectively develop, arrange, and rehearse a complete performance programme of original, culturally-eclectic music. Based on a series of pre-composed musical '*Fragments*', the music performed tonight will comprise a combination of musical cultures, and approaches to improvisation; integrating stylistic strands from each to form a new and exciting soundworld.

### **Fragment(s) #1:**

This piece is based on a skeletal melody written around a traditional Persian scale. The score contains no structural direction, or defined sense of pulse. The musicians will improvise around the stimuli to develop the shape of the piece in real time.

### **Fragment(s) #2:**

Initially consisting of only a scale, some chords, and a traditional Syrian rhythm, this preliminary 'sketch' has developed much over the past week. Raman created a melody to fit the rhythmic pattern during rehearsals, and the ensemble collectively arranged the material into a full, part-structured, part-improvised piece: The result is the perfect vehicle for collective music-cultural synthesis.

### **Fragment(s) #4:**

Based around contemporary jazz harmony, a 'funky' rhythmic metre, and a variation on a Persian scale, this piece provides a platform for the assimilation of musical conventions, where the underlying Western 'groove' becomes refreshingly infused with Middle-Eastern melodic decorations.

### **Fragment(s) #6:**

Using a rhythm common to both Kurdish and Persian tradition, combined with a scale and harmony more prevalent in Western music, this piece tips the balance once more to create a framework which blurs the subtle boundary between inter-cultural coexistence and assimilation. Here each music-culture remains distinctly identifiable, whilst continually interconnecting, throughout.

### **Fragment(s) #7:**

This score contains a structured transition between three simple tetrachords common to both Persian and Arabic traditions. Accompanied by three corresponding rhythmic models and indications of mood, each 'movement' is seamlessly connected through extemporisations. Different musicians are responsible for navigating the ensemble through the section changes, at each juncture.

### **Fragment(s) #8:**

Comprising information common to each music-culture, an odd-metre rhythm, and drone-based harmony, this final piece allows room for each performer to sufficiently showcase their musical point of origin, as well as form part of a synthesised self-organising system. Developed around a mirrored structure, each identity can at times be heard clearly, and at others becomes immersed within the collective improvisations.

