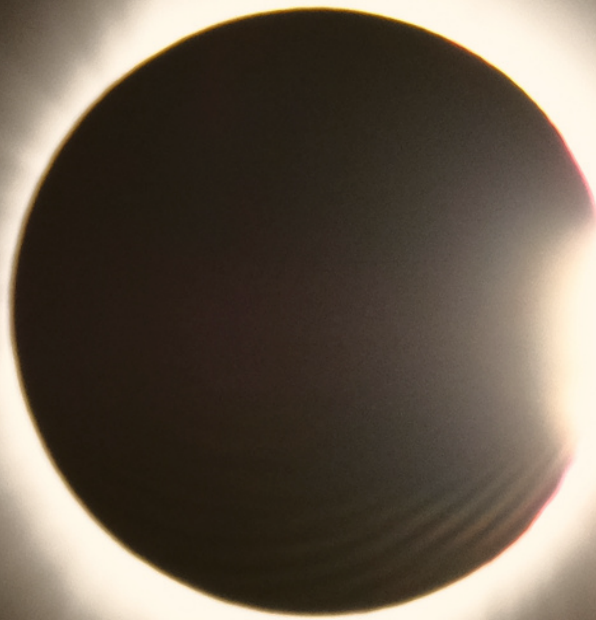


Siphr

liner notes

Naima Shalhoub
ft. Excentrik



All photography by
Excentrik aka
Tarik Kazaleh

Graphic Design by
Naima Shalhoub

Siphr was recorded and engineered at Women's Audio Mission
Sound engineer - Adria Otte
Mastering - Jessica Thompson

Co-Produced by Excentrik and Naima Shalhoub

Special thanks to Restoration Village Arts and Women's Audio Mission for your financial contribution and
sponsorship

Siphr lettering on page 2 by Chris Gazaleh

Page 14-15 photos from "Two: Rivers in the Desert" music video- directed, written, filmed by Excentrik

Siphr

The concept for Siphr was born in an apartment in Beirut, July 2018.

I was spending time with my family for 2 weeks traveling Lebanon, visiting our village and family members. I stayed for a few weeks afterward for a creative sabbatical so I could return to California with a vision for the record that I had one year to complete with Women's Audio Mission in San Francisco. Beirut carries many contradictions, sorrows and unutterable beauty. I am indebted to that city as one that birthed me as an artist years prior. With months of internal anticipation, I finally had three weeks to journey down rabbit holes of physics, math, geometry, spirituality, biblical scripture, faith, prayer, my ancestry. I put up a bunch of post-it notes on my wall that were from an album brainstorming session at Restoration Village Arts months prior, and kept moving the pieces around while adding others. It finally led me to *Siphr*, Zero. An image of a circle with nine circles surrounding it. 1-9. The continuities of life. The ancient, future, converging in presence.

When I arrived back in Oakland after the sabbatical I met up with Excentrik, who was already ready to work on the project. Without much explanation other than sharing my journal which contained my *Siphr* notes, he connected immediately with the concept--one which he had years prior--and the stars aligned. We began creating, mapping, writing and recording. Excentrik brought the precise convergence of arab american musical artistry and brilliance that my spirit was praying to be birthed in this project. He exceeded, as he usually does, any expectation I had producing this project so dear and near to my soul.

Siphr is the liminal space within beginnings and endings, the meaningless and meaningful, and life's continuity through political, emotional, spiritual, physical, cultural realms that are always in flux. We are always evolving, always becoming, and held by God's grace, the zero-factor, *Siphr*. There are 9 compositions and each composition holds the specific meaning of the number it represents for me--a snapshot of my own present through timeless concepts. Each title is the corresponding number with a subtitle. It is meant to be listened to in order continuously, although each composition stands alone.

Thank you for entering the *Siphr* with me. May the Lord bless you and heal you, continuously.

in gratitude,
Naima



1 One (Remembrance)

Music written/produced by Excentrik
Percussion, Guitar, Oud - Excentrik
Vocals & Keyboard - Naima Shalhoub



invocation. the beginning.

"we - who are capable of remembrance - are capable of liberation"
- Mahmoud Darwish

٢

Two

(Rivers in the Desert)

Song written by Naima Shalhoub

Lead Guitar - Excentrik

Vocals and Rhythm Guitar -

Naima Shalhoub



"See I am doing a new thing/
I am making a way in the wilderness/
and rivers in the desert."

translated into Arabic from Isaiah 43:19 (with help from my parents, aunt & uncle -
my counsel of elders)

Excentrik wrote, directed and filmed a music video for this song. Please watch it for a full immersion into the
essence of what this song means to me - water cleansing/baptism, union, redemption, a way out of no way.

٣

Three (Loved)

Song written by Naima Shalhoub

Cello - Ed Baskerville

Electric Guitar - Excentrik

Acoustic Guitar & Vocals -

Naima Shalhoub



a completion. resurrection. transmutation.

LYRICS: Oh my child I see you worried/Oh my child I see you faint/Lost in gazing at horizons/and in moments forgot the sun
would rise again/You have seen so much destruction/ Betrayed your truth for acceptance/You've known all the sorrow there is
know/Take my hand and know this sound/

Buildings will stand and then they'll fall but how have we loved at the end of it all x2
You could climb the highest mountains/You could try to rule the seas/You could fight for power over/But none of it would ever
heal your grief within/Take my hand, feel your burdens lighter/From your tears revolutions come/Beneath the walls the river
flows/And our song will still resound/

Buildings will stand and then they'll fall but how have we loved at the end of it all x2
End of it all/End of it all/End of it all/End of it all

Buildings will stand and then they'll fall but how have we loved at the of it all x2

ξ Four (Roumieh Prison Blues)

Lyrics by men in Roumieh Prison/Catharsis
Song by Naima Shalhoub
Electric & Slide Guitar, Percussion - Excentrik
Vocals & Acoustic Guitar - Naima Shalhoub
Bass - Marcus Shelby



In October 2017 I joined Zeina Daccache of *Catharsis* into Roumieh Prison in Lebanon to facilitate a music session with 52 incarcerated men. The lyrics were written during our session after a discussion of the Blues--its Black American roots--and the legacy of singing in Arab cultures as a means of resiliency. From story, through music, the Roumieh Prison Blues were born inside the prison.

LYRICS translated from Arabic to English:

Door oh door/In Roumieh it's hard, open the door/Door oh door/In Roumieh it's hard, open the door/Even my soul itself will leave, but here I'll still be without an open door. x2

Door oh door/come on now be my friend and open/Door oh door/come on how be my friend and open/Hurry up guards and shut the door behind you

0

Five (The Calling)

Song by Naima Shalhoub

Cello - Ed Baskerville

Electric Guitar - Excentrik

Vocals & Piano - Naima Shalhoub

Bass - Marcus Shelby



grace. still point. a transition.

LYRICS: I open my eyes a little too fast/Starting to forget the dream that sung me here/I get out of bed
looking for a paper trail of reflections that remind me of who I am/

There will be a voice behind you saying "this is the way"/Don't look to the right/Don't look to the Left/You
may here a thousand voices calling you another way/But you will know the heavenly sound calling your name

My eyes on the prize/My mind on the spirt/Letting go of all the shame that took root in me/It's easy to get
pulled back into familiar chains/But I cast away all the fear and let love rain/

There will be a voice behind you saying "this is the way"/Don't look to the right/Don't look to the Left/You
may here a thousand voices calling you another way/But you will know the heavenly sound calling your name

Calling your name/Calling your name/Calling your name/Calling your name..

7 Six (Distraction Suite)

Song by Naima Shalhoub
Electric Guitar, Drums - Excentrik
Vocals & Piano - Naima Shalhoub
Bass - Marcus Shelby



facing one of the greatest dangers.
how does one continue to find their way in the world of distraction?

LYRICS:

1 - distraction -

It comes in a flash/It comes creeping in/What is my reaction to distraction? (repeats)

2- be still -

What do you do when it crumbles?/Searching for remnants of home?/Memories burned, buried, stolen./I don't think
this world's my home/But I hear a voice calling me/It says "be still and know", "be still and know"

3 - distraction battleground

V Seven (Lamma Bada Yatathanna)

9th Century Arabic song
Arrangement by Excentrik
Cello - Ed Baskerville
Oud, Percussion, Guitar - Excentrik
Vocals - Naima Shalhoub



spiritual completion. divinity. recovery. rest.

A 9th century Arabic love song of debated origins. There are arguments that this song could have origins anywhere from Iraq to North Africa. It is an ancient muwashshah (Arabic poetic form) that is often used in story-telling. Excentrik played all the Arabic instruments in this piece except for the cello, layering each section as he created his own orchestra.

^ Eight (Arab Amerikkki)

Produced by Excentrik
Rap by Excentrik
Hook by Naima Shalhoub



human identity. finding freedom within struggle.
calling out injustice. uprooting lies. regeneration. a new order.

LYRICS: *Naima:* Arab Amerikkki torn between worlds/manmade divides/echoes apartheid/never was buried it's lived and
it's carried/open your eyes/uproot the lies/internal battle with an external war/haunted by home/memories worn/what is
this life when our death is our freedom/training my mind/praying to find/breaking the chains until justice remains
Excentrik: I don't think it's fair to me look at them stare at me arab amerikkki/as if it were parody cultural heresy muslim
so terribly/but I'm barely a christian a man of divisions of west and of east a pest of the west colonial nest of sykes-picot
where your borders gon' go next/ah ha that's the division the place white supremacy gets its assistance x2/this place that
we knew was basically ruined barely no one left barely no more left/scary it's all theft to me they're all deaf/ah ha that's
the division the place white supremacy gets its assistance x2/historical distance self against soul and our flesh against
presence x2

9

Nine

(The Return)

Music written/produced by Excentrik

Percussion & Guitar - Excentrik

Vocals & Keyboard - Naima Shalhoub

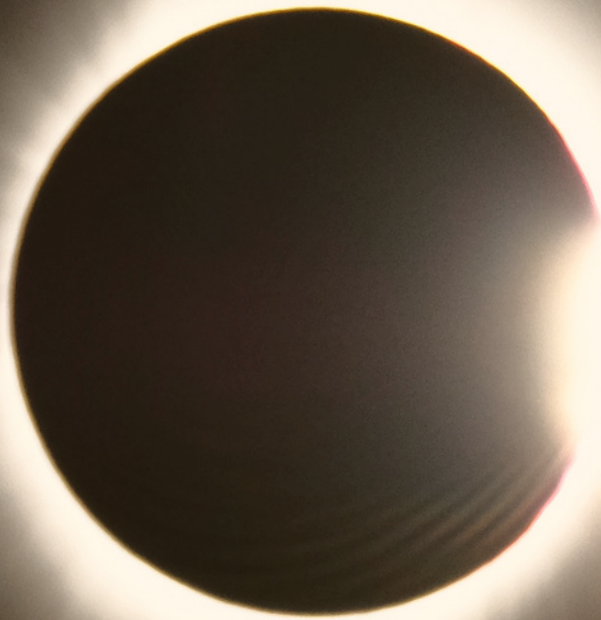


completion. returning to remembrance with knowledge and understanding.

the ending before a new beginning. continuous. the right to return.

This one is Excentrik's baby. He put his heart and soul into the composition, the choice of maqam, and guided me on how he envisioned the vocals and keys. He truly birthed the frequency of what 9 means to me for this project -- triumph, but not without sorrow; a completed cycle while returning to what is never completely undone.

for our constant remembrance of—and return to—the Most High



<https://naimashalhoub.com>

Stream Siphr on all platforms

Purchase: naimashalhoub.bandcamp.com

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