

EMAD ARMOUSH'S
RAYHAN
DEBUT CD
FRAGRANCE

Emad Armoush oud/ney/guitar/vocals

Featuring JP Carter trumpet/ electronics ♦ **François Houle** bass clarinet/ clarinet
Jesse Zubot violin/ effects ♦ **Kenton Loewen** drums

In May 2021, multi-instrumentalist **Emad Armoush** launches *Fragrance*, the debut CD recorded with his stellar band **Rayhan**, featuring trumpeter **JP Carter**, clarinetist **François Houle**, violinist **Jesse Zubot** and drummer **Kenton Loewen**.

Armoush plays the oud, ney (ancient middle-eastern flute), flamenco guitar and sings, drawing from the great tradition of Arabic songs and infusing them with contemporary interpretations and influences of the diverse music that he has explored throughout his life.

The music on *Fragrance* is drawn from the traditional Arabic and Middle Eastern repertoire of Armoush's childhood in Damascus, Syria, music to which he is deeply attached and has performed throughout his life. He brings his enormous experience in different settings with musicians from his own culture and from others such as flamenco and Roma.

Ten years ago, he met and began performing with some of the great musicians and master improvisers that are now part of Rayhan. Coming together at Afterlife Studios in 2020, the ensemble has recorded music filled with intensity, sonic colouring, thematic and far-reaching improvisations infused with modern electronic manipulations, all without losing the delicate beauty and authenticity of these old melodies. Armoush is a musical explorer, allowing his music and the members of his ensemble to transcend boundaries between tradition and contemporary sounds and to absorb and transform all the influences they have encountered as travellers.

He chose some of the best traditional songs that he knows and loves to be recorded by these highly creative musicians and interpreters. "These songs have simple structures, but great melodic lines and hip rhythms which I felt will allow us as an ensemble to bring in the sonic texturing, thematic improvisation, rhythmic manipulation, and the individual freedom of musical expression which we desire. The arrangements for the songs had certain things set and directions to go by, but were also loose and improvised. And the musicians truly listening, and communicating with each other was at the core of creating the music on the album.

I think this album is a real success of creative improvising musicians taking traditional repertoire and creating a truly original perspective. This is the beginning of our future as a group. We now have this wonderful recording and room to grow, to play in a way that we like, that is musically rich and nourishing."

Rayhan will be featured in concert at the 2021 Vancouver International Jazz Festival at 2:30 pm, Tuesday, June 29 at Performance Works.

<https://emadarmoush.com>

<https://emadarmoush.bandcamp.com>

Tracks from *Fragrance* will be featured on streaming services worldwide, and is available now for Spotify Pre-Save:

<https://distrokid.com/hyperfollow/emadarmoushrrayhan/fragrance>

Media Contact: Mark Haney, Diane Kadota Arts Management / mark@dkam.ca

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