

# **The Sounds of Violin in Palestine**



## **FINAL REPORT**

**28<sup>th</sup> March – 15<sup>th</sup> April**

**By Sara Michieletto**

## ***INTRODUCTION***

This project has born in February 14<sup>th</sup>, when Prof. Sara Michieletto, a professional violinist, and Mr.Saher Yaseen, Head of Musical Division in the Palestinian Ministry of Education, met and agreed to work together.

They organized a plan in which prof. Michieletto was supposed to visit many schools in West-Bank, teaching the sense of music to the students and teachers.

To implement this idea they opted for a special method which makes kids learn and play through games. Using different and funny activities, prof. Sara put her efforts in:

- developing creativity
- developing self-awareness
- developing listening
- developing sense of rhythm
- developing the knowledge of the violin and of how is the life of a professional violinist
- developing sense of community



Mr. Saher Yaseen

All these activities, beyond giving the students important artistic inputs, helped them in reducing the psychological pressure they are facing due to the occupation.

The plan was organized by weeks: each week prof. Sara travelled in a different town of West-Bank working on the school with students and teachers; meeting the local musical organizations; performing concerts; recording some Arabic music, teaching violin.

The local musical head of division of the Ministry of Education always accompanied her.

Since February, prof. Michieletto visited at least 25 schools in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Ar-Ram and Nablus, as a volunteer.

The three weeks UNESCO is supporting now are, therefore, the natural follow-up of the work already done since February.



Ramallah, 21<sup>st</sup> February:  
dancing standing the pace.

## ACTIVITIES

Here it is a detailed description of the activities realized starting from March 28<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>.

The first week was based in **Bethlehem**.

### Schools visits

The schools visited in those days were:

1. Banat al-Abediya at-thanawiia
2. Banat Bethlehem at-thanawiia
3. Banat Chili at-thanawiia
4. Banat al-Lauda at-thanawiia
5. Banat Maryam al-a'drat



Bethlehem, 31th March: the "kamanja"

We have also tried to visit these schools, where for different reasons, it was not possible to perform the musical activities:

- al-Kholasar ar-Rajedin
- Sos school S.George
- Beit Hir, Stabliish Banat

We think through the musical lessons we have reached around 500 girls in Bethlehem.

### Workshops

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March a workshop for around 20 teachers was realized at Sabreen – Beit Sahour. The Workshop aim, as suggested by the Ministry Representative, was to introduce the teachers to the Violin and the classical way of playing it. Prof. Sara performed and explained many pieces of classical music, she explained the different techniques, she spoke about acoustic and physics of the sound, and she showed what “interpretation” is.

It was also delivered them a 4 pages document with a synthetic resume of the activities prof. Sara is implementing in the schools, with the aim of giving new ideas to the teachers on how to teach the sense of music (see Annex 4)



On 30<sup>th</sup> of March a Work-shop in violin was made in Bethlehem Academy of Music, when prof. Michieletto gave some notions on how to play the violin to Mr. Sulyman, the violin teacher of the school.



On 30th, prof. Sara enjoyed the music of “Wajd Music Group” - Bethlehem and there was an interesting exchange of opinions about Arabic and classical music.



## Concert

On 31st a concert in the Lutheran Church of Beit Sahour, was organized by Jeddal Center (see Annex 5).

At least 50 people participate to the event, and they appreciate a lot the music.

The concert was a special event made in order to perform music and, at the same time, it let the painter Ahmad Abu Hanyia, from Beit Sahour, create images inspired by the music.

At the end of the concert it was as the notes had transformed themselves in signs and colours, flying from the violin to the painting.

To make the public understand the music, a little presentation of the music was read in Arabic and English (see Annex 3).



The second week was based in **Ramallah**.

## Schools visits

Name of the schools visited:

1. Banat al-Bireh At-Thanawia
2. Awlad Hamin al-Husseini
3. Banat Al-Fajar Al-Jadid
4. Awlad Al Bireh Al-Jadida
5. Banat Al-Mukhtaribin

We think through the musical lessons we have reached around 500 students in Ramallah.

## Workshops

It wasn't possible to realize the workshop in Ramallah (see Annex 1)



Ramallah, 4<sup>th</sup> April, dancing and smiling!

## Concerts:

It was not possible to perform the concert in Ramallah in those days because of some organizations problems. The concert foreseen for the 7<sup>th</sup> of April has been postponed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April.

## *Note:*

During the week in Ramallah some problems arose in the organization of activities with the representatives of the Ministry of Education. Therefore there was a meeting in which we discussed the situation until we found a solution for those organization's problems.



The third week was based in **Hebron**:

### Schools visits

1. Banat Roushdiia al-Machtaset
2. Banat As-Sai'id
3. Banat, Barakat
4. Awlad Amin Shahiin

We have reached around 400 students in Hebron.

Beyond the music lessons, in Hebron it was important to have been present at some performances of the students: wonderful choreographic *Depka* dances, good choral songs and interesting painting exposition were attended by both prof. Michieletto and Mr. Yaseen.



15<sup>th</sup> April, Choral of Banat As-Sa'id School



### Workshops

It was not possible to perform the Workshop in Hebron (see Annex 1)

13<sup>th</sup> April, Dancers of Banat Roushdiia School

### Concerts:

There have been a concert on 14<sup>th</sup> of April, organized by Al-Anq'a Cultural Association (see Annex 5). The concert was also sponsored by UNDP.

The participants were of around 130 people, the hall was full and it was really successful.

It was a challenge to perform classical music just with violin in a place which is supposed to be closed as Hebron, but the people demonstrated to appreciate a lot the event and invited prof. Sara to go back for more concerts.

Mr. Youssef Tartouri, president of Al-Anq'a, said that it was the first time after two years that a classical music concert was performed in Hebron.



Concert in Hebron

## Observations of prof. Sara Michieletto about School visits:

*After visiting more than 40 schools in West-Bank we would like to trace a general idea of how students and teachers reacted to this project.*

Students in West-Bank are curious and sensible, they have a good respect of the teachers and they have proficient artistic potentialities.

What I have seen is that they really need activities such the ones performed by this program.

As many teachers told me, the students are feeling deeply in their life the difficult situation their Country is facing : they are always under pressure.

Activities like these, which are lighter, without good or bad marks and in which body, mind and soul are involved, make them take a breath.

As a teacher from "A. Yasin" school told me: "Our students are more likely to learn and better concentrate after following your musical lesson".



Rhythmical game in Ramallah

### Rhythm:

They have a good sense of rhythm, but not excellent. When I played easy rhythm they were following me, but as soon as I made it more complicated they lost themselves. Furthermore, they didn't show a good creativity in performing their own rhythm.

### Creativity:

It was patent that children aged from 6 to 8 were much more free to express creativity without feeling judged.

It also was clear that the girls with a strict Islamic education were afraid to show fantasy and creativity during the activities.

The most creative activity was the "drama": while I was playing they had to invent a story suitable with the music (which was slow and sad at the beginning and fast and happy at the end) and after to mime and act it.

I have noticed that:

- Boys almost all the time performed stories about the occupation (soldiers, shootings, killings and so on)
- the girls from Ramallah acted some romantic stories (such as a girl who loose and after find his beloved man), whilst the girls from the other town never mentioned this argument.
- the little children of basic school showed much more ideas and different stories (rarely about occupation and often about animals).
- one school in Bethlehem has a theatre teacher and as a consequence students were brilliant.



Performing a drama with music in Hebron

- one boy in Nablus was amazing: he acted by himself and performed in a very expressive way: I suggested to the Director of the school to push him and help him in acting.

I don't know if they are shy or if they really are not very imaginative, but I believe it is very important to carry out activities do develop creativity in the students.

## Singing



Choir in Hebron

During the lessons in all the towns I have noticed that the students have a quite good ability in singing. Some of them were really amazing.

In one case, a girl of a school of Al-Bireh was singing so wonderfully that I gave to the Directress the telephone number of a friend of mine, to teach her music and singing for free. Unluckily the Directress never called my friend.

I have also heard some choir in the schools, which were good.

## Knowledge of Music

The students did not show a good knowledge of music, even if we speak of Arabic music. When I asked them how many strings a Ud has, they really didn't know.



Hebron: showing how to take the bow

I have also tried to play something they know and I discovered that they just know what they listen on the TV, such as The Four Seasons and Titanic music.



Bethlehem: showing the bow

They were very interested in knowing how a violin is made, and they also showed a great interest in trying to play the instrument. It was always impossible to satisfy their entire request to try to play the violin.

## Awareness

I have especially worked on developing feeling awareness on the students. For what I have seen, I think now they will be able to be aware of the sounds from outside and to understand how a sound make them feel, if they just want it.

A bit more difficult was to see awareness when they listened to the music. Generally they understood, but it happened more than a few times that students were confusing their feelings, or were not able to express what they felt.

Sometime I hade to change my question from "how do you feel?" to "what do you understand?". In this way they could express not just emotions but images or stories and this helped them in expressing their feelings.





## Different styles of life

It also was interesting to notice that they did not know Venice: so through my words and through some images of a magazine, they were surprised to discover a city where there are no cars. I played to them some Venetian music and spoke about my job and normal life in a place such different.

This was also a way to make their mind fly, imagining different styles of life and place.

In order to develop imagination, there was a game in which I was playing music from Venice asking them how they felt the Italian town to be: one of the most frequent answer was: "free", followed by "beautiful, happy, ancient, with water, etc."

Another game was to make them guess from which country the music I was playing was coming from and I therefore played music from China, Irland, Texas, France, etc. The students often guessed after just a few attempts.



prof. Sara with some teachers in Ar-Ram

## Teachers

The teachers who accompanied me were often very interested and participative.

They helped a lot, especially translating in Arabic my words and helping to perform the most active games. In some way, they also benefit by attending the lessons, learning new way of teaching subjects through games.

## Participation

Usually there was an excellent participation: the students liked the games and they were happy to participate. Offer they volunteered in performing special activities.

A special attention was given to girls who, for their education, are less incline to express themselves: for this reason the 75% of the schools I have visited were girl schols.

Unfortunately there was some case of Islamic girls who did not want to participate in some activities because of their religious beliefs.

What surprised me was that one of the most active and participative schools where Al-Aqsa Islamic school: it is an apparently very orthodox place with a mosque annexed to the school's building, but the students and the teachers there were wonderful and very participative.



Bethlehem, 1<sup>st</sup> April:  
everybody participating!

## ***CONCLUSIONS***

The project has been satisfactory.

The students - and the teachers too! - enjoyed a lot these activities and often they asked prof. Michieletto to come back (see Annex 2).

Even if some problems had occurred sometime in the organization (often due to the problems of living in a land of conflict), we must say that our efforts were fully recompensed.

We have seen the smile of the students and the brilliant eyes asking for coming back, after the lessons. We have seen how they performed the drama-game, showing moments of their normal difficult life. We saw the joy of trying to play the violin and the will to study music. And we saw one weepy girl coming back to smile after the lesson.

We think we gave them, just during the time of one lesson, the perception to live in a normal place, where music is the topic and where to express one's body and soul is the most important activity.

Boys and girls – especially the teenagers – need so much to put their feelings out and to manage to live being aware of them.

The music and games implemented helped the students to express themselves and to feel alleviated, thinking to arts and making their fantasy fly. We believe that this also answered the purpose to reduce a bit the psychological pressure they are facing due to the occupation.

Furthermore, classical music in West Bank is pretty unknown, and to try to make it closer to students is significant for their education.

Mr. Saher Yaseen for the Ministry of Education and prof. Sara Michieletto think that these activities are very important in Palestine, and, thanking the UNESCO for his support, they hope that such project will be implemented more times in the future.



### **Attached Documents:**

- 1 – Document from the Palestinian National Commission for UNESCO
- 2 – Documents of the Schools requesting more activities like these
- 3 – Presentation of Beit Sahour concert
- 4 – Resume for the teachers

## ANNEX 1

### 2 Documents from the Ministry of Education

**Palestinian Liberation Organization**  
**Palestinian National Authority**  
Palestinian National Commission  
For  
Education, Culture & Science

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



**منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية**  
**السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية**  
**اللجنة الوطنية الفلسطينية**  
للتربية والثقافة والعلوم

Ref: P.N.C/8/2/E- 1361  
Date: 4/12/2003

**Mr. Giampaolo Vianello**  
**Sovrintendente of "Gran Teatro LaFenice"**

Dear Sir,

We, the Palestinian National Commission for UNESCO, based in Ramallah, are willing to establish cooperation between our Commission and your Institution in the field of music, as we deal with fields of education, culture and science.

We have met the Violinist, Ms Sara Michieletto who gave us a clear vision on your activities, and we want her to assist us in training some young people on "Music and Violin". She expressed her readiness to do that provided that you give your prior approval to her.

Therefore, we invite Ms Michieletto to visit Palestine and stay for few months so as to perform this activity for the benefit of the Palestinian musicians.

Hoping that our invitation to her will receive your positive reply.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

With best regards and Compliments,



**Jihad Qarashoulli**  
**Secretary General of**  
**PNCECS**

D:\saleem\الملفات 2003\المنظمات\يونيسكو\UNESCO Eng.doc (م.ش.س.ع.)

Palestine - Ramallah ☎ 174, ☎ 2401080, 2400901  
Fax: 2406333, E-Mail: PNCECS@Palnet.com

فلسطين - رام الله ☎ 174, ☎ 2401080, 2400901  
فاكس 2406333، البريد الإلكتروني: PNCECS@Palnet.com

Web site : <http://www.pncecs.gov.ps>



## ANNEX 2

Documents of school/university requesting more activities like these

PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY  
Ministry of Education & Higher Education  
Directorate of Education  
Ramallah & Al-Bireh  
Al-Bireh Secondary Girls School  
National No. : 18111034  
Tel : 2956263



السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية  
وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي  
مديرية التربية والتعليم  
رام الله والبيرة  
مدرسة بنات البيرة الثانوية  
الرقم الوطني : ١٨١١١٠٣٤  
تلفون : ٢٩٥٦٢٦٣

الرقم :  
التاريخ : 4.4.2004

To whom it may Concern

The educational staff headed by the headmistress in AL-Bireh secondary Girls school found out the importance program for music and fun that was done by Sara Michieletto. That program helped the students much spiritually.

We are looking forward to helping us in doing such programmes in the future.

Thank you

Name of Principle: Mahasen  
4.4.04



my dear sara:-

I give you this music notes as a present  
for you to be entertained.

so I hope to meet you again  
in the future.

with best wishes

Khaled Sadio.

music department



khalesadious@yahoo.co.uk



Dear Sara,

It was great pleasure, for us, to have you among us at the school of Fine Art- Department of Music Sciences.

I would like to express our thanks to you for the efforts you put either in showing the lecturers the right classic way of dealing with the violin or the concert you performed at our School of Fine Arts on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2004.

Thank you again, hopping that our corporation will continue in the future.

Dr. Mohammad Ata Yousof

Dean School of Fine Arts  
An-Najah National University  
Nablus, Palestine

## ANNEX 3

### ***PRESENTATION OF THE CONCERT IN BEIT SAHOUR***

Good evening to everybody.

Today we will listen to different classical pieces of music performed by the professional Italian musician Sara Michieletto.

At the same time, painter Ahmad, from Beit Sahour, will create images inspired by the music.

At the end of the concert it will be as the notes had transformed themselves in signs and colours, flying from the violin to the painting.

The concert will be divided in three parts, as you can see in the program.

In the first part prof. Sara will perform music from Venice, the town from where she comes from.

The first piece will be an extract from Vivaldi's Four Season: no comments are needed for this wonderful and very famous music.

The second piece will be a totally different music.

The composer, Nildo Sanvido, is living in Veneto region, Italy.

He wrote three Bordones for solo violin in 1999, and in this music we will listen to the feelings a composer of our time is having, in a schizophrenic, sometime absurd world.

The first Bordone we are going to listen is speaking of the anxiety and stress of our time.

At the end of the first part we will listen to a piece that was written in the first years of 1900 by the Venetian composer Francesco De Guarnieri: he was the director of the conservatory of music and an excellent violinist. He wrote 12 capricci for solo violin which are as beautiful as unknown. Today we have the opportunity to listen to the first capriccio, a very lively and brilliant music.

-----

The second part begins with "The Laugh", a very virtuoso music written by the great Paganini in 1800. This music tries to imitate a Laugh, and after a parenthesis of angry will finish with a big smile.



Sanvido's second Bordone, on the contrary, is a music speaking of suffering. The whole music is played using to string, and the string A is like an obsessive sound echoing all the time. Surely many images will come to your mind listening to this crying music. Note that Sanvido's music uses space in a new way: the sounds of violin will not come from a frontal way but all around you.

Finally, Bach is one of the greatest classical musician ever lived. This Giga is a brilliant and happy dance he wrote in 1700. Good listening!

-----

We come back, now, to De Guarnieri beautiful capriccios and will listen to the n. 10. This is a virtuoso piece making use of harmonics sounds and double strings.

A brilliant piece, indeed!

And also brilliant and dancing will be Bach's "Gavotte en Rondeau", a dance where double string are often used and where a refrain is always repeated.

After this, we will listen to the last Bordone, the third. It is a very peculiar music. It is written not in a linear way but using many little cells that the musician can play in different order. See how big is the score. Note also how many different techniques are used in this piece: pizzicato, double strings, very high sounds, the mute and, most of all, the different tuning of the strings.

Anyway, the soul of this Bordone is also tragic.

The last piece of the concert is the fifth Sonata for solo violin of Ysaie, called "the Dawn". With the uses of amazing virtuoso techniques (like the use of bow and pizzicato at the same time), this music can describe the sun rising.

You will hear the dark stillness of the night and little drops of water falling. You will listen the wings of birds moving, the wind in the trees, and from a very calm, slow and silent mood we reach the wonderful explosion of colours that the sun brings rising up, shining brilliant and powerful on all.

Thank you for coming and good listening!

## ANNEX 4

### TEACHING THE SENSE OF MUSIC

By Sara Michieletto and Saher Yaseen

#### The importance of music in education:

The study of music enhances many abilities in students such as:

Attention,  
Self-control,  
Listening,  
Constancy,  
Creativity  
Physical coordination,  
Patience,  
Self-esteem.

Futhermore, being able to sing simple songs in a choir improves the sense of community and the ability to work together.

That's why we prepared these few lines: to help you as instructors, in your musical activities, which we believe are really very important for the students.

*NOTE: Never comment to a student who is singing badly that he/she can't sing.*

*Everybody can sing, even if some are faster than others. If you say to a child "don't sing, you are untuned" he/she will believe it for the rest of his/her life and will be ashamed each time they are asked to sing. Note that often, with time, children improve their ability to sing.*

#### The importance of expressing inner feelings with arts

When I express myself, I feel more controlled, because when I feel angry, happy, sad, etc. I can put out of my heart the strong emotions I am feeling and this make me feel better. Furthermore when I express myself I have more awareness of how I am, and this helps me to have better knowledge of myself.

#### The importance of teaching through games

When you play, you learn more and you remember more than when you are forced to sit still and listen, because when you play all your body and mind are engaged.

But is also important to make sure the children do not fight during the game, but that they collaborate, without excluding the ones who are slower to learn.

### Examples of musical Games

*NOTE:* if it is possible for the teacher to participate in the games, the results are better.

#### ❖ To know each others

- to learn the names of the students through a rhythmical game (Ahmed-Saeed-clap-clap Nisreen-Shadu-clap-clap, etc) and variations.
- to learn the birth month, you sing a simple music with words like "whoever is born in january (or another month) stand up - stand up" and while they sing, the students who were born in the mentioned month stand up, etc.
- to learn the village from which the students come, you can ask them all to say in a rithmycal way "my village is - my village is - my village is". While they say this in a low voice they slope their back and move rythmically. When they have the same rhythm, in turn, one by one they stand up shouting the name of their village.

❖ To develop creativity:

During the listening of music ask the students:

- to imagine a story and play a drama (choose 4-6 students to do it, while the others just imagine their own story)
- to paint something on a piece of paper;
- to translate a rhythm into a painting (for example: .. \_\_\_\_ .... \_\_\_\_ .. ^^ ^ \_\_\_\_ etc.)
- ask them to describe the music of a market, a school, a house, a forest, etc.
- ask them to freely imagine stories while music is playing
- play some music and ask them to try to guess which country the music comes from

❖ To develop rhythm:

- ask them to imagine they are in a forest. Divide them into 4 groups (for example Elephants, Tigers, Birds, Snakes) and create a rhythm for each group. Afterwards, put them all together and create a story.
- create a rhythm for the objects in the classroom and ask them to create high or low sounds (with pencils, with windows, with chairs, etc)
- make a rhythm just with the sound of the voice (be – tatata – sh sh – ua') or with some words (beeti beetak beeti beetak, beetiti beetatak etc), changing in triplets, semiquavers etc.)

❖ To develop musical abilities:

- the human piano: divide the students into 3 (or more) groups. Each group sings one single note. Afterwards you point to one of them and they sing making a step: hence, you “play” them.
- Divide the students into two groups. The first will hold their hands up and sing this little song (sol fa mi mi re do re mi) raising up and down their hands and in so doing, finally making a tunnel. The second group while singing the answer (re mi fa re mii re do si dooo) will run inside the tunnel. You can increase and decrease the rhythm as you do this.
- try to build a choir through canons and simple songs with one voice.

*NOTE: How to build a simple CHOIR:*

*We suggest that it is possible to build a choir anywhere: to sing is the base of music and voice is the primary instrument.*

*First you make the students sing the note (if the names of notes are difficult for them, just ask them to sing “la la la”).*

*After that, teach them a very simple song for one voice (do re mi do – do re mi do- mi fa sol etc.)*

*After this, try to sing in canon with 2,3,4 voices.*

*Explain to them how to breath together and how to keep the same rhythm.*

❖ To develop the sense of community:

- ask the students to create a big mechanical gear with a rhythm and a movement, linked one to the other. After this, ask them to go slower and faster, always keeping the rhythm.
- Breath together singing a song they know
- a more difficult game consists of asking the students to invent a gesture and a sound. The aim of the game is to pass from a rythmical confusion to a rythmical harmony. Everybody must have the same rhythm but different gestures and sounds. The beginning of this game is a total confusion. Little by little you ask the students to look each at other (always performing their own gesture and sound) and to try to take a bit of the other students gesture and sounds. In this way, at the end, everybody will perform the same gesture and the same sound, which will be the result of everybody's own gesture and sound.

❖ To develop listening:

- ask the students to listen to the sounds of the room and to write them on a piece of paper: they will be surprised to notice how many sounds we do not notice which we hear everyday!
- Afterwards ask the students how they feel when they listen the sounds of birds, cars, planes, voices. Tell them that each sound makes a different effect in our feelings and that is good to be aware of it.
- You can play the same game in other places (outdoors, in the road, etc.)
- Ask some students to close their eyes while the others, one by one, say a word. The students with closed eyes have to recognize who is the student speaking and to write his/her name.
- Make them listening to music and describe which instruments are playing.

❖ To develop the self-awareness:

Ask the children to listen to music and after they listen, ask them:

- how they feel (happy, sad,...);
- which kind of sound they have listened to (high, low, strong, ...)
- which style of music (Arabic, classic, pop, ...)
- which instrument was played in the music
- ...

The material of music (physics and acoustic)

It is also important to explain to the students something about a specific instrument and give some ideas about acoustics.

For example, if you have a violin, explain that it is made of wood and that the strings are made of steel. The bow is made of wood and horse's hair.

The violin is made in a shape that is beautiful but also useful: only its head (*riccio*) is an esthetic part, all the other parts have a practical function: the holes (*ef*) are made to project the sound, the other openings (*C*) are made in order to permit the bow to pass, etc..

After this you can speak about acoustics, that is, how sound spreads in the air.

If you are talking about a string instrument, you will show the string vibrating (always remember that sound comes from a vibration!), and explain that the vibration of the string passes through the so-called bridge, and to the wood of the violin and when all the wood vibrates the vibrating air flies to our ears.

It is also its good to show the students the difference between noise (not organized sounds) and sound (organized noises!). Conduct some experiments (for example if a pencil falls it's a noise but if you make it rhythmically fall it is a music).

*NOTE: we suggest you choose carefully the timing of the lesson: we think it is good to begin and finish with a game, teaching the most difficult things in the middle, when the students pay the most attention. We also suggest to choose a big room to perform the games, and to ask the students to make a circle. The teacher will play/speak both from the center of the circle, or sitting with the students.*