

### About the Performance

Egyptian-American **Karim Nagi** introduces students to Arab dance and Arab music in a high-energy performance featuring exciting traditional dances and soulful folk music played on a variety of traditional instruments. In this uplifting and stereotype-breaking program, Karim uses authentic costumes, maps, Arabic language, lots of audience participation and humor as he enlightens his audience about a captivating world beyond the headlines. Students will clap unique rhythms, dance, and celebrate as they learn about these ancient and contemporary cultural traditions.



### About the Artist

**Karim Nagi** is a passionate ambassador of Arab culture with a mission to show students a world beyond sensationalist headlines that is rich in tradition, vibrant expression, and stirring rhythm. A native Egyptian and immigrant to the USA, Karim has been a professional musician for over 30 years and is an internationally recognized folk dance teacher. As a percussionist, he has authored 14 CDs and instructional DVDs. He is also a TEDx speaker, a board member of Chamber Music America, a former faculty member of the New England Conservatory of Music, and member of the SHARQ Arabic Music Ensemble. His *Arabiqa* school assembly program has performed at over 400 in schools nationwide.

### Program Learning Goals

1. To introduce the geography, language, and culture of the Arab world.
2. To explore Arab music, instruments, and dance.
3. To emphasize the importance of learning about a culture outside the frameworks of politics and headlines.

### Essential Questions

1. What can learning about other cultures teach us?
2. What is the importance of music, dance, and language to a culture?
3. How is Arab music and dance similar to music and dance that you are familiar with? How is it different?

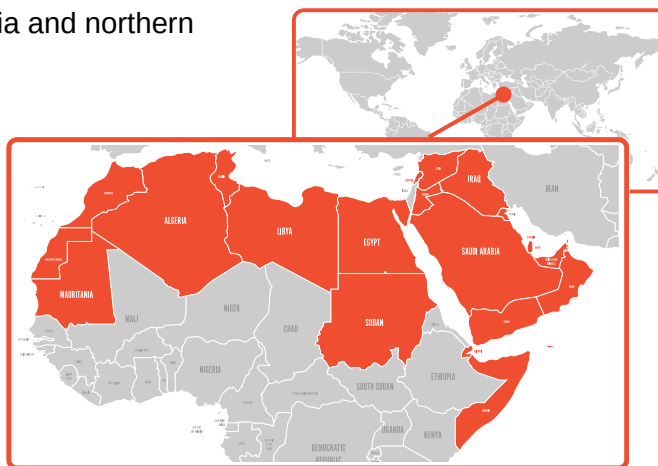
## Vocabulary

- **Arab:** a member of an ethnolinguistic group originating from western Asia and northern Africa
- **Arab-American:** an American citizen who is of Arab descent
- **Bi-Cultural:** someone who lives in a place other than their country of origin but also retains many of the traditions of their country of origin
- **Arabic:** the traditional language of Arabs which is written in its own alphabet and from right to left
- **Islam:** a religion originating in Saudi Arabia and founded by the prophet Muhammad in 610 CE which can now be found all over the world
- **Muslim:** someone who follows the religion of Islam
- **Copt:** a branch of Christianity originally founded in Egypt during the first century CE which now has over 10 million followers worldwide and makes up about 10% of the population of Egypt
- **Percussion instruments:** musical instruments sounded by striking, shaking or scraping
- **Beat:** the steady pulse of a song or piece of music
- **Rhythm:** a strong pattern of notes or beats in music
- **Tempo:** the speed of a song or piece of music
- **Dabka:** a line dance featuring stepping, jumping, and stomping that is performed at weddings, parties, stage performances, and social demonstrations by men and women together

## Key Facts and Cultural Context for Students

**The Arab World** is located in western Asia and northern Africa. It contains the countries:

- Algeria
- Bahrain
- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Oman
- Palestine
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Syria
- Tunisia
- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen



...continued on next page

## Key Facts and Cultural Context for Students, continued

### العربية

The word "Arabic" written using Arabic letters.

#### The Arabic Language

The primary language of the Arab world is **Arabic**. Unlike English, it is written from right to left and has no capital letters. While it uses a different alphabet than English, English borrows Arabic numbers.

#### Arab Music and Dance

Arab culture is thousands of years old. Originating in the Arabian Peninsula, the language and culture has spread to over 23 countries in western Asia and northern Africa. Poetry and stylized speech has been the cornerstone of all Arab art. Poetry would be sung melodically, rhythmically, and with refrains and repeats to create a rich melodic system with note combinations to match poetic moods, feelings, and emotions. Instruments were gradually added over centuries to accompany this vocal repertoire. Arab dance is closely related to music and many dancers are also musicians. Dance is an essential cultural tool used in social rituals and ceremonies such as weddings and births, as well as in sport and storytelling. There are several dances for single performers, women, men, and mixed gender groups.



#### Arabic Instruments



**Oud**

lute with five pairs of strings



**Qanun**

lap harp with 96 strings



**Nay**

bamboo flute



**Segat**

brass castanets



**Tabla**

hand drum



**Buzuq**  
guitar



**Riqq**  
tambourine



**Duff**  
frame drum

#### Percussive sounds

"Dum": a deep low-pitched sound

"Tak": a tight high-pitched sound

"Ka": a loud high-pitched sound

### Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- What do you know about the Arab world? What would you like to know? How could you find out more?
- What percussion instruments do you know? How are they played? What type(s) of music do they play?
- What do you think different cultures can communicate through music and dance?

### Pre-Performance Activity: Exploring the Arab World

#### Learning Goals:

- To identify the names and locations of the Arabic countries.
- To explore the geography and culture of an Arabic country.

#### Materials:

World map, “Exploring the Arab World” worksheet (see page 5), vetted resources about the Arab world (see resources on page 8)

#### Directions:

1. Discuss the Arab world. What does that mean? What part of the world makes up the Arab world? What countries are included?
2. On a map, locate the Arabic countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
3. Assign each student one Arabic country to research and complete the “Exploring the Arab World” worksheet.
4. Have students present their findings to the class.
5. Compare the worksheet answers from all the different countries. What are some similarities? What are some differences? How did students’ perceptions of the Arab world change through this activity?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Arabic Country: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exploring the Arab World

On what continent is this country located?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the landmass size of this country?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the population of this country?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the climate of this country?

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this country border other countries? If so, which one(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this country border any bodies of water? If so, which one(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Name two traditional foods from this country:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name two traditional musical instruments from this country:

\_\_\_\_\_

What is something interesting that you learned about this country?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- What did you learn about the Arab world?
- What instruments did Karim use in his performance? How were they played?
- In what ways do you think about Arab countries from a new perspective?

### Post-Performance Activity: Comparing Cultures

#### Learning Goals:

- To explore the elements that make up a culture.
- To compare Arabic culture the culture of the United States.

#### Materials:

“Comparing Cultures” worksheet (see page 7),  
vetted resources about the Arab world (see  
resources on page 8)

#### Directions:

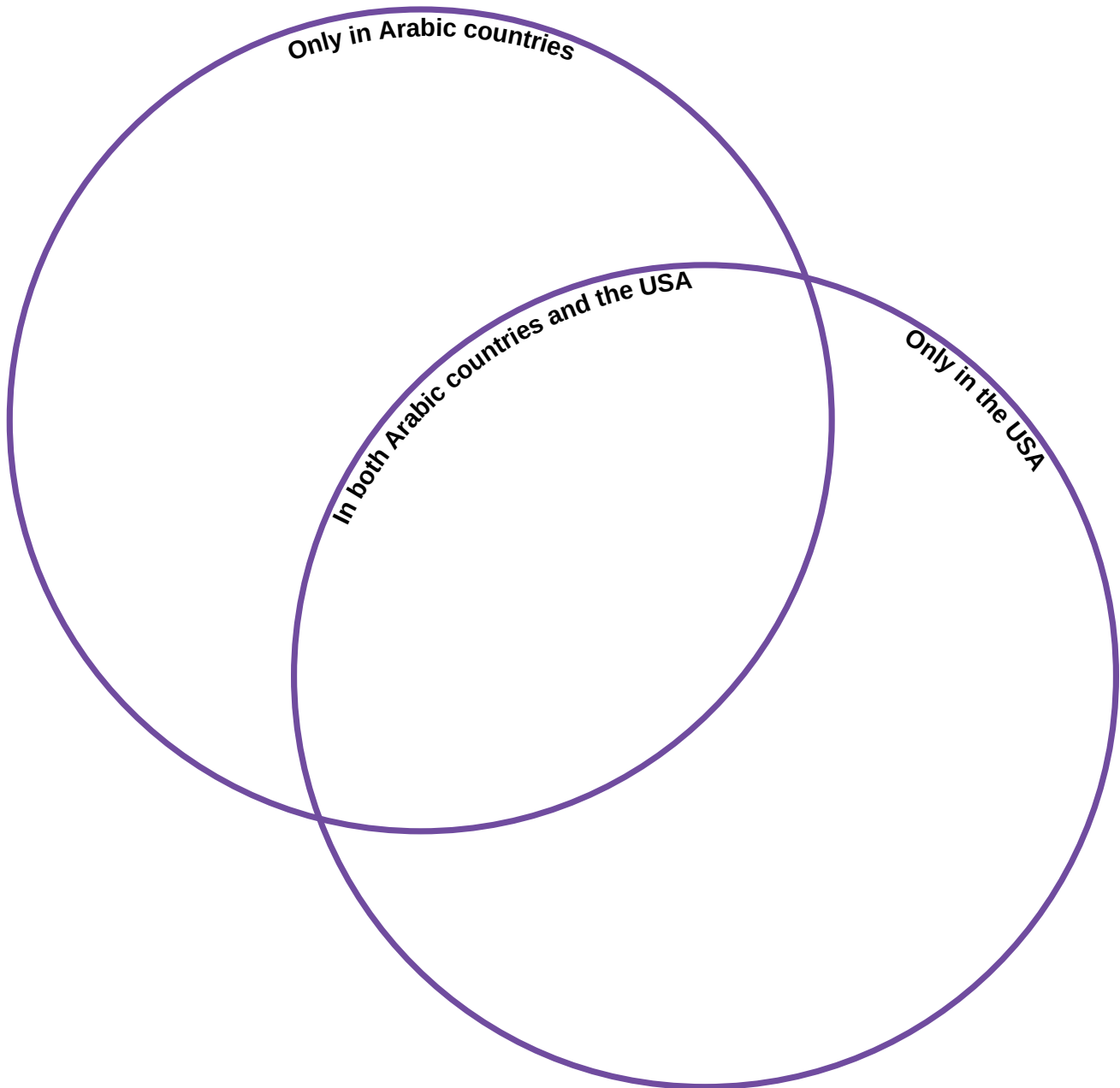
1. Discuss Karim Nagi’s performance. What did students notice, enjoy, experience, etc.?  
Review the clapping rhythms and Dabka steps.
2. In small groups, ask students to talk about the similarities and differences between the cultures in Arab world and the United States. Think about what they noticed in the performance, as well as researching topics such as:
  - food
  - music
  - clothes
  - sports
  - customs
  - language
  - religion
3. Have students fill out the “Comparing Cultures” worksheet based on their discussions and research.
4. Discuss students’ findings and how the students’ new knowledge of Arab culture affects how they view current events happening in that part of the world.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Comparing Cultures

**Directions:** Compare the culture of the Arab world and the culture of the United States. Think about food, music, clothes, sports, customs, language, religion, etc. Fill in the Venn diagram below with your findings.



### Further Resources

- [Karim Nagi Artist Website](#)
- [Karim Nagi YouTube Channel](#)
- [Al-bob](#): general information and news about the Arab world
- [American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee](#)
- [Maqam World](#): advanced Arab music resources
- Abdelrazaq, Leila: *Baddawi*, Just World Books (2015)
- Aidi, Hisham: *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture*, Vintage (2014)
- Khalil, Aya: *The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story*, Tilbury House Publishers (2020)
- Next Wave Muslim Initiative Writers: *I Am the Night Sky & Other Reflections by Muslim American Youth*, Shout Mouse Press, Inc. (2019)
- Nye, Naomi Shihab: *The Flag of Childhood: Poems From the Middle East*, Aladdin (2002)
- Roumani, Rhonda and Nadia Roumani: *Insha'Allah, No, Maybe So*, Holiday House (2024)
- Shah, Sajjad, Iman Mahoui, and Ala Hamdan: *Muslims of the World: Portraits and Stories of Hope, Survival, Loss, and Love*, Harry N. Abrams (2018)

### Curricular Connections

#### Arts Standards: Dance and Music

##### Creating

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. (D.Cr.01, M.Cr.01)
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. (D.Cr.02, M.Cr.02)

##### Performing

- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. (D.P.06, M.P.06)

##### Responding

- Perceive and analyze artistic work. (D.R.07, M.R.07)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (D.R.08, M.R.08)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (D.R.09, M.R.09)

##### Connecting

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. (D.Co.10, M.Co.10)
- Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. (D.Co.11, M.Co.11)

...continued on next page

## **Curricular Connections, continued**

### **English Language Arts and Literacy Anchor Standards**

#### **Speaking and Listening**

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (SL.PK-12.2)
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. (SL.PK-12.3)

### **History and Social Science**

#### **K**

- Topic 1: Civics: classroom citizenship (HSS.K.T1)
- Topic 2: Geography: connections among places (HSS.K.T2)
- Topic 3: History: shared traditions (HSS.K.T3)

#### **Grade 1**

- Topic 1: Civics: communities, elections, and leadership (HSS.1.T1)
- Topic 2: Geography: places to explore (HSS.1.T2)
- Topic 3: History: unity and diversity in the United States (HSS.1.T3)

#### **Grade 2**

- Topic 1: Reading and making maps (HSS.2.T1)
- Topic 2: Geography and its effects on people (HSS.2.T2)
- Topic 3: History: migrations and cultures (HSS.2.T3)
- Topic 4: Civics in the context of geography: countries and governments (HSS.2.T4)

#### **Grade 6**

- Topic 1: Studying complex societies, past and present (HSS.6.T1)
- Topic 3a: Physical and political geography of modern Western Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa (HSS.6.T3a)
- Topic 3b: Mesopotamia, c. 3500-1200 BCE (HSS.6.T3b)
- Topic 3c: Western Asia, the Middle East and North Africa: Ancient Egypt, c. 3000-1200 BCE (HSS.6.T3c)
- Topic 3e: Ancient Israel, Palestine, c. 2000 BCE - 70 CE (HSS.6.T3e)
- Topic 3f: The ancient Arabian Peninsula (7th century) (HSS.6.T3f)
- Topic 3g: Interactions among ancient societies in Western Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East (HSS.6.T3g)

#### **Grades 9-12**

- World History I Topic 1: Dynamic interactions among regions of the world (HSS.WHI.T1)

*...continued on next page*

## Curricular Connections, continued

### History and Social Science, continued

#### Grades 9-12, continued

- World History I Topic 2: Development and diffusion of religions and systems of belief c. 500 BCE-1200 CE (HSS.WHI.T2)
- World History I Topic 3: Interactions of kingdoms and empires c. 1000-1500 (HSS.WHI.T3)
- World History I Topic 4: Philosophy, the arts, science and technology c. 1200 to 1700 (HSS.WHI.T4)
- World History II Topic 6: The era of globalization 1991-present (HSS.WHII.T6)
- World History II Topic 7: The politics of difference among people: conflicts, genocide, and terrorism (HSS.WHII.T7)

### World Languages Standards

#### Communication

- Engage in, negotiate with, and improvise with cultural norms, etiquette, and nonverbal cues. (S.4.e)

#### Linguistic Cultures

- Analyze and evaluate variations among products and practices and how they relate to perspectives in multiple cultures and communities. (S.5.a)
- Analyze and evaluate the contributions of various cultural influences in the development of identity. (S.5.b)
- Investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of culture through comparisons of diverse target-language cultures and their own (S.6.a)

