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Niyaz [2012] Sumud (Six Degrees)



Just bought this straight from [Six Degrees](#) as bundle with Loga Ramin Torkian and a signed art print, all just for less than €20 incl. shipping. Niyaz and Azam Ali are my fiancée's huge favorites.

Grab a free track from [Bandcamp](#)

Lähetänyt [DJ Soma aka Om](#) 10th May 2012
Tunnisteet: [azam ali](#) [arabian niyaz](#) [six degrees records](#)

WNYC – <http://www.wnyc.org/>

New Sounds

Episode #3337

Poetry Set to Music, II

Friday, May 11, 2012

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Niyaz performed at Le Poisson Rouge in Greenwich Village on February 26. ([Hannah Thiem/flickr](#))

This New Sounds is the companion program to last night's show, where we'll not be limited to English-language poets. Look forward to texts by Rumi (Persian poet and mystic), set by Philip Glass. Also, listen for poetry by Pablo Neruda in a setting by Osvaldo Golijov. Plus, music by 17th century Alevi-Bektashi poets, as rendered by the band Niyaz and their vocalist Azam Ali, and more music with poetry by Pablo Neruda, and perhaps text by Rainer Maria Rilke, and more.

PROGRAM #3337, Poetry Set to Music, II (First aired on 5/11/2012)

ARTIST(S)	RECORDING	CUT(S)	SOURCE
Marcel Khalife & Mahmoud Darwish	Fall of the Moon	And We Love Life (Mahmoud Darwish) [7:45]	Nagam Records NR 1020 / Traditional Crossroads www.marcelkhalife.com
Donna McKevitt	Translucence	i walk in this garden (Derek Jarman) [4:33]	Instant Karma Ltd DHARMACD5, available through Amazon.co.uk
Maria Neckam	unison	You Will Remember (Pablo Neruda) [5:04]	Sunnyside 1321 www.sunnysiderecords.com
Niyaz	Sumud	Arzusun (Alevi-Bektashi poet Kul Nesimi) [6:24]	Six Degrees 657036 1187 2 www.sixdegreesrecords.com

Midwestrecord - <http://midwestrecord.com/>



NIYAZ/Sumun: The label's Arabic/world beat superstar trio tackle the cause of injustice, even if you don't know what they are saying. A protest record to the core, this crew wants to inform through the use of beats that the playing field has to be level for all. Meanwhile, back at the mixer, this is some smoking world beat delivered in compelling and passionate fashion. Using the current palette of tools of the trade, this trio can come on like gangbusters packing every byte with sound that doesn't quit. They know their stuff well and invite your ears to peek behind the curtain.

1187

Haunting, Hypnotic Middle Eastern Sounds from Niyaz

by delarue

In the era of the Arab Spring, it's become clear that the people of the Middle East have not suffered gladly. As the revolution that spread from Tunisia, to Egypt, to Syria and Greece and soon these shores gains momentum, we owe a debt to its freedom fighters for jumpstarting the movement as it spreads around the world.

Canadian ensemble Niyaz celebrate those heroes' resilience – "Sumud" in Arabic – which is the title of the band's hypnotically intense, melodically rich new album. The band's multicultural viewpoint reflects its members' diversity. Frontwoman/santoor player Azam Ali came to the United States as a refugee from India in 1985; multi-instrumentalist/composer Loga Ramin Torkian originally hails from Iran; keyboardist/drummer/effects wizard Carmen Rizzo is US-based. The rest of the group here includes Habib Meftah Boushehri on percussion and flute, Ulas Ozdemir on saz, Naser Musaon oud and Omer Avci on percussion. Rizzo's signature sonic manipulation layers the organic textures of Torkian's jangling, clanking, plunking lutes – rebab, saz, kamaan, djumbush, lafta and also guitar and viol – within a dense, chilly, endlessly echoing wash of drones, percussion loops wafting through the mix with a distant, muffled pulse. The effect is hypnotic, to say the least. The rhythms often give the songs a trip-hop or downtempo electronic lounge feel, albeit with dynamics which leave no doubt that this was created by musicians rather than by a computer.

Whether singing in Persian, Arabic or Turkish, Ali's nuanced vocals span from longing, to rapturous beauty, to raw anguish: for those who don't speak those languages, the cd booklet provides English translations. Most of the songs are new arrangements of traditional melodies, often with additional music by the band, which makes sense: in the countries where these tunes come from, improvisation rules. Ironically, the catchiest, most pop-oriented one here, Musa's Rayat al Sumud (Palestine) is also the most lyrically intense: "No matter how many borders you create, no matter how many soldiers you line up, we will always fly the flag of resistance," Ali sings in Arabic with a steely resolve. They follow that with another brisk anthem contrasting spiky lute textures with echoey, twinkling keyboards.

Many of the cuts here employ the haunting chromatics of the Arabic hijaz scale: a majestic Afghani folk song sung in Dari (a Persian dialect spoken there), whose message of peace has particular resonance these days; an almost imperceptibly crescendoing Persian love song; a steady, tiptoeing Kurdish tune and a duet by Ali and Torkian over a slinky Ethiopian-flavored triplet groove. A strolling, pulsing song by Ozdemir has echoes of gypsy rock; other songs here sound like an Iranian version of Portishead. The album ends with a gorgeous, longing Turkish epic that slowly comes together after a long, apprehensively crescendoing introduction. Sometimes solemn, sometimes soaring within Rizzo's signature swirl, it's the kind of album that sounds best late at night with the lights out.

World Music / National Geographic - <http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/>



MAY 17, 2012

Niyaz Announces New Album, Tour

Sumud To Be Released May 22

by Tom Pryor

Los Angeles based Persian/Middle Eastern electronica trio Niyaz recently announced the release of their third album, *Sumud* scheduled for May 22nd on the Six Degrees label.

The album's title translates from Arabic as "steadfastness", which lead singer Azam Ali explains as symbolic of her belief that "every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born."

The group will also be playing select tour dates in support of the album, beginning on May 19th.

The full press release is reprinted below, along with tour dates after the text.

Struggle as a metaphor is something every human can relate to. One of the most prolific and challenging forms of struggle in the world today is the plight of ethnic and religious minorities, which is the topic of Niyaz's third album, Sumud (pronounced soomood) forthcoming on Six Degrees Records. Translating from Arabic as 'steadfastness,' lead singer Azam Ali chose this philosophical term as a symbolic reminder that, as she explains, 'every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born.'

Niyaz, which means 'yearning' in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by Ali, multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian and two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician Carmen Rizzo. The band borrows from an historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets setting verse to music, perhaps most famously known today through the work of the 13th century Persian poet Rumi and the endless barrage of quotes attributed to him on Twitter and Facebook. While the immediate goal of Niyaz was to explore the music and identity of Iranians living in exile and struggling to maintain their cultural identity in the modern world on their first two acclaimed records, Niyaz and Nine Heavens, the band has expanded that theme with Sumud.

In its short history, Niyaz has garnered an incredible amount of media attention, including features on NPR and PRI, with the Huffington Post declaring the band to be 'an evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music.' Their second album, Nine Heavens, topped both the iTunes World and CMJ World Music charts, while a number of songs from the two-disc set found their way onto television and the big screen. Tireless performers, Niyaz continues to tour internationally, while each member has released at least one solo album since Nine Heavens' 2008 release.

"We have now travelled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we've taken on this album," Ali says from her new home in Montreal. "We've performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran."

Over the last seven years, the band has spent a lot of time touring the world, playing numerous shows across North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. A major source of inspiration has always been Afghanistan, and the folkloric 'Mazaar,' an ode to the holy city of Mazar-e-Sharif, captures the beauty and depth of this trio splendidly. Fans of Indian music may be surprised to find the extraordinary Oscar-winning Indian composer, musician and singer AR Rahman singing exquisitely alongside Ali on this stunning homage to a war-torn region.

'I'm a long-time AR Rahman fan,' Ali says. 'I grew up in India, so I have a great passion for Bollywood music, which has influenced the way I compose. The theme that AR wrote for the 1995 film Bombay has to be one of the most beautiful pieces of music I've ever heard, so I was honored to have him on this album.'

'Mazaar' was, as Rizzo says, an '11th hour' occurrence. After performing a number of shows together, Rahman ended up in Rizzo's Los Angeles studio. He noticed a Niyaz poster and expressed his love for the first album. Rizzo later mentioned that the band should invite a guest of some stature to perform. After Ali suggested Rahman, one of the most renowned producers and composers in the world today, Rizzo put in the call, and the response was positive.

Like all of the album's ten tracks, 'Mazaar' features a punchy low end and a strong emphasis on percussion. Electronic elements abound on Sumud. At the beginning of the process of recording, a collective decision was made to give the kick drum more kick after the acoustic-minded Nine Heavens. It also marks the first time that the band recorded the majority of the album together, starting in Montreal and putting the final touches on in Los Angeles.

'By ramping it up sonically and musically from an electronic perspective, it opens up an entire range of possibilities for the live performance,' Rizzo says. 'The new show is going to have a lot more electronic elements and textures, and be a lot more beat-driven. The songs are going to be arranged and performed a lot differently than the record.'

For Torkian, the approach involved less multi-layering and more effects on his instruments, predominantly the Middle Eastern stringed instruments kamaan and robab. The effect is hypnotic, with melodic waves erupting between the precise stabs of Rizzo's cutting-edge production aesthetic. 'By recording in a less acoustic manner,' Torkian says, 'the instrumentation merges into the electronic music in a different way. With less multi-layering, there is more room to process and treat the acoustic sounds.'

As with any Niyaz record, however, Ali remains the central focus, with her love for Middle Eastern poetry and her dynamic vocal performance; she has been featured in a number of movies, including 'Matrix Revolutions' and 'Prince of Persia.' Sumud features new creations of Turkish, Afghan, Palestinian, Kurdish and, of course, Persian folk songs. Two songs, 'Dertli,' the album's most upbeat and danceable track, and the closing, ambient 'Arzusun' were written by 17th century Alevi-Bektashi poets.

'Loga and I listen to so much Alevi music,' Ali says. 'No other music has had such an impact on us. I really wanted to record 'Arzusun,' which was based on an old poem by Kul Nesimi and made a song by Muharrem Temiz. We reached out to him and he gave us his blessing. It's based on divine love, like Sufi poetry, it is about yearning to be reunited with the beloved.'

In an age where conflict regions are tearing up areas of the Middle East, as well as completely fracturing the understanding of Arabic culture in America, Niyaz is presenting the most groundbreaking marriage of ancient, ecstatic verse with 21st-century dancefloor kinetics. Ali and Torkian were both born in Iran, though Ali was raised in India; this connection is extremely personal. Their music applies to every global citizen, however, not only those with Persian blood flowing in their veins. As Rizzo explains, the human element is deep at work here.

'When I heard Azam explain what sumud means, I had a lump in my throat. It's very powerful and meaningful. Understand the meaning of the album makes the music even better. It's not just ten songs. It's an entire concept of this work.'

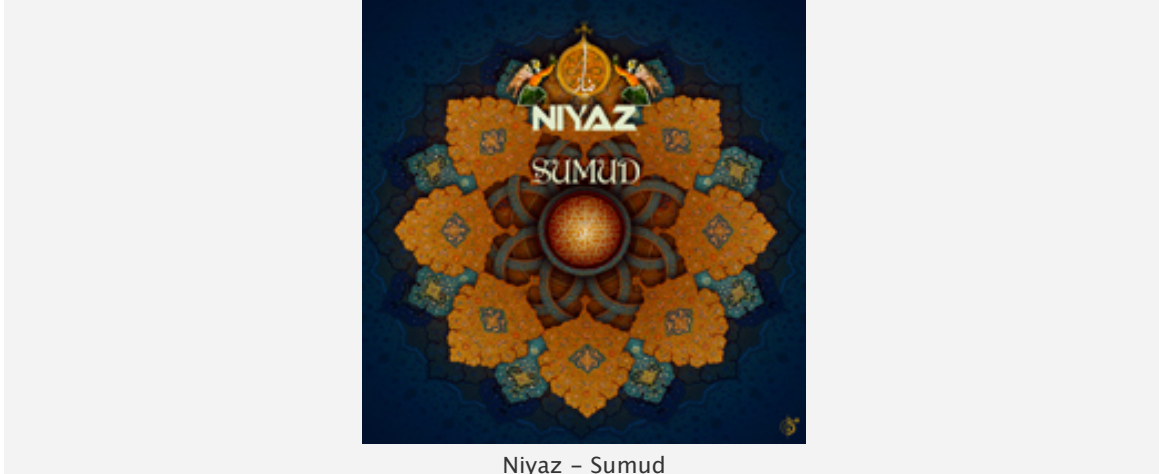
Niyaz Sumud Live Dates:

Sat 5/19/12 L'Astral Montreal, Canada
Thu 5/24/12 Festival Mawazine Rabat, Morocco
Fri 7/20/12 Festival Paleo Nyon, Switzerland
Sun 7/22/12 Drom (The East Village) New York, NY
Wed 7/25/12 Kennedy Plaza (Venue Subject To Change Pending On Weather) Atlantic City, NJ
Fri 7/27/12 Faerieworlds Eugene, OR
Sat 8/4/12 Grand Performances (Free Concert) Los Angeles, CA
Sun 8/5/12 Yoshis San Francisco, CA
Thu 8/9/12 TBA Irvine, CA
Sat 8/11/12 KPCCenter Seattle, WA

Steadfast Niyaz

BY TJNELSON

- MAY 18, 2012 POSTED IN: CD REVIEWS



Niyaz – Sumud

Niyaz

Sumud (Six Degrees Records, 2012)

With collaborative efforts like the self-titled Niyaz and Nine Heavens under their belts – not to mention solo recordings like *From Night to the Edge of Day*, *Mehraab* and *Looking Through Leaves* – Azam Ali, Loga Ramin Torkian and Carmen Rizzo, the trio behind Niyaz, are back with a new recording called *Sumud* on the Six Degrees label. Meaning steadfastness in Arabic, *Sumud* is a collection of new and refashioned traditional songs from Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, Palestine and the Kurdish peoples. Dipping into the poetry of Baba Taher, Ashik Dertli and Kul Nesimi wrapped around musical compositions by Ms. Ali, Mr. Torkian and the Palestinian and Jordanian composer Naser Musa, *Sumud* finds solace in the steadfastness of the music or as Ms. Ali marks the symbolic philosophy of the title, “every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born.” In essence, the music of *Sumud* becomes the plaintive nature of the struggle and the solace.

Ms. Ali explains, “We have now traveled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we’ve taken on this album. We’ve performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.”

There’s nothing light or flirty about *Sumud*, no this recording is ripe and meaty, deliciously dark and utterly haunting from the opening “Parishaan” to the closing “Arzusun,” a tune from the Malatya province of Turkey. Steeped in layers of keyboards and electronica provided by Carmen Rizzo and laced with Mr. Torkian’s saz, kamaan, robab, djumbush, lafta and guitar viol and Ms. Ali’s vocals, santoor and percussion, *Sumud* slides across the senses like a warm, fragrant wind.

Ripe with thick Middle Eastern rhythms tracks like “Sosin” and “Rah-e-vafa” possess an irresistible pull to the listener, of course if you add Ms. Ali’s sultry vocals against a backdrop of dazzling electronic well it just doesn’t get any better than that.

Other gems include the lushly worked “Mazaar,” based on an Afghan folk song from the Dari region, the Turkish inspired “Dertli” with its layered vocals, “Mazooz” from Iran and “Rayat al Sumud,” written by Naser Musa.

Adding to the sound of *Sumud* are Habib Meftah Boushehri on percussion, flute and vocals; Ulas Ozdemir on saz and vocals; Naser Musa on oud and vocals and Omer Avci on percussion.

Sumud is gorgeously powerful and artfully commanding in both content and intent and there’s not many recordings out there these days that could say the same. *Sumud* is proof that steadfastness needn’t be spare but utterly sumptuous.

Parishaan (Free download)

Express Milwaukee - <http://expressmilwaukee.com/>

[Home](#) / [CD Reviews](#) / *Niyaz*

FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2012

Niyaz

Sumud (Six Degrees)

By [David Lührssen](#)

"World music" is often a catchphrase for exotic mediocrity. Niyaz is among the great exceptions, a trio in cosmopolitan exile, retaining their Iranian roots but seamlessly fusing the quiet ecstasy of age-old melodies and rhythms with contemporary punch and production. *Sumud* (Persian for "yearning") is as much at home in the caravansary as the dance club. Vocalist Azam Ali rises true to the album's title; her words are Persian, and their precise definition means little when delivered with such unearthly intensity.

All Music Guide - <http://www.allmusic.com/>

[Niyaz](#)

Review by Rick Anderson [-]

For those who have grown up with Western pop music and who don't speak Arabic (or Persian or Turkish), the temptation when listening to a [Niyaz](#) album is simply to sit back and let the sinuous grooves and "exotic" melodies wash over you in a state of blissful Orientalist incomprehension. But that's always been a good way to miss a significant part of what this band is doing. While the lyrical themes of their first two albums have focused mainly on issues related to Iranians in exile around the world, their third, titled [Sumud](#) (Steadfastness) deals with broader issues of cultural diaspora and ethnic minority status. The program draws on Kurdish, Turkish, Afghani, and Palestinian material as well as folk songs from Iran; some of the songs are traditional folk music, while others are settings of secular and mystical poems from the 11th to the 17th centuries. For the most part, the songs are not directly political; instead, they tend to address predictable themes of love and longing, cultural tolerance, suffering as a shared experience, and endurance. But for those with ears to hear, there are subtle messages about the ultimate ineffectuality of borders, the implications of universal experience, and cultural resistance. If you are uninterested in such messages, there is still the option of sitting back and letting [Ali](#)'s gorgeous voice and the band's tough, dark, powerful grooves carry you away.

Creative Loafing - <http://cltampa.com/>

New music Tuesday! (May 22): Gossip, Rec Center, Joe Bonamassa, Garbage, The Cult, John Mayer & more

Releases out this week, with audio & video included.

*Posted by **LEILANI POLK** on Mon, May 21, 2012 at 11:19 PM*

Fourth Wave May. I've included info and links for the ones you want to know about most below, plus some other ones you may not have heard of (but should know), with audio & video for your listening and viewing pleasure. **Click here** to check out releases that dropped over the past few months ...

Niyaz, *Sumud* (Six Degrees)

Exclaim - <http://exclaim.ca/>

Niyaz

Sumud

REVIEWS > SOUL, FUNK & WORLD > MAY 22 2012



By Nereida Fernandes The immigrant's challenge to retain their cultural identity while embracing modern ideology resonates with Iranian vocalist Azam Ali and her husband, multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian, reflecting the intergenerational struggle occurring in their homeland. The Montreal-based couple know exactly how the two can be consolidated: using the universal language of music to make their point. They are joined by DJ/producer Carmen Rizzo to form the trio Niyaz. The group's third release, *Sumud*, is a luminous ten-track collection of elaborately carved Middle Eastern music with an electronic aesthetic more pronounced than in previous releases. Niyaz reimagines Palestinian, Afghan and Kurdish folk songs, blending the trio's humanitarian, social message with 17th century Middle Eastern poetry. Ali's haunting vocals perfectly complement *Sumud's* shifting moods; she sounds exquisite whether backed by rhythmic, traditional instruments or made more hypnotic via ambient electronica. Film composer A.R. Rahman (*Bombay*, *Slumdog Millionaire*) makes an appearance as a guest vocalist on "Mazeer." If not a must-have for socially conscious world-fusion listeners at the very least *Sumud* is a must-listen.

(Six Degrees)

Freegan Kolektiva - <http://freegankolektiva.wordpress.com/>

Record Review: Niyaz – Sumud (2012, Six Degrees Records)

This entry was posted on 22/05/2012 by [Freegas](#), in [Music](#) and tagged [Alevi-Bakatsi](#), [Downtempo](#), [Ethnic](#), [Niyaz sumud review](#), [One-world vision](#), [Oriental music](#), [Sufi](#), [Sumud](#), [World fusion](#), [World music](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#). [Leave a comment](#)

Niyaz return with a more electronic sound, yet their work is deeply acoustic, well-researched based on age-old Middle-Eastern folk songs and poems. In ‘Sumud’ they also expand their universal message, their one-world vision beyond divisions, wars and grievances.



Genre: World Fusion / Oriental / Downtempo

Region: Montreal, Canada

Artists' Website: <http://www.niyazmusic.com/>

Label: Six Degrees Records

Niyaz deliver spiritual folk music primarily from Iran and the Middle East as fused with electronic music and a lyrical descent based on age-old poems. Their sound is emotive, intricate and intriguing – expanding our mindset beyond social fragmentation, forging a vision of a borderless and unified world. But who is behind Niyaz?



Niyaz is the musical vehicle of three renowned artists: singer and dulcimer player **Azam Ali**, multi-instrumentalist **Loga Ramin Torkian** and music producer **Carmen Rizzo**. All three musicians have a rich history in music with other groups, various collaborations and personal albums.

Azam Ali was co-founder of the ethnic crossover band ‘Vas’ which was active between 1996 and 2004. She has

produced three albums with Vas as well as three solo albums. Torkian has been involved with Axiom Of Choice and he released his first personal record in 2011 (‘Mehraab’) while Carmen Rizzo has many collaborations under his belt (Seal, Paul Oakenfold, Huun Huur Tu etc.) as well as three personal albums. Moreover, all of the artists’ music has been featured in numerous films, compilations etc.

Another defining point, which is also reflected in the music of Niyaz, is transmigration. For instance, Ali was born in Tehran, Iran, grew up in India and ended up in USA and lately in Canada. Relentless touring with Niyaz and especially playing in tense regions like the Kurdish parts of Turkey, shifted their focus from one being more personal, centred around the condition of being Iranian expats to a more universal one in support of ethnic/religious minorities. As Niyaz themselves stated “We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions [Middle East], because they have really struggled to maintain their identity.”

The album’s title, ‘Sumud’, can be translated as ‘steadfastness’. It directly refers to the Palestinian notion of persistence and non-violent resistance, their version of Satyagraha, which emerged as a response to the invasion of Israelis in Palestinian lands back in 1967 and the ongoing occupation ever-since. It is the constant struggle of people to live freely in their own lands and it extends to the right of minorities to maintain their culture wherever they are.

It aligns with Niyaz’ one-world vision – their humanitarian message. They believe in a world that can rebate discords, a truly integrated society receptive to difference: “And as the world becomes smaller, as is

happening with technology, and so many children nowadays born to parents from very different cultural and religious backgrounds, more of this will happen until it becomes one thing.”



Niyaz play music with similar qualities: border-defying and forward-looking highlighting spirituality and our shared human bonds. From the rhythmic opener ‘Parishaan’ to the ecstatic ambiance of album’s closer ‘Arzusun’ (based on an old sufi poem of Kul Nesimi about divine love) one can hear Niyaz’ characteristic world fusion with Carmen Rizzo’s eclectic electronics, Torkian’s oriental melodies played with an array of Middle Eastern stringed instruments like the Turkish Saz,

the Robab and the custom-made Kamaan (designed in cooperation with Jonathan Wilson) and the luscious, cultivated singing of Azam Ali. Sumud is based on Turkish, Afghan, Palestinian, Kurdish and Persian folk songs as well as on a lineage of Alevi-Bektashi and Sufi poets.

The electronic world fusion of Niyaz is more concise without any dubstep acrobatics for instance or any heavy trance/electro leanings. Their sound is not boasting, trying to impress with subbass heaviness or other trends – it is rather atmospheric and subtle capturing the imagination in a musical journey to the heart, soulful and meditative.

Their electronic sound, although evidently more pronounced than in their previous album (2008’s Nine Heavens) is still focused on building subtle atmosphere, providing a rhythmic pulse and accentuating the emotive textures of each song. In that way it is likely that the more electronic sound of Sumud will not turn off the ones familiar with their music. However, one could argue that at times their acoustic work is slightly buried underneath the increasingly-dominant, thick electronic layers.

According to Carmen Rizzo that was a conscious decision for the band with new potential: “By ramping it up sonically and musically from an electronic perspective, it opens up an entire range of possibilities for the live performance.” Anyway, Niyaz are not hesitating to experiment with technology albeit they do it in a way that their deep roots in culture are not severed. They believe indeed that modernization does not

necessarily bring westernization. Nonetheless, Niyaz are not your average dance act with exotic melodies. Their music is well-researched with deep roots and primarily acoustic arrangements with Torkian's instrumentation.

Although Sumud is a very coherent and tightly-knit album that can be heard like one composition or a contemplative mantra there are some highlights like the astonishing 'Mazaar' – an ode to the holy city of Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan- which also marks their cooperation with Indian musical guru A. R. Rahman. Another standout track is 'Sosin' which perfectly balances all elements of Niyaz.

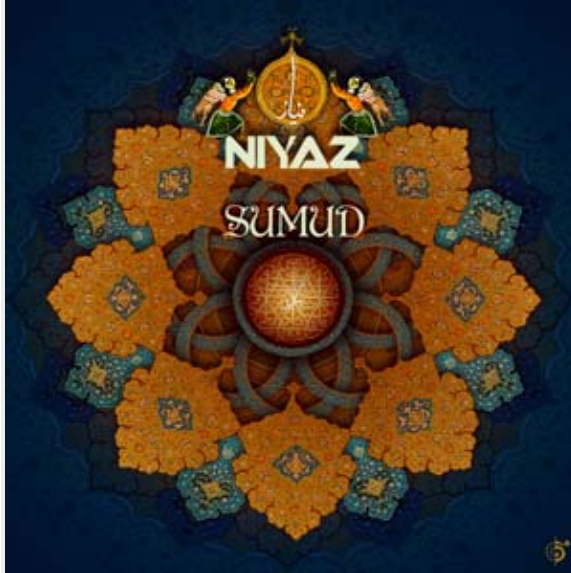


Niyaz means 'yearning' and probably represents their desire to maintain their culture and be able to live dignity beyond the 'arabophobia' campaign of the media (That was actually a reason for them to move from USA to Canada). Sumud is a well-crafted album and a shift to a more electronic sound for the band. However,

what still sets them apart from other world fusion acts is their rich acoustic base – electronics are just added to enrich their version of ethnic music not the other way around.

Niyaz offer Free Track from Sumud

05/22/2012 by admin



NEW MP3 : “Parishaan” (via [Bandcamp](#)) / ([direct link](#))

VIDEO: [NIYAZ Teaser for DERTLI](#)

Struggle as a metaphor is something every human can relate to. One of the most prolific and challenging forms of struggle in the world today is the plight of ethnic and religious minorities, which is the topic of Niyaz’s third album, Sumud (pronounced soomood) forthcoming on Six Degrees Records.

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‘We have now travelled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we’ve taken on this album,’ Ali says from her new home in Montreal. ‘We’ve performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.’

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As with any Niyaz record, however, Ali remains the central focus, with her love for Middle Eastern poetry and her dynamic vocal performance; she has been featured in a number of movies, including ‘Matrix Revolutions’ and ‘Prince of Persia.’ Sumud features new creations of Turkish, Afghan, Palestinian, Kurdish and, of course, Persian folk songs. Two songs, ‘Dertli,’ the album’s most upbeat and danceable track, and the closing, ambient ‘Arzusun’ were written by 17th century Alevi-Bektashi poets.

‘Loga and I listen to so much Alevi music,’ Ali says. ‘No other music has had such an impact on us. I really wanted to record ‘Arzusun,’ which was based on an old poem by Kul Nesimi and made a song by Muharrem Temiz. We reached out to him and he gave us his blessing. It’s based on divine love, like Sufi poetry, it is about yearning to be reunited with the beloved.’

In an age where conflict regions are tearing up areas of the Middle East, as well as completely fracturing the understanding of Arabic culture in America, Niyaz is presenting the most groundbreaking marriage of ancient, ecstatic verse with 21st-century dancefloor kinetics. Ali and Torkian were both born in Iran, though Ali was raised in India; this connection is extremely personal. Their music applies to every global citizen, however, not only those with Persian blood flowing in their veins. As Rizzo explains, the human element is deep at work here.

‘When I heard Azam explain what sumud means, I had a lump in my throat. It’s very powerful and meaningful. Understand the meaning of the album makes the music even better. It’s not just ten songs. It’s an entire concept of this work.’

Niyaz – Sumud

Posted on May 23, 2012 by Alex



Niyaz – “Parishaan” *Sumud*

Niyaz released their third album entitled *Sumud* this week on Six Degrees Records. *Sumud*, which translates from Arabic as “steadfastness,” focuses on the ethnic and religious plight of minorities around the globe. Lead singer Azam Ali chose the title to remind people that, as she explains, “every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born.” Niyaz, which means “yearning” in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by Ali, multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian and two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician Carmen Rizzo. Over the past seven years, Niyaz has drawn strong support from music critics and fans alike. Besides features on NPR and PRI, the Huffington Post declared the band to be “an evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music.” Niyaz has toured the world over and during their voyage, the sights and sounds of different places had a profound impact on the recording of *Sumud*.

“We have now traveled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we’ve taken on this album. We’ve performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.” – Azam Ali

Sumud reveals a more electronic approach than Niyaz’s previous effort, *Nine Heavens*. A collective decision was made to give the kick drum more kick on this record. With more electronic elements and textures, the band merges acoustic and electronic sounds together in a neat collage. Kurdish, Turkish, Afghani, and Palestinian material as well as folk songs from Iran find their way on to the album. Traditional folk music as well as secular and mystical poems from the 11th to 17th centuries complete this sonic collage. Deep grooves surround Ali’s majestic voice and the harmony of electronic and acoustic music makes for an enticing listen. Oscar-winning Indian composer, musician and singer AR Rahman sings exquisitely alongside Ali on “Mazar,” an homage to Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan. Niyaz is currently on tour and they will be performing at Drom in NYC on July 22nd. Listen to “Parishaan” above and buy *Sumud* at your local record store.

Solipsistic Nation - <http://solipsisticnation.com/>

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SONG OF THE DAY: "DERTLI" BY NIYAZ

Posted by [solipsisticnation](#) on Wednesday, May 23, 2012 · [Leave a Comment](#)



"Dertli" from [Niyaz](#) from their [Sumud](#) album. I can't get enough of their music and would love to have them on the show. Hint-hint.

Inside World Music - <http://insideworldmusic.blogspot.com/>

Inside World Music

World Music CD reviews, artist profiles, concert reviews, and general articles about music from around the

Thursday, May 24, 2012

CD Review: Niyaz' 'Sumud'



Niyaz
Sumud
Six Degrees

The modern arrangements of the Persian group Niyaz are steeped in Persian, Kurdish, Afghani, Palestinian, and Turkish folk songs. The contemporary arrangements on keyboards, electronics, drums, and percussion are due to the talented Carmen Rizzo. Azam Ali is the vocalist, but she also plays the santoor and assorted percussion. Loga Ramin Torkian plays saz, robab, kamaan, djumbush, lafta, guitar, and viol. The stunning compositions are modernized, but not so much they are diluted with boring or cheap embellishments. Instead, the result is a catchy, moving, and ear-friendly approach to folk music. The popularized result is not devoid of folkish charm. *Sumud*, which means 'steadfastness' in Arabic, is appropriately-titled. *Sumud* will astound, amaze, and awe-inspire all who listen to it. - Matthew Forss

Posted by Matthew Forss at 12:29 PM

Labels: azam ali, carmen rizzo, central asian, contemporary, forss, iran, niyaz, palestine, persian, six degrees, sumud, USA

Secret Archives Of The Vatican - <http://secretarchivesofthevatican.wordpress.com/>

Album review – Sumud by Niyaz

MAY 26, 2012

tags: album review, Alevi, Bektashi, Niyaz, Six Degrees Records, Sumud
by Vince Millett



Niyaz are a band that fit into no marketing category, that are absolutely brilliant and that are loved here in the **Secret Archives of the Vatican**. They make music that embodies all that is good: Persian traditional modes and tunings, complex yet funky ancient rhythms, finely crafted electronica, stunning vocals and masterful instrumental skills, all combined with fine production values. Their albums have very nice artwork too!

Niyaz, (which means ‘yearning’ in Persian), was formed in 2005 by vocalist **Azam Ali**, multi-instrumentalist **Loga Ramin Torkian** and producer and electronic musician **Carmen Rizzo**. Their new release is called **Sumud** – an Arabic word (صمود) meaning *steadfastness* or *steadfast perseverance*. This is a philosophical term that first emerged among the Palestinians in the wake of the Six-Day War. **Azam Ali** chose this philosophical term as a reminder that, as she explains: ‘Every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born. We have now travelled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we’ve taken on this album. We’ve performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.’

Sumud features reworkings of Turkish, Afghan, Palestinian, Kurdish and Persian folk songs. **Carmen Rizzo** explains: ‘When I heard **Azam** explain what *sumud* means, I had a lump in my throat. It’s very powerful and meaningful. Understand the meaning of the album makes the music even better. It’s not just ten songs. It’s an entire concept of this work.’

So, how does **Sumud** sound? Well, there is definitely more of an emphasis on the electronic side of their sound – this album has a less acoustic sound than the previous two.

The opener, **Parishaan**, features a pulsing bass and sparse frame drum outlining a 12/8 time rhythm. **Azam Ali**'s voice is as mesmerizing as ever. **Sosin** sets itself in a cavernous sonic space. Once again the rhythm is tight and controlled. The acoustic instruments lock in with the understated electronic instruments to keep the driving feel all the way to the end of the track. **Shah Sanam** wraps itself in delay and reverberation effects which fade away at the end to lead us into perhaps the album's star track. **Mazaar** features a special guest vocal appearance from Oscar-winning Indian composer, musician and singer **AR Rahman**. The song is a folkloric ode to the Afghan holy city of **Mazar-e-Sharif**. **AR Rahman**'s vocals are a perfect fit with **Azam Ali**'s – an awesome piece of music, with (to me at least) *aqawwali* feel, with superb percussion.

*'I'm a long-time **AR Rahman** fan,' Azam Ali says. 'I grew up in India, so I have a great passion for Bollywood music, which has influenced the way I compose. The theme that AR wrote for the 1995 film **Bombay** has to be one of the most beautiful pieces of music I've ever heard, so I was honoured to have him on this album.'*

Vafa starts quietly, and features multi-tracked vocals which remind me of some of **Niyaz**'s earlier work.

Two songs, **Dertli** and the final track **Arzusun**, were written by 17th century **Alevi-Bektashi** Sufi poets. **Dertli** is uptempo with a four-on-the-floor kick drum giving it a slight house feel – I can hear remixes working well for this tune.

*'Loga and I listen to so much Alevi music,' Ali says. 'No other music has had such an impact on us. I really wanted to record **Arzusun** which was based on an old poem by **Kul Nesimi** and made a song by **Muharrem Temiz**. We reached out to him and he gave us his blessing. It's based on divine love, like Sufi poetry, it is about yearning to be reunited with the beloved.'*

We're back in a very Persian 12/8 time for **Masooz** – it grooves along in fine style – and then **Rayat al Sumud** takes us elsewhere. It sounds Bollywood influenced to me and the heavy kick drum keeps it in head-nodding, foot-tapping, almost danceable territory.



Mahtaab sounds like much of what we've already heard (and that's a good thing!) and then we reach the chilled-out finale, **Arzusun**, which is the second of the songs with texts written by 17th century **Alevi-Bektashi** poets, and which eases us, satisfied, back into the world around us.

This album is beautiful from beginning to end, exemplifying all the values I mentioned in the opening paragraph. It'll certainly be getting plenty of time in my listening devices and I'll play a track or two in our podcast – the world needs to know about **Niyaz**!

Six Degrees Announces Niyaz's "Sumud"

SOURCE: [PRESS JUNKIE PR](#), Published: 2012-05-30



Struggle as a metaphor is something every human can relate to. One of the most prolific and challenging forms of struggle in the world today is the plight of ethnic and religious minorities, which is the topic of Niyaz's third album, *Sumud* (pronounced soomood) forthcoming on Six Degrees Records. Translating from Arabic as 'steadfastness,' lead singer Azam Ali chose this philosophical term as a symbolic reminder that, as she explains, 'every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born.'

Niyaz, which means 'yearning' in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by Ali, multi-instrumentalist [Loga Ramin Torkian](#) and two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician [Carmen Rizzo](#). The band borrows from an historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets setting verse to music, perhaps most famously known today through the work of the 13th century Persian poet Rumi and the endless barrage of quotes attributed to him on Twitter and Facebook. While the immediate goal of Niyaz was to explore the music and identity of Iranians living in exile and struggling to maintain their cultural identity in the modern world on their first two acclaimed records, *Niyaz* and *Nine Heavens*, the band has expanded that theme with *Sumud*.

In its short history, Niyaz has garnered an incredible amount of media attention, including features on NPR and PRI, with the Huffington Post declaring the band to be 'an evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music.' Their second album, *Nine Heavens*, topped both the iTunes World and CMJ World Music charts, while a number of songs from the two-disc set found their way onto television and the big screen. Tireless performers, Niyaz

continues to tour internationally, while each member has released at least one solo album since *Nine Heavens*' 2008 release.

'We have now travelled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we've taken on this album,' Ali says from her new home in Montreal. 'We've performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.'

Over the last seven years, the band has spent a lot of time touring the world, playing numerous shows across North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. A major source of inspiration has always been Afghanistan, and the folkloric 'Mazaar,' an ode to the holy city of Mazar-e-Sharif, captures the beauty and depth of this trio splendidly. Fans of Indian music may be surprised to find the extraordinary Oscar-winning Indian composer, musician and singer AR Rahman singing exquisitely alongside Ali on this stunning homage to a war-torn region.

'I'm a long-time AR Rahman fan,' Ali says. 'I grew up in India, so I have a great passion for Bollywood music, which has influenced the way I compose. The theme that AR wrote for the 1995 film *Bombay* has to be one of the most beautiful pieces of music I've ever heard, so I was honored to have him on this album.'

'Mazaar' was, as Rizzo says, an '11th hour' occurrence. After performing a number of shows together, Rahman ended up in Rizzo's Los Angeles studio. He noticed a Niyaz poster and expressed his love for the first album. Rizzo later mentioned that the band should invite a guest of some stature to perform. After Ali suggested Rahman, one of the most renowned producers and composers in the world today, Rizzo put in the call, and the response was positive.

Like all of the album's ten tracks, 'Mazaar' features a punchy low end and a strong emphasis on percussion. Electronic elements abound on *Sumud*. At the beginning of the process of recording, a collective decision was made to give the kick drum more kick after the acoustic-minded *Nine Heavens*. It also marks the first time that the band recorded the majority of the album together, starting in Montreal and putting the final touches on in Los Angeles.

‘By ramping it up sonically and musically from an electronic perspective, it opens up an entire range of possibilities for the live performance,’ Rizzo says. ‘The new show is going to have a lot more electronic elements and textures, and be a lot more beat-driven. The songs are going to be arranged and performed a lot differently than the record.’

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‘Loga and I listen to so much Alevi music,’ Ali says. ‘No other music has had such an impact on us. I really wanted to record ‘Arzusun,’ which was based on an old poem by Kul Nesimi and made a song by Muharrem Temiz. We reached out to him and he gave us his blessing. It’s based on divine love, like Sufi poetry, it is about yearning to be reunited with the beloved.’

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CD Hot List - <http://cdhotlist.btol.com/>



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Title: Sumud
Label: Six Degrees (dist. Fontana)
Artist: Niyaz
ISBN: 9786314687465
ISBN-10:
UPC: 00657036118720
Prod.#: BECDXDR6570361187
Cat.#: 1187
Genre: World Music

Release type: New

Comments: Niyaz is a trio composed of singer Azam Ali, her husband and multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian, and producer Carmen Rizzo. The songs on their first two albums explored themes of Iranian exile, but on their third album they have broadened their focus to include ethnic and religious minorities worldwide. The music is equal parts acoustic and electronic--Torkian's *kamaan* and *robab* both featuring prominently--and is generally characterized by darkly beautiful soundscapes punctuated by sudden outbursts of joyful lyricism. As always, Ali's voice is a pure pleasure to hear. Recommended to all world music collections. (RA)

Acidted - <http://acidted.tumblr.com/>

ACID TED




NIYAZ-ARZUSUN. Electronics and C.17 Ottoman poetry. Good in a gloomy way.

Blurb: The song ARZUSUN performed by electronic/acoustic group NIYAZ from their latest album SUMUD. Photography and animation created by AZAM ALI

Music by Muharrem Temiz. Alevi-Bektashi poem by 17th century Ottoman poet Kul Nesimi- The lyrics are about divine love & separation. (by [3delara](#))

Posted 1 year ago from bookmarklet

Source: youtube.com




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Niyaz drop 'Arzusun' music video

This entry was posted on 04/06/2012 by [Freegas](#), In [Music](#) and tagged [Arzusun](#), [Niyaz](#), [One-world vision](#), [Oriental music](#), [Sumud](#), [World music](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#). [Leave a comment](#)



Niyaz released their stunning third album 'Sumud' recently and they have already enjoyed a warm reception. They just made another song available in the form of music video. It is the album's ecstatic closer 'Arzusun', which is an old sufi poem of Kul Nesimi about divine love and separation.

The music was written by Muharrem Temiz while Azam Ali, the singer of Niyaz, was responsible for photography and animation.

Niyaz are known for blending centuries-old melodies with eclectic electronics to inspire respect for cultural integrity, especially concerning minorities worldwide.

You can [read the whole review of Sumud](#) here.

30 Seconds Over - <http://30secondsover.blogspot.com/>

TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 2012

Niyaz

I've been really enjoying *Sumud*, the third album from Iranian emigre band Niyaz, a wildly propulsive, emotionally stirring kind of thing, mildly electrified but not jarringly synthetic or modern. The title means "steadfast" and the album is, apparently, all about surviving through struggle. Before I embarrass myself trying to describe a kind of music that is mostly unfamiliar, how about just lifting from [the label site](#):

Niyaz, which means 'yearning' in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by Ali, multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian and two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician Carmen Rizzo. The band borrows from an historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets setting verse to music, perhaps most famously known today through the work of the 13th century Persian poet Rumi and the endless barrage of quotes attributed to him on Twitter and Facebook. While the immediate goal of Niyaz was to explore the music and identity of Iranians living in exile and struggling to maintain their cultural identity in the modern world on their first two acclaimed records, *Niyaz* and *Nine Heavens*, the band has expanded that theme with *Sumud*.

POSTED BY [JENNIFERPKELLY](#) AT 6:01 AM

LABELS: [NIYAZ](#)

World Music National Geographic – <http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/>



JUNE 1, 2012

Video Selector: Niyaz

Watch New Video for "Arzusun"

by Tom Pryor

Each week Nat Geo Music scours the far corners of the internet to bring you the coolest new videos from across the globe.

This week we turn to L.A.-based Persian/Middle Eastern electronica outfit Niyaz, and a stunning new animated video from their latest album, *Sumud*. Released just last week on the Six Degrees label, the dazzlingly atmospheric album has already shot to #1 on the iTunes world music charts.

Here's what the label says about the album: *Struggle as a metaphor is something every human can relate to. One of the most prolific and challenging forms of struggle in the world today is the plight of ethnic and religious minorities, which is the topic of Niyaz's third album, Sumud (pronounced soomood) forthcoming on Six Degrees Records. Translating from Arabic as 'steadfastness,' lead singer Azam Ali chose this philosophical term as a symbolic reminder that, as she explains, 'every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born.'*

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Meanwhile, this dreamy animated video for the song "Arzusun", was created by Azam Ali, with music by by Muharrem Temiz. The text is taken from an Alevi-Bektashi poem by 17th century Ottoman poet Kul Nesimi. According to Ali, "the lyrics are about divine love & separation."

Check it out.

Album Reviews - <http://albumreviews.org/>

NIYAZ – Sumud



Niyaz the band returns with their third album, Sumud. The album's title is Arabic for 'steadfastness' and the record's musical themes center around the plight of ethnic and religious minorities around the world. Azam Ali chose this philosophical term as a symbolic reminder that, as she explains, 'every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born.'

With a heavier emphasis on the electronic side of their sound and a special guest vocal appearance from Oscar-winning Indian composer, musician and singer AR Rahman, Sumud is the most powerful release yet from one of global fusion's most popular bands.

<http://www.niyazmusic.com/>

Dancefloor Mayhem - <http://dancefloormayhem.tumblr.com/>

JUN
7



Niyaz - Arzusun

New album from Niyaz is out now. You can get a free download of the album song Sumud @

<http://sixdegreesrecords.bandcamp.com/album/sumud>

::Niyaz Tour Dates::

Fri 7/20/12 Festival Paleo Nyon, Switzerland

Sun 7/22/12 Drom (The East Village) New York, NY

Wed 7/25/12 Kennedy Plaza (Venue Subject To Change Pending On Weather) Atlantic City, NJ

Fri 7/27/12 Faerieworlds Eugene, OR

Sat 8/4/12 Grand Performances (Free Concert) Los Angeles, CA

Sun 8/5/12 Yoshis San Francisco, CA

Thu 8/9/12 TBA Irvine, CA

Sat 8/11/12 KPCCenter Seattle, WA

Legends of the Summer

Mythical faerie festival enchants Eugene

ARTICLE | JUNE 7, 2012 - 12:00AM | BY HAILEY CHAMBERLAIN



Photo by Byron Dazey • creativeflashes.com

Faerieworlds, the yearly festival that encourages attendees to “live your legend,” returns. Celebrating fantasy, magic and, of course, faeries, this annual event of pixie dust and gossamer wings provides everything a faer-folk enthusiast could want. By bringing in internationally acclaimed authors and artists, featuring a “Mythic Marketplace” and presenting a diverse group of musicians from the world over, Faerieworlds — at Howard Buford Recreation Area (aka Mount Pisgah) July 27-29 — caters to the varying tastes of those who adore the faerie realm.

Recent Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Donovan is headlining this year, premiering his original show “The Living Crystal Faery Realm,” a multi-media extravaganza.

Famous for his raspy vocals paired with catchy strumming tied together with rousing lyrics, Donovan is a must-see performer at this year’s festival.

Baka Beyond, described by its members as Afro-Celtic, will also hit the stage. Featuring musicians from Ghana, Sierra Leone, Brittany and Senegal, the group prides itself on having expansive influences and its ability to “cross boundaries between age, race and culture.” Utilizing a wide variety of instruments including marimba, djembe, kalabash, kora and more, Baka Beyond creates a unique sound that pays homage to the Baka tribes.

Niyaz, an Iranian trio hailing from Los Angeles and formed by Grammy-nominee DJ/producer Carmen Rizzo, will perform its otherworldly music with a modern aesthetic. Niyaz fuses traditional Iranian music with electronica, creating an intensely beat-driven sound. By applying electronic effects to instruments such as the kamaan and robab, Niyaz produces hypnotizing melodies that are impossible not to dance to.

Faerieworlds founders Emilio and Kelly Miller-Lopez will be lighting up the stage late into the night with their band Woodlands. Combining mellow beats and soft vocals, Woodlands creates the perfect soundtrack for relaxation after a long day of jamming to folklore and dancing with faeries.

Faerieworlds promises to be full of “tricksy goblins, pillaging pirates, frisky faeries, beguiling bellydancers, lost boys, steam punks and horned ones.” Guests are encouraged to participate in costume workshops, where they can characterize their own legends and fantasies through intricate, hands-on costume design. The perfect occasion to dance in the summer, Faerieworlds is unlike any other festival on the West Coast.

Faerieworlds Festival is July 27-29, at Howard Buford Recreation Area; tickets available at faerieworlds.com

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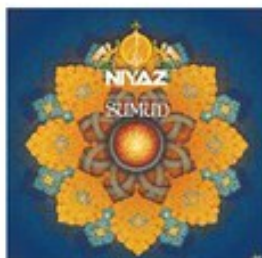
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SUMUD /CD

BY NIYAZ
Six Degrees Records

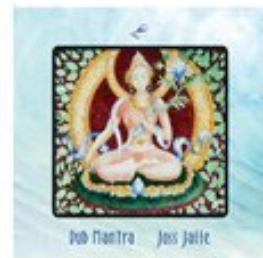
Change is inevitable; it forces us to push through the walls of complacency and fear. Niyaz's rhythms are slightly abstract and jarring in their unpredictability. But right on the heels of fear, the gratitude comes: a breath of fresh air that might be beyond your western comfort zone at first listen.

In an age where conflict is tearing up the Middle East, as well as completely fracturing the understanding of Arabic culture in America, Niyaz presents an uncompromising fusion of ancient ecstatic verse and modern dance floor politics.

Niyaz is world music with an electronic backbone that curves a little left and as a listener, it keeps me guessing and focused. Just a step outside of the four-on-the-floor that electronic/world music has made us dependent on. Don't worry... they get to that eventually, after dancing around a little 10/8.

Singer Azam Ali's vocals - all in Arabic - are a beam of light, the shortest distance between two points. A straight line that glues it all together, like Miles Davis' trumpet in the mid-70s musical chaos of his making. In the uproar of our times, Ali is spreading the philosophy that "Every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born." Music is the weapon of the consciousness revolution. Arm yourself with this CD.

Reviewed by **Daniel Overberger**, a Los Angeles based Yoga teacher, the author of *Leaving Stress Behind* and founder of alt-kirtan group, Dharma Gypsies.
LeavingStressBehind.com



DUB MANTRA /CD

BY JOSS JAFFE
Tataouine/BMI

It feels like a natural marriage: Mesmerizing and uplifting aspects of Sanskrit chant laid over hypnotic beats and bass lines that comprise dub reggae rhythms. Dub Mantra, the latest release from Oakland-based Joss Jaffe is an insightful exploration into the many ways these musical worlds can overlap. Jaffe's years performing in both Indian Raga and Dub Reggae set the foundation for this album's concept.

Laidback dub reggae bass grooves ride on top of spacious drum beats augmented by often minimalist guitar and keyboards. The resulting grooves allow proper showcase of the chosen Sanskrit chants and English adaptations. Sometimes Jaffe intermingles Sanskrit and English within the same song, as he does in tracks like "Wanderer" and "Arati Lijo." Sprinkle in tabla, finger-picked guitar and sitar, and the full dynamic impact of this album comes into bloom.

The combination of Dub Mantra's devotional lyrical content coupled with a plethora of female vocals sets the listener on a soothing audio path. On songs such as "Lakshmi," "Ragapuri," "Shivaya," "Monkey," and "Nataraj," Jaffe sometimes alternates female and male lead vocals, and other times serves up delicious female harmonies that intertwine themselves within their male lead vocal counterparts.

Honestly, I initially wasn't sure what to expect from this album. Yet it seems obvious now that this unique musical combination works tremendously well.

Reviewed by **Joe Kara**, who loves his double life working in music, playing bass, and teaching Yoga in Hollywood and the Valley. Facebook/ Twitter: JUKara

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2012

Niyaz



How about some awesome middle eastern grooves? They don't get more groovier than Niyaz.

Niyaz is made up as follows:

Azam Ali - Voice, Santour, Hammered Dulcimer, Daf, Frame Drums, Riqq, Chan Chan, Zils

Carmen Rizzo - Programming, Keyboards, Synthesizers Loga Ramin

Torkian - Guitar Viol, Kamaan, Saz, Lafta, Djura, Guitars

Azam Ali of the amazing voice, another where I have no idea what she is singing, but it sounds great.

[Azam Ali](#) was born in Tehran, Iran and grew up in India from the age of four in the small town of Panchgani, a hill station in the state of Maharashtra. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 changed the course of Azam's life, as it did for many Iranians. Unwilling to bring her daughter back to a country filled with uncertainty, her mother decided to give up her home and life, and together they moved to America in 1985 when Azam was just a teenager. Azam felt that she wanted to pursue a career in music after falling in love with the Persian santour (hammered dulcimer). It was during one of her santour lessons that her teacher heard her sing for the first time. Completely taken, he told her that her voice had a rare emotional quality about it which should be cultivated and

nurtured. A voice which Billboard magazine would later describe as "a glorious unforgettable instrument."

If you have a moment in time check out their amazing new album Sumud.

For those who have grown up with Western pop music and who don't speak Arabic (or Persian or Turkish), the temptation when listening to a Niyaz album is simply to sit back and let the sinuous grooves and "exotic" melodies wash over you in a state of blissful Orientalist incomprehension. But that's always been a good way to miss a significant part of what this band is doing. While the lyrical themes of their first two albums have focused mainly on issues related to Iranians in exile around the world, their third, titled Sumud (Steadfastness) deals with broader issues of cultural diaspora and ethnic minority status. The program draws on Kurdish, Turkish, Afghani, and Palestinian material as well as folk songs from Iran; some of the songs are traditional folk music, while others are settings of secular and mystical poems from the 11th to the 17th centuries. For the most part, the songs are not directly political; instead, they tend to address predictable themes of love and longing, cultural tolerance, suffering as a shared experience, and endurance.

Revel in the experience. Check out three of the tracks from this amazing album.

Parishaan New song from Niyaz from their upcoming 3rd album, titled Sumud. The song is called "Parishaan" and it was previewed in a performance in New York City in November 2011.

NY Daily News - <http://www.nydailynews.com/>

Jim Farber's Top Ten in Music for June 17, 2012

Hot Chip, Bobby Womack, The Beach Boys, Dave Thomspson's book and more

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

PUBLISHED: SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2012, 6:00 AM

UPDATED: SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2012, 6:00 AM

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music-arts/jim-farber-top-ten-music-june-17-2012-article-1.1095505#ixzz2a5vzxRKJ>

8) **Niyaz** "*Sumud*" Kurdish, Iranian and Afghani tunes and instruments get a hypnotic, electronic face-lift in the music of Niyaz - which is Persian for yearning.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music-arts/jim-farber-top-ten-music-june-17-2012-article-1.1095505#ixzz2a5w2AFJR>

'Tuned In' review: Togetherness puts Niyaz over the top on 'Sumud'

- By **Chuck Campbell**
- Posted June 19, 2012 at 10:37 a.m.



Niyaz's "Sumud"

Niyaz's elaborate sound and overriding message on "Sumud" can be summed up in a single, bumper-sticker-friendly, word: coexist.

"Sumud," which translates from Arabic to "steadfastness," is an alternately roundabout and direct call for acceptance of ethnic and religious minorities, particularly in Middle Eastern countries. To create the release, the Iranian-born/North American-based married couple Azam Ali and Loga Ramin Torkian, plus Los Angeles-based third member Carmen Rizzo, build their music on traditional songs from Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan, Kurdish folk music and interpretations of works by 17th century Alevi-Bektashi poets and 11th century poet/mystic Baba Taher.

The resulting songs convey universal themes of pain and love, suffering and peace.

There's another layer of coexisting going on here: The three members of Niyaz have distinctly different (and potentially contradictory) skills and equally important

roles in the act's ultimate sound. Vocalist Ali has an ethereal voice that could command a cappella. Torkian deftly handles a range of evocative instruments (on "Sumud" that includes kamaan, robab, saz, djumbush, lafta and guitar viol) that could likewise stand alone. And Rizzo's electronic programming (plus drums and percussion) would seem to be at odds with both Torkian's acoustic instrumentation and Ali's preternatural voice. (It's no wonder all three members also produce music independent of each other.)

Yet they improbably come together on "Sumud" to create magic, an East-meets-West brew of the ancient, the futuristic and the timeless. Sometimes harkening cult favorite Dead Can Dance, Niyaz stomps out of the gate with propulsive percussion and a bittersweet air on "Parishaan" and later works into a transcendent churn on "Dertli," courtesy of Rizzo. Ali's expressiveness breaks language barriers on the darkly rhythmic "Shah Sanam" and "Masooz," her wails and moans prompting soul-probing goose bumps. And Torkian's exotic instruments (to Western ears at least) are hypnotic from beginning to end.

However, it's not as if one of the members of Niyaz steals the spotlight. They succeed by working together.

And that's the point of "Sumud's" bigger picture, too.

1000 recordings - <http://www.1000recordings.com/>

New Obsession

POSTED BY TOM ON JUNE 28, 2012 AT 10:36 AM

IN NIYAZ, SUMUD, NEW ALBUM, SUFI MUSIC

Sumud, the new Niyaz album, has been haunting me since I first heard it in late May.

It's got all the requisite "world fusion" trappings, including cleverly layered electronic textures and loops. This collage, which features the song "Parishaan," isn't an official video, just images gathered by vocalist Azam Ali. No visuals are needed: Listen to the way she slides over and around the textures -- the rhythm has some intricate hiccups but she never furrows a brow, instead exuding a smooth and untroubled serenity. The contrast between that tone and the considerably more active pulse is like an energy shot with a hot chocolate chaser: It thrills and relaxes at the same time.

DooBeeDooBeeDoo - <http://www.doobeedoobeedoo.info/>

7. NIYAZ featuring Azam Ali

Date: Sunday, July 22, 2012

Time: 8pm

Venue: [Drom](#) (85 Avenue A, NY, NY 10009, 212- 777-1157)

Ticket: \$25

Genre: electronic Middle Eastern Classical music

A journey to the heart of the unmistakable voice of **Azam Ali**, the refined acoustic/ electronic instrumentation of **Loga Ramin Torkian**, and the cutting-edge electronic artistry of two-time Grammy nominee producer-remixer **Carmen Rizzo**. **NIYAZ** defines the best in contemporary world music by effortlessly marrying rich Sufi mystical poetry and folk songs from the Middle East, masterful acoustic instrumentation, with modern electronics. Based in Montreal, NIYAZ is considered by critics to be one of the most groundbreaking groups of its time. Since the release of their debut successful album in 2005, Niyaz have performed in many prominent festivals and concerts around the world. As individual artists as well as collectively they have also contributed to some of the biggest soundtracks of major Hollywood films.

Their latest album entitled **Sumud** which will be released on May 22, 2012, further defines the sound that the group have received acclaim for. *Sumud*, an Arabic word which means "*steadfastness*", offers a philosophical quest into the human depths, a message of hope against the injustice and oppression of ethnic and religious minority groups, a universal tribute to beauty, cultural and spiritual diversity, freedom and dignity for all.

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Niyaz with Azam Ali

Reggae

Drom

Until Sun Jul 22 2012

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Not yet rated [Be the first...](#)

Time Out says

Thu Mar 15 2012

Dreamy Iranian-Indian band Niyaz teams up with Azam Ali—who's sung with System of a Down and Nine Inch Nails—to celebrate latest album *Sumud*.

0


Reviews

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Broadway World - <http://broadwayworld.com/>

STAGE TUBE: Niyaz Releases 'Parishaan' Music Video; US Tour Kicks Off 7/22

Tuesday, July 17, 2012; 08:07 PM - by [Stage Tube](#)

Niyaz has just released a new music video for their single "Parishaan," off their critically acclaimed new album "Sumud." Watch the video below!

Montreal/Los Angeles-based Niyaz have recently released their third album, Sumud (pronounced soomood) and they are bringing it on tour to the United States this summer. The album has already debuted at #1 on the iTunes World Chart and broke into the top 10 Billboard World Music Chart as well. The band will be kicking off their US tour on July 22nd in NYC then off to Atlantic City, Eugene, Los Angeles, Irvine, San Francisco, and Seattle. Full tour dates below.

Niyaz, which means 'yearning' in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by Azam Ali, multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian and two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician Carmen Rizzo. The trio borrows from an historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets setting verse to music, while exploring the music and identity of Iranians living in exile and struggling to maintain their cultural identity in the modern world.

Their new album, Sumud (out now on Six Degrees Records) expands on that theme, while adding their new experiences and worldviews learned during their heavy touring through the Middle East in the past seven years. 'We have now travelled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we've taken on this album,' Ali says from her new home in Montreal. 'We've performed in the Kurdish parts of [Turkey](#) during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.'

In its short history, Niyaz has garnered an incredible amount of media attention, including features on NPR and PRI, with the Huffington Post declaring the band to be 'an evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music.' Their second album, Nine Heavens, topped both the iTunes World and CMJ World Music charts, while a number of songs from the two-disc set found their way onto television and the big screen. Tireless performers, Niyaz continues to tour internationally, while each member has released at least one solo album since Nine Heavens' 2008 release.

In an age where conflict regions are tearing up areas of the Middle East, as well as completely fracturing the understanding of Arabic culture in America, Niyaz is presenting the most groundbreaking marriage of ancient, ecstatic verse with 21st-century dancefloor kinetics. Their [music](#) applies to every global citizen, however, not only those with Persian blood flowing in their veins. As Rizzo explains, the human element is deep at work here.

Neufutur - <http://neufutur.com/>

[Home](#) › [Artist News](#) › Niyaz Releases New Music Video, US Tour Starts This Week!

Niyaz Releases New Music Video, US Tour Starts This Week!

Posted on July 18, 2012 by [James McQuiston](#) — [No Comments ↓](#)

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Niyaz Releases New Music Video, Starts US Tour

SOURCE:

PRESS JUNKIE PR,

Published: 2012-07-18



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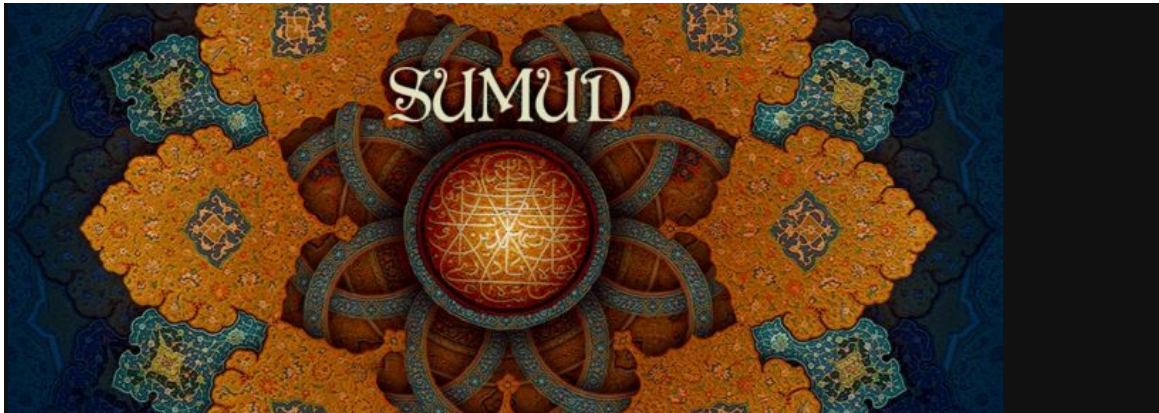
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GOINGS-ON

Niyaz: Mediterranean Influence

—by Sara Fazio, July 18, 2012

The Iranian trio **Niyaz** are coming to the States this month. Their sound is very Mediterranean and cultural, with influences from all over the world. The band's goal is to showcase the struggle to maintain identity in religious atmospheres throughout Middle Eastern territories. Niyaz means “yearning” in Persian and Urdu. The group, which formed in 2005, consists of Carmen Rizzo, Loga Ramin Torkian, and Azam Ali. As their popularity continues to grow, so does their need to tell a story. They will be playing at **Drom** in New York on **July 22** and at **Kennedy Plaza** in Atlantic City on **July 25**.



By [sanj.k](#) | July 19, 2012 at 7:51 am | 0 Comments | [the latest](#) | Tags: [Azam Ali](#), [Carmen Rizzo](#), [free download](#), [Nine Heavens](#), [Niyaz](#), [six degrees records](#), [Sumud](#)

The band borrows from an historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets setting verse to music, perhaps most famously known today through the work of the 13th century Persian poet Rumi ... **Niyaz**, which means 'yearning' in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by **Azam Ali**, multi-instrumentalist **Loga Ramin Torkian** and two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician **Carmen Rizzo**.

Struggle as a metaphor is something every human can relate to. One of the most prolific and challenging forms of struggle in the world today is the plight of ethnic and religious minorities, which is the topic of **Niyaz**'s third album, '**Sumud**' (pronounced soomood) out now on **Six Degrees Records**. Translating from Arabic as 'steadfastness,' lead singer **Azam Ali** chose this philosophical term as a symbolic reminder that, as she explains, 'every human being should inherit the right to live with dignity and freedom upon the land on which they are born.'

Like all of the album's ten tracks, '**Mazaar**' features a punchy low end and a strong emphasis on percussion. Electronic elements abound on **Sumud**. At the beginning of the process of recording, a collective decision was made to give the kick drum more kick after the acoustic-minded '**Nine Heavens**'. It also marks the first time that the band recorded the majority of the album together, starting in Montreal and putting the final touches on in Los Angeles.

The approach involves less multi-layering and more effects on his instruments, predominantly the Middle Eastern stringed instruments kamaan and robab. The effect is hypnotic, with melodic waves erupting between the precise stabs of **Carmen Rizzo**'s cutting-edge production aesthetic. 'By recording in a less acoustic manner,' **Torkian** says, 'the instrumentation merges into the electronic music in a different way. With less multi-layering, there is more room to process and treat the acoustic sounds.'

In an age where conflict regions are tearing up areas of the Middle East, as well as completely fracturing the understanding of Arabic culture in America, **Niyaz** is presenting the most ground breaking marriage of ancient, ecstatic verse with 21st-century dancefloor kinetics.



[Niyaz](#)

Sumud

(Six Degrees; US: 22 May 2012; UK: 22 May 2012)

Text: [AA](#)

Niyaz: Sumud

By [David Maine](#) 20 July 2012

Not exactly ground-breaking, but solid

The folks in Niyaz have been busy these past couple of years. Singer Azam Ali has taken time to have a child and release a solo album in his honor, 2011's excellent *From Night to the Edge of Day*. Loga Ramin Torkian, the group's main songwriter/arranger/multi-instrumentalist (and also Ali's husband) teamed up with vocalist Khosro Ansari to release the recent *Mehraab*, a strong set of tunes that fits in well with Niyaz's general musical approach, yet sounds markedly different being delivered by a male voice. These records are the product of the same fruitful musical minds that made Niyaz's last record, 2008's *Nine Heavens*, such a rewarding listen.

That album came as a two-disc set, with the bonus disc recreating the songs on acoustic instruments, eschewing the band's tendency toward synthetic sounds and understated

studio knob-twiddling. This time around, the band's latest album *Sumud* returns to explore those electronic tendencies more, perhaps, than ever before. This is a good thing, because this far into the band's career, there is something of a risk of diminishing returns.

Those diminished returns make themselves known right off the bat. There is nothing wrong with the tune that opens this set, "Parishaan", it just sounds mighty familiar. Ali's breathy voice carries the tunes, falling somewhere between a whisper, a chant, and a drone, and the instrumentation is tasteful and atmospheric. The sound is distinctly bottom heavy, with plenty of hand percussion and rolling, echoey bass tone.

So far, though, there is little to differentiate it from previous Niyaz records. There is a good balance between traditional instruments like oud and saz, and wispy layers of synthesizer—this is Niyaz's signature sound after all. Few bands out there are playing electro-traditional versions of Persian, Kurdish and Middle Eastern songs, and if a listener has never heard this one before, then s/he is apt to be impressed. Longtime followers, though, will be forgiven for scratching their heads and saying, "Okay, now what?"

Happily, things pick up after this. "Sosin" ramps up the synth elements, which might be a problem for folk-trad purists, but then again they're probably not listening to this band anyway. With creaky grunts and electronic zaps provided by the band's third core member, Carmen Rizzo, "Sosin" suggests the direction for much of the rest of the album: away from the acoustic and deeper into the electronic sphere.

This is immediately reflected in a couple of the strongest songs on the record, "Shah Sanam" and "Mazaar". The former opens with more layers of pulsing synth tones, perfectly balanced by Ali's voice, which is animated enough to bounce across a relatively uptempo melody line. "Mazaar" places the emphasis squarely on Ali, with a few violin accents and a heap of reverb to balance the underlying percussion. It manages to do what Niyaz does better than anyone else, yet at the same time to sound new.

The balance of the album straddles these two worlds. Some tunes venture a little deeper into the electronic side of things, while others pull back to introduce guest musicians of a more traditional bent. Some tunes sound like they could have come from an earlier record ("Masooz", "Arzusun"), while others, like "Dertli" and the loping "Rayat al Sumud", continue to experiment with new sounds.

This isn't quite a place-holding album, but neither is it a full step in the band's evolution. Next time around, maybe the sonic progression will be more pronounced. Then again, maybe not. In any case, this record should be quite solid enough to satisfy current fans, and maybe even make some new one.

NEW YORK MUSIC DAILY

Niyaz Brings the Persian Party to Drom

by delarue

“It sounds like there are 14,000 people here!” Niyaz frontwoman Azam Alitold the audience at Drom Sunday night, and she wasn’t being sarcastic: the club was packed, and the crowd responded ecstatically. Playing swirling, hypnotic original arrangements of classic melodies from Iran, Afghanistan and across the Middle East, Niyaz elevated those tunes with an orchestral majesty and an intoxicating, hypnotic beat. What was most impressive is how organic the music was. Although there was a laptop onstage, with Carmen Rizzo reaching from his keyboard to a series of mixers with split-second precision, it was clear from the first resonant booms from Habib Meftah Boushehri’s drumkit that this wasn’t going to be karaoke. While a supplementary lute track or wash of ambience would occasionally waft into the mix, this was definitely live. Both Ali and her husband Loga Ramin Torkian have put out excellent albums under their own names over the last year or so; this time out, their set included most of the tracks on the new Niyaz album Sumud (Arabic for “resilience”). Torkian played tersely incisive, often haunting quartertone melodies, switching between jangly Turkish saz lute and his own invention, the kaman – a hybrid cello and kamancheh fiddle with a guitar-like body – while Ali took a turn on frame drum as well as electric santoor. Her two elegantly rippling, eerily reverberating solos on that Iranian instrument – her first love, even before she became a singer, as she reminded the crowd – were among the night’s most mesmerizing moments.

“Habib comes from Bushehr, in the south of Iran where people really know how to party!” Ali remarked as the drummer came out from behind the kit and added his powerful baritone to an animated duet, Rizzo running a loop of his beats so that the undulating rhythmic waves wouldn’t waver: the crowd loved it. Yet as much as this concert was a dance party, the music was serious. Ali stood immobile and waiflike as the show began, stark and atmospheric, but then began to sway and then loosened as the songs picked up. In the studio, whether singing in Farsi, Arabic, Turkish or an Afghan dialect, her vocals have a minutely nuanced microtonal intensity; onstage, she relied on the understated power of her lower registers, mingling hypnotically and occasionally soaring over frequently ominous, shifting sheets of melody. Rizzo, as it turns out, is an agile keyboardist, his echoey, oscillating chords contrasting with eerily pinging righthand motifs. The songs on Sumud, notably the bouncy title track, follow a common theme of resistance and survival under duress. Ali took care to explain that what she was trying to communicate is that peace begins at home: who are we to criticize other nations or cultures for the strife that’s occurring within their borders when we don’t have equality here? She emphasized that everywhere on the globe, it’s always the religious and ethnic minorities who get the short end of the stick. After almost an hour and a half onstage, they ended the concert by encoring with the same song twice. Despite the high-tech sonics, improvisation is what this band is all about, so it was no surprise that both versions were just as intriguing. The first featured Torkian playing tensely insistent riffs on his kaman; the second time around, he switched to saz and the song relaxed, taking on an irresistible sway over the pulsing drums, enveloping keyboard swirl and Torkian’s understatedly fiery crescendos. Niyaz are currently on national tour: the schedule is here.

EVENTS CALENDAR

EVENT DETAILS

REVIEWS: 0

WRITE A REVIEW

ATLANTIC CITY

A.C. International Night Concerts



Music and dance from around the globe will once again be featured on the Atlantic City Boardwalk this summer as part of the Fifth annual Atlantic City Library International Night Series.

Since forming in 2005, Niyaz, which means "yearning" in Persian and Urdu, has toured the world, including shows throughout North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The band borrows from a historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets setting verse to music. *The Huffington Post* declared the band to be "an evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music."

Multicultural Sounds: Ojos De Brujo And Niyaz Draw From Middle-Eastern, Indian, Latin Influences

Posted by **VIVIAN HUA** July 29, 2012 **0 COMMENTS AND 0 REACTIONS**

Multicultural Sounds travels the world for contemporary reinventions of cultural staples. Spain's Grammy-winning **Ojos De Brujo** tackle every genre under the sun in their remix album, and Montreal/Los Angeles by-way-of Iran's **Niyaz** talk humanitarian ideas on their latest, *Sumud*.

Niyaz

Niyaz (نیاز), meaning “yearning” in Persian and Urdu, is an Iranian musical trio now based in Montreal and Los Angeles. Middle Eastern roots proliferate here, not only in ecstasy on the instrumental front, but on the thematic front as well. The trio's lyrical inspiration for their third album, *Sumud*, was affected by touring conflict-strewn areas in the Middle East.

Describes Ali, “We've performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.”

More on this band to come, but first, enjoy the music video from their album single, “Parishaan”, directed by Johnny Ranger. The MP3 can be downloaded on their Bandcamp [HERE](#).

Art and Culture Maven - <http://www.artandculturemaven.com/>

Niyaz New Single & US Live Dates in August 2012

from a media release:

Niyaz Releases New Music Video For “Parishaan” Off Their Critically Acclaimed New Album Sumud

Still time to catch their US Tour on the West Coast to August 4 to 11 2012

Montreal/Los Angeles-based Niyaz have recently released their third album, Sumud (pronounced soomood) and they are bringing it on tour to the United States this summer. The album has already debuted at #1 on the iTunes World Chart and broke into the top 10 Billboard World Music Chart as well. The band will be kicking off their US tour on July 22nd in NYC then off to Atlantic City, Eugene, Los Angeles, Irvine, San Francisco, and Seattle. Full tour dates below.



Niyaz, which means ‘yearning’ in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by Azam Ali, multi-instrumentalist Loga Ramin Torkian and two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician Carmen Rizzo. The trio borrows from an historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets setting verse to music, while exploring the music and identity of Iranians living in exile and struggling to maintain their cultural identity in the modern world.

Their new album, Sumud (out now on Six Degrees Records) expands on that theme, while adding their new experiences and worldviews learned during their heavy touring through the Middle East in the past seven years. ‘We have now travelled across the world, and those experiences have affected the journey that we are on and the direction we’ve taken on this album,’ Ali says from her new home in Montreal. ‘We’ve performed in the Kurdish parts of Turkey during times of major conflicts, as well as other parts of the Middle East. Obviously that has affected this project. We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity. It started from us wanting to tell our story, and it has evolved into this humanitarian social message, embracing regions around Iran.’

In its short history, Niyaz has garnered an incredible amount of media attention, including features on NPR and PRI, with the Huffington Post declaring the band to be ‘an evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music.’ Their second album, Nine Heavens, topped both the iTunes World and CMJ World Music charts, while a number of songs from the two-disc set found their way onto

television and the big screen. Tireless performers, Niyaz continues to tour internationally, while each member has released at least one solo album since Nine Heavens' 2008 release.

In an age where conflict regions are tearing up areas of the Middle East, as well as completely fracturing the understanding of Arabic culture in America, Niyaz is presenting the most groundbreaking marriage of ancient, ecstatic verse with 21st-century dancefloor kinetics. Their music applies to every global citizen, however, not only those with Persian blood flowing in their veins. As Rizzo explains, the human element is deep at work here.

Niyaz US Tour Dates:

Sat 8/4/12 @ Grand Performances (Free Concert) - Los Angeles, CA

Sun 8/5/12 @ Yoshis - San Francisco, CA

Thu 8/9/12 @ Orange County Great Park - Irvine, CA

Sat 8/11/12 @ KPCenter - Seattle, WA

KPFFK - <http://www.kpffk.org/>

Global Village Mondays with Derek Rath – Playlist for 7/30/12

Monday, 30 July 2012 12:08 Tatiana Zaza [Global Village Mondays with Derek Rath](#)


Global Village Mondays with Derek Rath – Playlist for 7/30/12

*LIVE, in-studio today with Carmen Rizzo of NIYAZ

Artist -----Track----- Album

1. Modern Jazz Quartet, "Bags' Groove," [Jazz Classics](#)
2. Angelique Kidjo, "Summertime," [The Best of Angelique Kidjo](#)
3. Lokkhi Terra, "Tumi Eshechile Porshu," [Che Guava's Rickshaw Diaries](#)
4. Flavia Coelho, "Bossa Muffin (O Viajante)," [Bossa Muffin](#)
5. Aurelio Martinez w Youssou N'Dour, "Labaru Wanwa," [United in Song](#)
6. Hidden Orchestra, "Spoken," [Archipelago](#)
7. Cheikha Remitti, "Guendouzi Mama," [Agent du Monde Presents The Marrakesh Mission](#)
8. Mashti & Bahramiji, "Indusufi," [NAMASTE Ibiza Selection Vol. 1](#)
9. Osali Mabe, "Staff Benda Bilili," [Make the World Shake](#)
10. Andra Kouyate & Seke Chi, "N'Goke," [Saro](#)
11. Toumani Diabate's Symmetric Orchestra, "Tapha Niang," [Boulevard de l'Independence](#)
12. Dead Can Dance, "Sacrifice," [Duality](#)
13. Grey Reverend, "Regen," [The Cinematic Orchestra Presents: In Motion #1](#)
14. LIVE in-studio with Carmen Rizzo of NIYAZ
15. Ekova, "The Chase," [Space Lullabies...and other fantasmagore](#)
16. Niyaz, "Parishaan," [Sumud](#)
17. Niyaz, "Dertli," [Sumud](#)
18. Niyaz, "Mazaar," [Sumud](#)
19. Niyaz, "In The Shadow of Life," [Niyaz](#)
20. Niyaz, "Sosin," [Sumud](#)

MSN - <http://music.msn.com/>

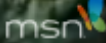

 **ENTERTAINMENT**

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Music Video





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Music Video by Niyaz performing Parishaan / Six Degrees Records
Date: 7/31/12 Views: 632
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KPCC - <http://www.scpr.org/>

With 'Sumud,' Niyaz is at home with a rich array of music and hopes for peace amid conflict

Steve Hochman | August 1st, 2012, 5:42pm



Laura Arwen Berg

Home is a complicated issue for Azam Ali. And despite that fact that until a couple years ago she'd lived in Los Angeles for a quarter of a century, she does not look at the concert she'll be doing as part of the trio [Niyaz](#) on Saturday in the California Plaza's [Grand Performances](#) series as a homecoming.

Montreal, where she and life/musical partner Loga Ramin Torkian have settled with their young son, is home, she says. Life in L.A. (where the Iranian native was brought as a young girl after a time living in India) was too full of "stress and chaos" for her as she came of age, found her artistic voice and attempted to build a full life.

But she's still very much looking forward to her return.

"The best part, I look forward to seeing people," she says, her voice lightening and mood brightening. "Family, friends, people I really miss. That's the part I'm really looking forward to."

Those people were always the peace amid the turmoil here. And that notion, to some extent, is the thread running through *Sumud*, the new, third album by Niyaz, the trio of Iranian-born singer Ali, Torkian (also born in Iran and a master of a wide array of instruments both

traditional and modern) and L.A.-based electronics and percussion specialist Carmen Rizzo. The album draws on sounds and guest artists from throughout the Middle East and South Asian regions, and throughout centuries of vibrant culture.

“I am a huge believer in having a concept, a story for each album,” she says. “So the idea of *sumud* was just perfect, in many ways became an extension of where my solo album [2011’s *From the Night*] was from, which was lullabies from the Middle East and areas that are tumultuous politically and socially.”

But where that one was inspired by her motherhood, *Samud* — an Arabic word which translates as “steadfastness” — was inspired by her mother. In the moving liner notes she talks of the courage of the woman who “gave up her life, her country, her entire family, and started all over in a new country with absolutely nothing but a young daughter, all because she did not believe in the way of life that was being forced upon us by the religious party coming into power in Iran.”

It’s an act which “not only shaped my entire life, but it taught me about the resilience of the human spirit, about the power of our actions and how a simple act of personal bravery can create change.”

It’s that light that Niyaz shines on what they see as the same kind of steadfastness and bravery rising in today in the region where Ali and Torkian were born.

“We felt it would be important to show that side, that there is something taking root in the worst parts of the Middle East,” she says, singling out a non-violence movement growing in the harsh conditions of Palestine. “Something beautiful can emerge like that, just like the lotus coming out of the mud. Granted, it will take a long time to grow, but in the darkest of the Middle East people are embracing this non-violence. It’s very comforting.”

The concept was played out both in the material chosen for the album and the musicians asked to join the trio for the sessions.

“It lent itself so well to all the other ethnic and religious minority groups we wanted to include in the project,” she says.

Arguably, the centerpiece is “Rayat al Sumud,” written for the project by long-time friend, our player Naser Musa.

“He’s a Christian Palestinian, the gentlest person I know,” Ali says. “When I said we were doing this on the ideology of *sumud*, he said, ‘I’ll write a song.’ And he wrote a beautiful song.” Musa has joined the group for its U.S. tour, and the L.A. show will also feature [Tanya Evanson](#), a whirling Dervish dancer who lives in Vancouver and has been friends with Niyaz since they appeared at the same event in Germany a few years ago.

They also recruited Turkish musician Ulas Ozdemir to write a song from the poetry of Ashik Dertli, while also bringing in percussionist Omer Avci to represent Turkish Kurd music.

Throughout, the traditional sounds blend with Rizzo's subtle modern electronics, arguably even more integrated than on the trio's last album, 2008's *Nine Heavens*, which featured one disc of the full arrangements and a second with just the original, pre-electronics acoustic tracks. (A second, stripped-down version of *Sumudis* planned for later release.)

And threading through the album are several songs Ali and Torkian composed to the words of 11th century Iranian poet Baba Taher. In the opening song, "Parishaan," they blend the poetry with an adaptation of a traditional song from Iran's Khorasan region.

"It's difficult to translate poetry from any language, but it's a song about divine love," she says. "A lot of Sufi poetry is, even though he was not a Sufi poet. He sang about love, that kind where you don't know if it's divine love or love for another person. That's what it's about."

Sounds like home.

IN THE MIX



Niyaz

7 p.m. Sunday. \$26-\$28.

The group's contemporary world music blends Sufi mystical poetry and folk songs from the Middle East with masterful acoustic instrumentation and modern electronics. Its new album, "Sumud," is on Six Degrees Records. [Yoshi's, 1330 Fillmore St., S.F. (415) 655-5600, www.yoshis.com]

OC Register - <http://www.ocregister.com/>

Iranian trio Niyaz plays O.C. Great Park

Thursday's show is part of the Flights and Sounds concert series taking place all month.

By ILYSE LIFFREING / THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

The Orange County Great Park's eclectic Flights and Sounds concert series continues Thursday with a performance by the Iranian music trio Niyaz.

Niyaz, whose name means yearning in Persian and Udu, is touring behind the release of "Sumud," the third album the group has released since coming onto the scene in 2005.



Niyaz will perform at the Orange County Great Park on Thursday.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Niyaz

Where: Palm Court Arts Complex, Orange County Great Park, Sand Canyon Road and Marine Way, Irvine

When: 8:15 p.m. Thursday

How much: Admission free, parking \$10

Call: 866-829-3829

Online: www.ocgp.org

The new album expands the group's interesting and unique approach through the historic lineage of Middle Eastern poets creating verse with music while exploring the music and identity of Iranians living in exile and struggling to maintain their own cultural identity in the modern world.

While Niyaz makes its obvious political and cultural statements through music, the popularity of the group tends to transcend its own origins. The new album debuted at No. 1 on the iTunes World Chart and broke into the top 10 of the Billboard World Music Chart as well. The group has enjoyed features on NPR and PRI, while the Huffington Post has been quoted as saying the band is an "evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music."

The world tour that began July 22 in New York City, reflects a total of seven years of touring throughout the Middle East and the affects that has had on its music.

"We wanted to focus on the ethnic and religious minority groups in these regions, because they have really struggled to maintain their identity," said Carmen Rizzo, the two-time Grammy nominated producer and electronic musician for Niyaz.

Monday, August 27, 2012

Niyaz Mixes Traditional With Modern



Niyaz, which means yearning in Persian and Urdu, was formed in 2005 by Ali, Loga, and Carmen. Together the band takes its cue from historic influences within Middle Eastern culture, from poets and music, while exploring the sounds that make them up and then modernize it into something that's globally aware while remaining exploratory. Their third album Sumud is a beautiful mixture of just that; it's a stunningly gorgeous ancient sounding recording that's thoroughly modern in it's approach and construction.

Using struggle as a launching point the band explores the steadfastness and resilience of peoples who have been put into situations simply because of religion or ethnicity. While I have no idea what's being sung you get the sense of resiliency built into each song and although it's awash in stunning vocals and instrumentation the message remains. Sumud is an awesome record that finds source material through the Middle East region and latches onto the struggle for those minority groups to maintain their identity. The struggle doesn't sound downtrodden but brimming with beauty and positivity and that pressing on is the only way and that's what Niyaz conveys and plays throughout Sumud.

Minimal by nature and nearly ambient at times the record is sparse and fascinating. With instrumentation coming from a feast of traditional instruments including Kamaan, Robab, Santour, Lafta, Viol listening to Sumud is like listening to to a Blue Planet guide to the Middle East. It's filled with adventure, mysteries, and things that provoke your mind. Sumud is a great record and the thought and musicianship that has gone into this truly reflects upon Niyaz as being one of the most important bands playing traditionally influenced Middle Eastern music outside of the region. Truly something every citizen of the world should own.

Top 30 World Albums of 2012

by **RACHEL DEVITT**

This has been such a fascinating, if slightly discombobulated, year in global music, hasn't it? Unlike some years, where a dominant theme (Gypsy punk! Neo-psychedelica! Desert blues!) has emerged, 2012 was marked more by several mini-themes than one overarching narrative. Let's break them down, shall we?

Mini-Theme 1: Neo-Trad Experimentation

Artists around the globe got very interested in musical roots this year, but not in some kind of dusty,



Pungwe
Chimurenga
Renaissance



Batida
Batida



Folila
Amadou &
Mariam



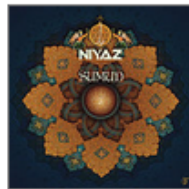
Traveller
Anoushka
Shankar



Karimba
Novalima



Soul Is Heavy
Nneka



Sumud
Niyaz



World
Psychedelic
Classics 4:
Nobody Can
Live Forever: The



MTMTMK
The Very Best



Fatou
Fatoumata
Diawara