

# THE FAMOUS ELSEWHERE WORLD MUSIC QUESTIONNAIRE: Ghada Shbeir

Graham Reid | Nov 20, 2017 | 2 min read

## Ya Nadimi



The arc around the Mediterranean we loosely refer to as “the Middle East” boasts some astonishing voices, not the least that of Lebanese singer Ghada Shbeir whose yearning sound conveys the passions and tragedies of that region.

School in many Arabic traditions as well as the sounds of Andalusian-Arabic songs and ancient chants, she brings a formidable personal history to the classical and folk music of that often unstable but always interesting arc at what was once the centre of the known world.

She is coming to next yea's Womad in Tranaki (details below) so it is very timely to put a questionnaire her way . . .

### **The first musician whose music really affected you was**

Mrs Imane Homsy. I was actually affected by her efforts.

### **Your first appearance on stage before an audience was . . . (And you were how old?)**

I was eleven years old.

**If music was denied you, your other career choice would be . . .**

I would have loved to be a lawyer.

**The three songs (yours, or by others) you would love everyone to hear because they are so emotionally moving are . . .**

Mine: Li habiboun & Rouhan

Abdel Wahab: Ya garat al wady

**The most unusual place you have performed would be . . .?**

“Theatre Des Abbesses” in Paris because while I was performing there was no light in the theatre and I was singing a capella, so I felt like I was singing alone and couldn’t get the interaction of the audience.

**The most important book you have read is . . .? And why?**

“Fan al ilqa” for Abdel wareth ‘athar and “Pronunciation for Al Farabi”. I learned through these two books that pronunciation is the major thing in singing.

**If you could get on stage with anyone it would be . . . (And you would play?)**

Andréa Bocelli. We would perform a duo; a mix in Arabic and Italian.

**The three films you'd like anybody watch because they might understand you better are . . .**

I’m not really into films, but I like historical films and films about investigations.

**The last CD, vinyl album or download you bought was . . .**

I have been downloading and listening to Karem Mahmoud’s songs lately.

**When you travel, what is it you most miss about your home country?**

I miss the vivid life found in my country. It is true that it is sort of chaotic in my country but for me it’s an organised chaos that I like and I miss when being abroad.

**The artist you most admire would be . . .**

I admire a lot of artists such as: Asmahan, Najat Ali, Feyrouz, Mary Gebran, Wadih El Safi, etc.

**Your favourite meal to share with friends would be . . .? (Care to share a simple recipe?)**

I like Lebanese food in general.

**Do you practice every day, and if so for how long?**

I practice every day all day long as I teach music.

**David Bowie sang, “Five years, that's all we've got . . .” If that were true, you would spend them where, doing . . .?**

I would quit my job as an instructor and I would record the Syriac Chants and compose music and chants besides spending more time with my family.

**And finally, do you have any unrealised goals in music?**

Recording my research in Syriac chants and printing my books.

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