

REVIVAL

Artists emerge from ruins of Mosul to reclaim Iraqi city's cultural life

It has been a year since Mosul was liberated from IS, now Iraqis are starting to celebrate life's simple pleasures like music and reading. Under Islamic State rule, arts and culture suffered intensely, only now Mosul's cultural life is starting to thrive again



CLASSIC

The irreplaceable



Ziad Rahbani

Arabiyonana | Beirut

As the 1970s ushered in a new era with an influx of talent, Lebanon would greatly benefit from names who carried the art form during the toughest of times. Joseph Sakr, with his distinctive voice and charisma oozing from every pore, personified the changing landscape with longtime friend and collaborator Ziad Rahbani.

While the latter is heaped with praise for his genius work, Sakr has gone underappreciated as the driving force behind the most memorable masterpieces.

Joseph Sakr started his musical career with Al-Firqa Al-Ishabiya Al-Lubnaniya, invented by the Rahbani Brothers in the '60s. He joined the choir to accompany Fairuz in many of her performances while also taking on minor acting roles. Her son Ziad Rahbani was a pianist at the time with dreams of developing his own plays, and he instantly developed chemistry

with Sakr.

It wasn't long before their first play Sahriye debuted in 1973. From a French teacher to an overnight star, Sakr left the school in mid-year to embark on his newest journey as Nakhle Al-Taneen.

When Nakhle Al-Taneen was recruiting a new talent in the play, his stardom was threatened by one particular name, and the battle of "Ahhh" that ensued is iconic:

Long gone were the days of background singing as he joined Fairuz in two supporting roles in Loulou (1974) and Mais El-Reem (1975). With his indisputable talent, Joseph Sakr became an instrumental presence to assist Ziad in carrying the Rahbani legacy for years to come. He starred in Nazl El Sourour where he shone in the role of Barakat, carrying the majority of musical workload in the play.

While Fairuz shied away from Ziad's contentious lyrics, Sakr tackled those tracks in



Joseph Sakr