TODAY IN HISTORY

Uthman ibn Affan, companion of Muhammad, appointed 3rd Caliph of Islam

During St. Lucia's Flood in Northwest Netherlands the Zuiderzee seawall collapses with loss of over 50,000 lives



Princess Mary Stuart succeeds her father James V and becomes Queen Mary I of Scotland at 6 days old

Norwegian Roald Amundsen's expedition is the 1st to each the South Pole

Reuters | Mosul, Iraq

did when Mosul was liberated from Is- musicians. lamic State last year was breathe a sigh of relief.

The militants who seized the city in 2014 had targeted artists like himself so when neighbours said they were hunting for him, he left home, called his wife to say he was likely to die and took to sleeping in a different place each night.

The next thing he did was recover his beloved violin and his oud, similar to a lute, from where he had hidden them in the frame of his bed.

He said he hugged and kissed them "like they were my own children," and played amid the ruins "a song ... for Mosul."

In October, Badri and other musicians and activists attended the first orchestral concert in the northern Iraqi city since the militants were defeated more than a year ago by Iraqi and Kurdish forces and a coalition led by the United States.

Thousands died in that battle or fled the city, large parts of which was reduced to rubble.

The musicians played in a park where the militants once trained child soldiers and the music, a mixture of Western and Iraqi classical, wafted along the banks of the Tigris River.

"Music is my life. It's amazing to hear it in Mosul again," he said. The concert was conceived



Karim Wasfi leads the Peace Through Arts Farabi Orchestra during a concert in Mosul

by Karim Wasfi, former director of the Baghdad Orchestra, whose visiting Peace Through he first thing musician Fadhel al-Badri Arts Farabi Orchestra played alongside local

Mosul was long celebrated as a centre of Iraqi culture but that life was suppressed even before Islamic State declared its caliphate in 2014. Al Qaeda targeted musicians in the wake of a U.S.led invasion in 2003 and no one could remember when they last heard live music in Mosul.

Islamic State continued that crackdown, blowing up statues and monuments, said Ali al-Baroodi, a Mosul University professor and photographer.

"We continued to consume culture in secret: we would listen to music, trade books, films, music. That never stopped even though it was dangerous," he said.

Baroodi and Badri belong to a community of artists and activists who have defied fears of fresh attacks to hold weekly book markets and community has also painted murals around the city in a bid to reclaim public spaces.

Rich history

Last year, he helped launch an international book drive to replenish the million books that that housed rare manuscripts including govern-Islamic State torched at the university library, one of the most important in the region.

"Mosul lost its identity, lost its features, lost thousands of its people with many more still under the rubble," he said. "These efforts aren't us hope."

One new cultural centre is the vibrant Qan- makeshift shelves. tara cultural cafe. It opened in east Mosul in well-stocked bookshop and hosts readings and workshops. In addition, musicians including Badri have performed there.

Its walls show paintings and photographs of ment repair efforts had stalled. Mosul's rich history and its recent devastation. One wall depicts the crimes of IS, displaying a said a library employee. "We can't just rebuild yellow jumpsuit worn by detainees as well as bridges and roads, we have to rebuild minds."

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photography exhibitions. In a bold move, that Ban Chakib plays the piano with Karim Wasfi, conductor of the Peace Through Arts Farabi Orchestra, during a concert

handcuffs.

Not every cultural institution in Mosul is seeing rebirth.

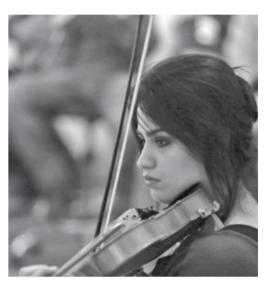
The central public library, a research centre ment records dating back to the Ottoman era, was the only one to survive Islamic State intact, even though it was used as a base.

Librarians hid the most precious texts but 20,000 books were dumped in the basement. going to fix everything overnight but it gives After East Mosul was liberated, librarians salvaged what they could and stacked books on

But with no windows and holes in its ceiling, March, welcomes men and women, boasts a the library remains closed. Its halls, once filled with student researchers, are now caked in dust.

Library head Jamal Ahmed said funds had been set aside to repair the library, but govern-

"This library is an important cultural home,"



Hadeer Saad plays the violin with Karim Wasfi, conductor of the Peace Through Arts Farabi Orchestra, in Mosul



Items related of Islamic State militants are seen displayed on the wall of Qantara Culture Cafe in Mosul, Iraq

e great who voiced a generation



durinf a recording

ways that only he could. She was a noted some of their work, including an appearance ways that only he could. She was a noted in her earlier plays.

ies was a distinguishable persona and vocal in her earlier plays. flair that resonated with listeners of all ages. He gladly experimented with ad-libs that ies was a distinguishable persona and vocal added lively energy to the songs, morphing flair that resonated with listeners of all ages. into trademarks that illustrated his image.

singing as he joined Fairuz in two support- into trademarks that perfectly illustrated ing roles in Loulou (1974) and Mais El-Reem his image. (1975). With his indisputable talent, Joseph Sakr became an instrumental presence to associate, opting to only release songs comassist Ziad in carrying the Rahbani legacy posed by Ziad Rahbani. He turned down for years to come. He starred in Nazl El Sou- several offers in the '90s and remained mostly on his songs without having seen his image, rour where he shone in the role of Barakat, out of the spotlight until the release of his they are still able to immediately recognize carrying the majority of musical workload final album "Bema Enno" in 1995. in the play.

While Fairuz shied away from Ziad's con- from his family and a country that needed What set Sakr apart from his contemporar- moment for the man who merely had a role

What set Sakr apart from his contemporar-Long gone were the days of background added lively energy to the songs, morphing

Joseph Sakr remained loyal to his closest

At 55 years old, Sakr was taken too early

fan of the duo and would request to perform tentious lyrics, Sakr tackled those tracks in his voice. In 1997, New Year day celebrations were cut short in some Lebanese households at Beiteddine Festival. It was a crowning fan of the duo and would request to perform upon hearing the news of Joseph Sakr's sudmoment for the man who merely had a role some of their work, including an appearance den death, which coincidentally fell on Ziad at Beiteddine Festival. It was a crowning Rahbani's birthday. While Ziad had been the mastermind behind all the classics, it was Sakr who steered the wheel to deliver his messages in a captivating way.

> The greatest testimony came from Ziad Rahbani who admitted that nothing had af-He gladly experimented with ad-libs that fected his artistry more than the absence of the irreplaceable Joseph Sakr.

With the 21st anniversary of his death coming up, a new website is set to launch containing an archive of songs, videos and photos, according to his son Raji Sakr. And while most of the younger generations have been raised his mellifluous voice ringing through parties and various events.

Joseph Sakr personified the changing landscape of musin during the 1970 with longtime friend and collaborator Ziad Rahbani

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