

**Huda Asfour** is a performer, composer and engineer who has worked, studied, and collaborated with artists in Tunisia, Gaza, Ramallah, Egypt, Lebanon and the United States. Huda's formal training in music began in Tunis at the age of 13, though her musical origins began much earlier, among a family of musicians. In 1996, she joined the National Conservatory of Music in Gaza and later, in Ramallah she was mentored by Khaled Jubran at the Edward Said Music Conservatory. In 2002, Huda joined Al Urmawi Center for Mashriq Music. As part of her tenure at Al Urmawi, Huda attended multiple workshops for young musicians covering the fundamentals of Irani and Indian music as it relates to Maqam. Huda also trained under the famous Qanoun player Said Rajab in Cairo, Egypt. In 2004, Huda, together with Tamer Abu Ghazaleh, co-founded Jehar band, a musical experiment which molded Arabic folk and the classical Levantine Arabic repertoire from their traditional presentations into reinterpretations that would be relatable to young Palestinians emerging from the siege of the Second Intifada.

Huda's debut release 'Mars, Back and Forth' (2009) is another progressive experimentation and reinterpretation of familiar Arabic styles alongside a compelling push for the inter-stellar home, self, and futurism. Mars features Kinan Azmeh (clarinet), John Hadfield (percussion), Kris Funn (contrabass) and Nadim Khoury (buzuq). For Huda, Mars was her "search for home and for identity: a trip to a world without borders, undefined by labels and boundaries. The god of war, that shaped [her] early years, from the mountains of Lebanon where [she] was born during the Israeli invasion, to the early years of the Second Intifada (uprising) in Ramallah."

Huda is the recipient of the 2009 Production Cultural Program by Al Mawred Al Thaqafi and the 2014 music production grant from the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture. The latter funded the recording of Asfour's second album, "Kouni", which is scheduled for release on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

"Kouni" (Be), Huda's second studio album, is a work that resists categorization. It's an album that thrives on the contradictions, complexity, and complementarity of Huda's identity and her musical and life experiences. Huda is a storyteller, and every song in this album tells the story of the musical genres that have come to shape Huda's personality and musical influences. In Kouni you will listen to reinterpretations of folk songs from Iraq and Tunisia, a reinterpretation of a song by her Aunt Salwa Jarrah, of a poem by Palestinian icon Mahmoud Darwish. You will also hear original compositions that are a study of love that transcends imposed definitions, borders, and bodies. Huda also blends vocals with classical and jazz-inspired string and brass arrangements, and rhythms from a broad range of styles that marry the nostalgic with the experimental, the rebellious with the subtle

Since the release of Mars, Huda has published a 15-minute original film score for the short film 'Blue Dive' by the Egyptian film maker Mostafa Youssef. In collaboration with Sri Lankan American poet, Gowri Koneswaran, Huda has premiered the multimedia performance 'Yasmneen', featuring the Syrian flamenco dancer Wathec Sleiman and Canadian tap dancer Melissa Frakman, in Washington DC. More recently she also

recorded an improvisational album with the group DUNUM.

Huda is also a co-founder of the DC Palestinian Film and Arts Festival ([dcpfaf.org](http://dcpfaf.org)), a volunteer run 501C3 organization and was its managing director for the 2016 cycle.

In addition to her work as a musician, Huda is an educator and conducts biomedical engineering research in the department of pharmacology and physiology the George Washington University.