

**Trent: Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. The rabab and the music you make with it are simply fascinating. Can you tell a little bit about your background?**

Kevin: Kevin Qais Essar, rabab player and producer

Born Qais Essar to Afghan refugees here in the states, I was immersed in Afghan culture at a very young age, and when I had reached an appropriate age, began to train under various teachers and masters, both eastern and western, to gain a deep proficiency of music in general... it was much later that I realized that the Rabab, much like other aspects in others' lives, was a calling for me, and that through the rabab, I could be an ambassador for afghan culture, and traditional afghan classical music, which has in the years following the mass exodus of the 80's, has gone astray. It has become my lifes work to represent my ancestral heritage as it is, and to bring this beautiful instrument into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Trent: How did you become interested in the rabab?**

Kevin: I have always held that the rabab chose me...

**Trent: Can you describe your involvement with the *Words in the Dust* audiobook?**

Kevin: I had received a call from a dear friend that led me over to Paul Gagne at Scholastic Publishing, where we talked to about the piece of for a couple days, I then suggested to Paul that Ariana Delawari do the narration. I had been familiar with Ariana Delawari the wonderful musician, but had also heard that she did acting, so I thought she would be a good fit.

**Trent: How did you decide on the composition for the music? What sort of response were you interested in creating? Was there any aspect of *Words in the Dust* you were trying to invoke with your music?**

Kevin: Having been filled in on the story that had been told, myself and Paul were playing with the word "tender"... thus I wanted to create something very tender, at the same time something distinctly afghan. Hence, the rearrangement of a very old folk song, that now carries a twinge of melancholy for the afghan diaspora around the world, and yet very open to a new interpretation... the story itself has very soft, sensitive moments that I wanted to convey in the piece itself.

**Trent: How can musicians get involved with the rabab?**

Kevin: The instrument itself nowadays is so rare, but there are many avenues that, if one is serious enough, can take to to become involved with the instrument. I would start with listening at first... Ustad Mohammad Omar is a good start...

**Trent: Learn more about Kevin Qais Essar, his music, and the rabab at [www.therabab.com](http://www.therabab.com)**