

İki Cihan Arasında / Between Two Worlds: An Ottoman Musical Tapestry

Brown Hall, New England Conservatory, Monday, March 28, 2011

directed by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol and Robert Labaree

DÜNYA Ensemble

Robert Labaree *çeng/voice/percussion*, Panayotis League *kemençe/percussion/voice*,
Cem Mutlu *percussion/voice*, Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol *voice/ud/saz/ney/mey/zurna*,
Tev Stevig *tanbur/saz/guitar/voice*, Thomas Zajak *santur/sackbut/miskal/voice*

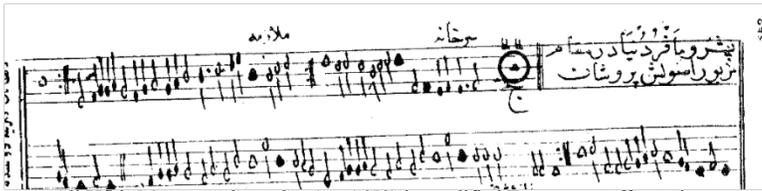
*Calabım bir şar yaratmış
İki cihan aresinde
Bakıcak didar görünüür
Ol şarın kenaresinde*

My Lord has created a city
In between two worlds.
One sees the beloved if one looks
At the edge of that city.

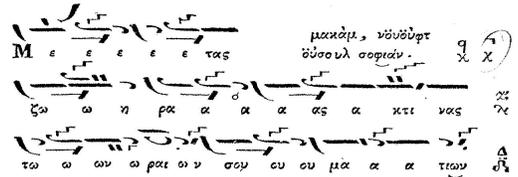
*Nagihan ol şare vardım
Anı ben yapılır gördüm
Ben dahı bile yapıldım
Taş ü toprak aresinde*

I came upon that city
And saw it being built.
I too was built with it
Amidst stone and earth

Hacı Bayram Veli (d. 1429-30) Translated by Cemal Kafadar



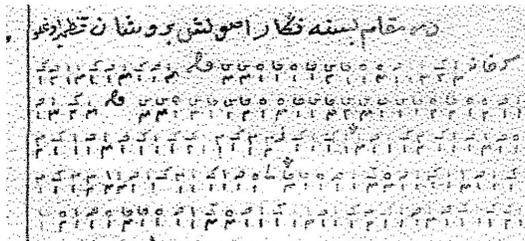
Ali Ufki, *Meemûa-i Sâz ü Söz* (ca. 1650) in modified European staff notation



Evterpi (1830), Turkish classical music in Byzantine notation

The idea that humans pass their lives in more than one world is not new to the thinking of religious mystics and poets like the 15th century Turkish Sufi quoted here. Hacı Bayram Veli wrote the words which were the inspiration for the book on Ottoman history written in 1996 by Dr. Cemal Kafadar, Vehbi Koç Professor of Turkish Studies at Harvard. We in turn have taken the visionary perspectives of both the book and the poetry as the inspiration for this concert and applied them to the multiple strands of the Ottoman musical tapestry.

Five suites of pieces make up our program, each suite featuring a particular repertoire composed and/or inspired by a traditional genre performed around the capital of the Ottoman Turks (present day Istanbul), who ruled the diverse region surrounding the Mediterranean between the 14th and 20th centuries. The goal here is to take brief plunges into a few of the separate streams of Ottoman music-making, including the religious and the secular, the courtly and the folk, the new, the forgotten and the familiar. Each of these streams represents a distinct community of belief and language which was carefully segregated by region and city neighborhood under its own administration by the Ottoman sultans. However, over the centuries, each of these communities also acquired a hyphenated identity—Ottoman-Turkish, Ottoman-Jewish and Ottoman-Greek—which reveals how much they interacted. Throughout this program, the musical idiom reappearing in all five suites is Ottoman Turkish *makam* and *usul*, the melodic and rhythmic systems which these various communities synthesized together out of practices brought from Central Asia and combined with those inherited from the Arabs, Greeks and Persians.



Dimitrie Cantemir, *Kitâbu 'İlmi'l-Mûsiki alâ Vechi'l-Hurûfât* (early 18th c.), one of Cantemir's Turkish music compositions written in his own notation

צב
לחן נילן ניונגול סכרי איילי • תודקי סוסאיני
ישע אלהית חיל • לב סולר בחיל • לב סולר בחיל : קו
פי עור אלהי עליון • יטה עליון • יטה עליון : קו
לב נשבר ונרפא • פרות אל חכה • לב עשוק ורצון • עודת שוב לשושן
עודת שוב לשושן • פאו בשמחת וחרות וישועת אל חי : לב
שמח לבב אומלל • פמוצא שלל • פמוצא שלל • רב :
ושמחת את כל עיצבך • כי אל את ריבך • פי אל את ריבך • רב : לב

A Hebrew devotional poem (*piyyut*), *Yesha El Hay Tohil Lev* with directions that it be sung to the tune of a poem by a Turkish Sufi, Pir Sultan Abdal.

PROGRAM

I. A suite of Ottoman court music from the 17th Century

A *fasıl*, a suite of instrumental pieces and vocals, drawn exclusively from 17th and 18th c. manuscript sources by Ali Ufki (1610-75) and Dimitri Cantemir (1673-1723). Two extended vocal pieces, one with secular words in Ottoman Turkish and one with sacred words in Hebrew, are framed by an instrumental prelude (*pişrev* or *peşrev*) and a postlude (*semai*). A mix of sacred and secular texts is not normal in *fasıl*, but we have chosen to include an example from the extensive Jewish *maftirim* repertoire, which consisted of Hebrew poetry set to classical and religious instrumental and vocal pieces by Ottoman composers some of whom were Sufi dervishes.

Pişrev-i makru dünya (instrumental prelude) [usul: 16/8, 3-3-2-2-2-2-2] Music: Anonymous

Irak Murabba (courtly secular song in Ottoman Turkish) [usul: 12/4] Text and Music: Anonymous

<i>Bir dilber-i rananıñ divanesi oldum ben</i>	I became a fool for a beautiful woman
<i>İçdim aşk şarabını mestanesi oldum ben</i>	I became inoxicated by the wine of love
<i>Firkat beni yandırdı kül etdi vücudum heb</i>	Separation has burned me and turned my body into ashes
<i>Şem-i şeb-i hicranın pervanesi oldum ben</i>	I became a moth to the candle darkness of sorrow

Ani Be-Rov Hasdekha [usul: 16/4, 3-3-2-2-2-2-2] Text: Aharon Hamon (d. 1721)

Music: *Bestenigar peşrev* by Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723)

The text of this piece is an 18th c. *piyyut* (a sacred poem in Hebrew) by Aharon Hamon who claimed that he composed it to the melody of an instrumental prelude by the Ottoman composer Dimitrie Cantemir, to be sung (without instruments) in the synagogue. For this performance, an excerpt of Aharon's poem was adapted to one section of Cantemir's *peşrev* by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol.

Ani berov hasdekha e'erokh levadakh / kol drakhai negdekha sameah nefesh avdakh
I, for all your grace, shall set only for you / all my deeds, happy is the soul of your servant

Irak Semai (instrumental postlude) [usul: 6/8] Music: Anonymous

II. A Suite of New Polyphonic Compositions and Improvisations

Suite Two consists entirely of new polyphonic explorations of the Ottoman musical system, which has historically developed on melodic, not harmonic, lines. Two new compositions for voice and instruments by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (NEC DMA '04) frame an extended group improvisation which also adds Byzantine music into the mix.

A Canon in Kürdilihicazkar Makam for sackbut and voice Music: Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (b. 1974)

A new polyphonic composition for voice and sackbut, a small trombone widely used in the European Renaissance.

Perde kaldırma (modulatory improvisation) and ***Christos Anesti***

This section opens with a series of free rhythm improvisations (*taksim*) modulating through different makams over a sequence of rhythmic cycles in 7, 6, 4 and 2. At the climax we hear the melody of the Greek Orthodox hymn *Christos Anesti* (Christ is risen), super-imposed over an instrumental ostinato. This hymn proclaims the Resurrection of Christ and is beloved by Greeks. The tune was written down by Petros the Peloponnesian (c. 1730-1778) and arranged further by Photios Ketsetzis (b. 1945).

Merhaba Text from the 3rd section of the *Mevlid-i Şerif* by Süleyman Çelebi (1351-1422)

Music: Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (b. 1974)

A new polyphonic composition for two voices, kemençe and sackbut in imitative counterpoint on an excerpt from a famous 15th century Turkish poem commemorating the birth of the Prophet Mohammed.

<i>Yaradılmış cümle oldu şadüman</i>	All of creation rejoiced
<i>Gam gidip alem yeniden buldu can</i>	As grief departed and the world found life again
<i>Cümle zerrat-i cihan edip seda</i>	As all the world's particles exclaimed
<i>Çağrışuben dediler kim merhaba</i>	Those who called out gave their greetings
<i>Merhaba ey âl-i sultan merhaba</i>	Greetings, greetings to the sultan of the worlds!
<i>Merhaba ey kan-i irfan merhaba</i>	Greetings to the enlightened one!

III. A Folk Suite from the 17th Century

This set, composed entirely of pieces transcribed from Ali Ufki's 17th c. manuscript collection, takes the form of a *köçekçe* or *tavşanca* as a model. These suites were composed of lively folk pieces accompanying the professional troupes of dancing boys called *köçek* or *tavşan*. Even though our suite groups not only dance music pieces but diverse examples of urban folk music from this century (including janissary music) the *köçekçe* still proved to be the ideal model. Our instrumentation is modeled after those pictured in the famous miniatures of Ottoman life in the *Surname* by the 18th c. painter Levni.

Pişrev-i Varsağı (instrumental prelude) [usul: 14/8, 3-2-2-3-2-2]

Music: Anonymous

Uşşak Varsağı [usul: 3/8]

Text and Music: Anonymous

The words of this song may be mentioning the *tavşan* or male dancer.

<i>Çikamadım kayalarım başına</i>	I couldn't climb to the top of a rocky cliff
<i>Tavşancıklar yuva yapar eşine</i>	Rabbits make a nest for their mates
<i>Benim sevdiğimin işi, gücü ne</i>	What's my lover busy with?
<i>Ey nazlu yarım, yine mi canım melullüğün var</i>	O my coy love, are you sad again?

Türki şikayet ez felek "müsenna" [free rhythm]

Text: Katib (17th c.), Music: Anonymous

Alone of all the pieces in his collection, Ali Ufki actually describes, in the manner of an ethnomusicologist, the different styles of vocal improvisation that goes with each line of this text.

<i>Çarh-ı felek benim hatırım yıkdıñ</i>	O destiny, you have offended me
<i>Seniñ dahi hatırcığıñ sına hey</i>	I hope your feelings are offended too
<i>Hicranın odına bağrımı yakdıñ</i>	You burned my heart with the flame of sorrow
<i>Bencileyin kara bağrın yana hey</i>	If you ask me, your black bosom should burn

Hüseyni Yelteme [usul: 2/4]

Music: Anonymous

Ali Ufki indicates that pieces like this one were specifically composed and/or performed by players of the *çöğür*, an early type of long-necked lute, now in general referred to as *saz*.

Şarki fırak [usul: 12/8, 3-3-2-2-2]

Text: Ali (17th c.) Music: Anonymous

<i>Uçurdum şahini konmaz koluma</i>	I have had the falcon fly, now it won't come back
<i>Fırsatın düşürdüm girmez elime</i>	Even when it was possible it won't come back
<i>Cümle alem ağlar benim halime</i>	Everyone is sorrowful about me
<i>Felek beni sevdiğimden ayırdı</i>	Destiny separated me from my love

Uşşak Türki [usul: 10/8, 3-3-2-2]

Text: Ahmed (17th c.), Music: Anonymous

Uşşak Türki is a janissary (an elite military unit) poet song. These troops were officially attached to the Bektaşî Sufis. At this time there were a number of famous janissary poets in Istanbul.

<i>Bagdad'ı, Basra'yı seyran eylesem</i>	If I was to go see Baghdad and Basra
<i>Aceb derviş olsam Yari bulam mı?</i>	Or become a dervish, could I find the Beloved?
<i>Aşkın ile beni hayran eylesen</i>	If you were to amaze me with Your love
<i>Aceb derviş olsam Yari bulam mı?</i>	If I became a dervish, could I find the Beloved?
<i>Yohsa hasretiñle ölem, kalam mı?</i>	Or shall I die with your longing?

Türki beray-ı bızır-ı yar [usul: 4/4, 3-3-2]

Text and Music: Anonymous

<i>Her sabahı çıkar yolu beklerim</i>	Every morning I look for you
<i>Şaki bülbül var uyandır yarimi</i>	O nightingale, sing and awake my love
<i>Hasretini can içinde saklarım</i>	Your longing is hidden inside me
<i>Şaki bülbül var uyandır yarimi</i>	O nightingale, sing and awake my love

Türki beray-ı kanlı kavak [usul: 6/8, 3-3]

Text and Music: Anonymous

The title suggests that this song may have been used in the *kanlı kavak* meddah play, a 17th c. example of the storyteller's art. The poem is a dialogue between a man and the *kanlı kavak* (bloody poplar) itself.

<i>Dallı dallı budakların kurusun</i>	I hope your branches die
<i>Yeşil yeşil yabrakların çürüsün</i>	and your green leaves rot
<i>Saîna gelen güzel hiç gelmez olsun</i>	I hope beautiful girls who come around you never come
<i>Kanlı kavak kanı benim sevdiğim</i>	O bloody poplar, your blood is my lover's

*Dallı dallı budakların suçu ne
İbrişim takdılar sırma saçına
Aldılar gitdiler tağlar içine
Haramiler aldı seniñ sevdiğin*

What's the guilt of (my) branches
They placed a silk thread on her hair
And took her deep into mountains
Bandits took your love

Sultan İbrahim'in huzurunda oynanılan Raks / The dance performed before Sultan Ibrahim (1615-1648)
[usul: 6/8, 3-3] Text and Music: Anonymous

Because of its many explicit sexual references, we have been selective in translating the words of this song, addressed to a dancer known as "Saçbağı".

*Saçbağı takar saçına
Gider sarayıñ içine
Güzel seveniñ suçu ne
Saçbağı devran seniñdir
Seniñdir nazlım seniñdir
Alemde seyran seniñdir*

He/she puts on a hair band
And goes to the palace
What's the guilt in loving someone beautiful?
O Hair Band, this is your time
It's your time my coy one
Everyone in the world should come see you

Tekerleme [usul: 6/8, 3-3] Text and Music: Anonymous

A song addressed to the santur, the trapezoidal stringed instrument played with small hammers. The song criticizes religious fanatics who condemn music.

*Hay santuruñ kırk şen teli
Ötmez oldu bağıriñ yeli
Hey Allah'ın asi kulu
Neyledi bu santur saña*

The forty happy strings of the santur
Your bosom is no longer singing
Hey, God's fanatical servant
What has this santur done to you?

*Bu bir ağaç paresidir
Dertli canıñ çaresidir
Şeytan bunuñ neresidir
Neyledi bu santur saña*

This is a piece of wood
It's a remedy for sorrow
Where is the devil in this?
What has this santur done to you?

* * * intermission * * *

IV. A 19th Century Greek Ottoman Suite

Here, the tastes of the upper class Greek community of Istanbul are reflected in an instrumental Turkish courtly piece as well as two vocal pieces in Greek with stylistic qualities particular to this community. These pieces were published by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in the 19th c., notated in Byzantine neumes, the musical writing system used to preserve the sacred liturgy of Greek Orthodoxy.

The pieces in this set were transcribed and edited by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol from three musical sources:

Evertipi (ca.1830), *I Pandora* (1843) and *Mousikon Apanthisma* (1872).

Terennümlü Peşrev ve Semaisi in Rast Makam [usul: 48/4] Music: Benli Hasan Ağa (1607-64)

A classical instrumental piece by a famous Turkish composer, preserved in Byzantine notation as a textless vocal piece, sung on the syllables "le", "ne" and "re".

Phanariote Song in Nühüft Makam [usul: 2/4] Music and Text: Anonymous

A song with Greek words from the predominantly Greek Fener (*Phanar*) district of Istanbul.

*Me tas zoiras aktinas
Tou oraion sou mation
Pou astraptoun thavmasios
Kai titroskoun exaisios*

With the vivacious rays
Of your beautiful eyes
Which flash so wonderfully
And exquisitely impose themselves

Tempolu Gazel (vocal improvisation over a repeated rhythmic pattern) Text: Necati (d. 1509)

*Güller çemende kendilerin nazenin tutar
Naz ile gülse ağzına gonca yenin tutar*

Roses behave coyly in the fields
If he/she was to smile his/her mouth would become the rosebud

Yürük Semai in Nişaburek Makam: Istrapte sto prosopon sou [usul: 6/8] Music and Text: Anonymous

Another song with Greek words from the predominantly Greek Fener (*Phanar*) district of Istanbul.

*Istrapte sto prosopon sou kalloni angeliki dia touto ki' i morfı sou me angelous katoikei.
Angelic beauty shone on your face and that's why your shape resides with angels*

V. A Bektaşî (Sufi) Suite

We have modeled this final suite after a *muhabbet* of the Bektaşî Sufi order—a set of devotional songs for group celebrations. Unlike any other Sufi order, the music associated with the Bektaşî features a wide range of styles. In this set, in addition to examples displaying this variety we have also included historical examples which reflect the cross-fertilization that occurred regularly among Sufis, Jews and Greeks. The set ends with a 1970s rock version of a well-known Bektaşî song, also from the Balkans.

Ud Taksim

Yesha El Hay Tohil [usul: 10/8, 3-2-2-3]
and

Text: Israel Najara (ca. 1550-1625) Music: Anonymous

Gel Gönül Sabreyle

Text: Pir Sultan Abdal (ca. 1480-1550) Music: Anonymous

The text of this is a *piyyut* (devotional poem in Hebrew) by Israel Najara which the poet intended it to be sung to the melody of the following Bektaşî poem by Pir Sultan Abdal, well known during his time. Since the early 16th century Bektaşî melody of this particular poem has been lost, Noam Sender has adapted the poem by Najara to a melody used nowadays for a different Bektaşî devotional song (*nefes*) that follows the same syllabic structure. To that same melody, Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol has adapted the original Bektaşî poem by Pir Sultan Abdal as well.

*Yesha el hay tohil lev soled behil
Ki od el hay eliyon yateh al tziyon
Lev nishbar venidka pedut el hakeh
Lev ashuk veratzutz od tashuv lasus*

Living God provide deliverance to an exulting heart
The Heavenly Living God will still favor Zion
Broken and dismayed heart, expect heavenly redemption
Weary and exhausted heart, you shall rejoice again!

*Gel gönül sabreyle katlan bu cevre
Elbet sen'ağlatan bir gün güldürür
Niceleri konu göçtü bu hane
Elbet sen'ağlatan bir gün güldürür*

O my heart, be patient and bear this pain
Surely, who makes you cry, will make you smile one day
So many came to, and left this inn
Surely, who makes you cry, will make you smile one day

Araya araya bulsam izini

[usul: 15/8, 3-2-2-3-2-3] Text: Yunus Emre (1240?-1321?) Music: Anonymous

A Bektaşî *nefes* from the Balkan region to the west of the Ottoman capital here performed in Ottoman classical style as many of these Balkan pieces were performed in Istanbul with this style.

*Araya araya bulsam izini
İzinin tozuna sürsem yüzümü
Hak nasip eylede görsem yüzünü
Ya Muhammed canım arzular seni*

I shall look for your trail
I shall put the dust of your trail on my face
God allow it so that I can see his face
O Muhammed, I long for your presence

Alis mono den ifiche (Bektaşî Sufi song in Greek)

[usul: 14/8 + 12/8] Source: Müyesser Bacı (20th c.)

Text and Music: Anonymous

An example of Islamic mysticism (Sufism) from Greece, a Bektaşî Sufi song in Greek from the island of Crete.

*Alis mono den ifiche sti yis apothamenos
s' olo ton kosmo brihnetai ma einai kouklomenos*

Ali was not left dead in the ground
he's everywhere in the world, but he's concealed

*Alis den ipsiase vizi tsi manas na bizazi
to Muhammed perimene ya na tou kouventiazei*

Ali didn't take his mother's breast to nurse
he was waiting for Muhammed, to converse with him

Eviç Gazel

*Sevdim seni ta gönülden Şah-ı Merdan Ya Ali
Şüphem yoktur yardımcısın Şah-ı Merdan Ya Ali*

Text: Cafer Tuncay Halifebaba (1902-1991)

I love you from the bottom of my heart, O King of men, Ali
I have no doubts, you're my help, O King of men, Ali

Demedim mi? ("Didn't I tell you?")

Words: Pir Sultan Abdal (16th c.) Music: Anonymous

A rendition of the famous text of a Bektaşî Sufi song (*nefes*) by a 16th c. dervish about the difficulties of the Sufi path. Our version is based on a 1970s arrangement of the *nefes* by the controversial rock musician, Cem Karaca (1945-2004).

*Güzel aşık cevrimizi
Çekemezsin demedim mi
Bu bir rıza lokmasıdır
Yiyemezsin demedim mi*

Fellow dervish, you couldn't handle
Our difficulties, didn't I tell you?
This is a sweet morsel of resignation
You can't eat it, didn't I tell you?

Translations: Edwin Seroussi (Hebrew), Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (Turkish), Panayotis League (Greek)

The Musicians

Robert Labaree (*çeng, voice, percussion*) is on the faculty of the NEC Music History Department, director of the NEC Intercultural Institute, and co-founder and Vice President of *DÜNYA*.

Panayotis League (*kemençe, percussion, voice*) teaches Greek language at Hellenic College, and is an active performer of Irish, Greek and Turkish music in the Boston area.

Cem Mutlu (*voice, percussion*) plays jazz and a variety of world musics with groups in the Boston area and is a founding member of the *DÜNYA* board.

Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (*voice, ud, saz, ney, mey, zurna*) is a composer, jazz pianist and teacher with a doctorate in composition from New England Conservatory, and is co-founder and president of *DÜNYA*.

Tev Stevig (*tanbur, saz, guitar, voice*) is a graduate of Berklee College of Music. He is on the faculty at Berklee College of Music's City Music program and Summer Guitar Sessions.

Thomas Zajac (*santur, sackbut, miskal, voice*) is an early music specialist and is a faculty member at Wellesley College.

DÜNYA (the Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek word for "world") is a non-profit, tax exempt educational organization located in Boston, Massachusetts. Its goal is to present a contemporary view of a wide range of Turkish traditions, alone and in interaction with other world traditions, through performance, recording, publication and other educational activities.