

# *Othello in the Seraglio*

## *The Tragedy of Sümbül the Black Eunuch*



A coffeehouse opera produced by Dünya  
Conceived and composed by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol  
Coffeehouse opera concept developed by Robert Labaree

### **Sources**

*The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*, by William Shakespeare (1603)  
*Un capitano moro (A Moorish Captain)*, by Giovanbattista Giraldi (Cinzio) (1565)  
*Kızlarağası'nın Piçi (The Bastard of the Chief Black Eunuch)*, by Reşad Ekrem Koçu (1933)

Storyteller script by Robert Labaree  
Original music, with music from 16th- and 17th-century European and Turkish sources arranged,  
and additional Turkish poetry, by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

With eleven musicians and a storyteller, *Othello in the Seraglio: The Tragedy of Sümbül the Black Eunuch*, is scaled to the intimate, informal setting of a coffeehouse in seventeenth century Istanbul (Constantinople). In the days before tea became the preferred Turkish beverage, this was a setting in which a professional storyteller (*meddah*) entertained a cosmopolitan audience of men while they smoked and sipped coffee, a newly-fashionable stimulant imported from Yemen. The storyteller spins out a well-known tale, an historically-based legend of love and jealousy, intensified by the crossing of boundaries between the free and the enslaved, white and black, Muslim and non-Muslim.

## Characters

MEDDAH HAYALİ a traditional Ottoman coffeehouse storyteller: **Max Sklar**, a speaking role  
SÜMBÜL AĞA, a retired, aging chief black eunuch of the Ottoman court: **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**, tenor  
SUZAN, a European slave girl who becomes the wife of Sümbül: **Camila Parias**, soprano  
FRENK MUSTAFA, Sümbül's aide, a former European slave: **Michael Barrett**, baritone  
SAADET, Suzan's maid, a Turkish village woman trained in the palace: **Burcu Güleç**, alto

## Instrumentalists

**Michael Barrett**, *lute, recorders* • **Beth Bahia Cohen**, *kemane* (spike fiddle), *violin*, *çiftetelli* (octave violin) • **Burcu Güleç**, *kaşık* (wooden spoons), *parmak zili* (finger cymbals), *castanets* • **Robert Labaree**, *çeng* (Ottoman harp) • **Carol Lewis**, *gamba* • **Steven Lundahl**, *sackbut*, *trumpet*, *recorders* • **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**, *ud* (short-necked lute), *ney* (cane flute), *zurna* (double reed pipe) **Dan Stillman**, *sackbut*, *trumpet*, *dulcian* • **George Lernis** and **Bertram Lehmann**, percussion: *nekkare* (small kettledrums), *davul* (bass drum), *darbuka* (hour-glass shaped drum), *bendir* (frame drum), *daire* (frame drum with cymbals), with *bells*, *gongs*, *cymbals*, *talking drum*, *bombo* (a side drum) and *kös* (kettledrum)

## Synopsis

*Prologue:* The story begins in Istanbul (Constantinople) in the 17th century. Sümbül, an African caught up in the trans-Saharan slave trade as a boy and castrated, has risen to the height of power and influence as a *Kızlarağası*, a chief black eunuch. Freed in old age, Sümbül has retired and lives in his own mansion.

*Scene I:* In gratitude for his freedom, Sümbül plans to present a concubine (*cariye*) to the sultan as a gift. In a slave market, he purchases a very beautiful Italian girl named Suzan, only to discover that she is already expecting a child. In this condition, she cannot be offered to the sultan.

*Scene II:* Sümbül cannot help but fall in love with Suzan and decides to keep her. Suzan in turn comes to love Sümbül for his kindness and clear affection for her, even though he is much older and their love cannot be consummated. They decide to marry.

*Scene III:* Cyprus is under attack by the Venetians, and the sultan appoints Sümbül to travel there as an advisor. When the entourage arrives in Cyprus, Sümbül's trusted aide Frenk Mustafa—himself a former Italian slave—approaches Suzan and declares his love. She rejects him. Mustafa cannot bear the idea of such a beauty preferring the ugly, old, black eunuch. He wants to take revenge.

*Scene IV:* Mustafa plants the idea in Sümbül's mind that Suzan is having an affair with Rocer (Ruggiero), a young European member of the retinue who is handsome and masculine. Jealousy is kindled in Sümbül, and it gradually increases until it overwhelms him. He plots to have Rocer killed.

*Scene V:* In a moment of rage, Sümbül loses control of himself and kills Suzan, only to find out from her faithful maid Saadet that his jealousy was unjustified. Sümbül takes his own life.

*Epilogue:* Suzan's orphaned son lives on as Sümbül's heir and becomes an influential figure in Istanbul. He is always known as the bastard of the chief black eunuch (*Kızlarağası'nın piçi*).

### About the Opera

The story of Sümbül (“Hyacinth”) is drawn from a web of tales shared among the Muslim and Christian peoples of the Mediterranean Basin, in which a dark-skinned African rises to power, but comes to a tragic end. Shakespeare's *Othello* is the version of this story best known to western audiences, and parts of the script are derived from his play, in Elizabethan English and in translation (Italian and Turkish). Other portions are adapted from Shakespeare's own source, the sixteenth-century Italian novel by Cinzio. A third source dates from the 1930s, a Turkish novel by Reşad Ekrem Koçu (1905-75) about the famous black eunuch Sümbül—an African slave known to have overseen the sultan's harem in the seventeenth century. As a “coffeehouse opera” *Othello in the Seraglio* uses only commedia-like masks and simple props, and in this respect resembles the *masque*, *intermedio* and *favola in musica* which were the earliest forms of European opera appearing in the same period in which this story takes place. Turkish speakers may also recognize quotations from the Turkish shadow play (*karagöz*), from poetry of the Bektaşî dervishes, and from Turkish proverbs. Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol wrote additional song lyrics in seventeenth-century Turkish and in classical Ottoman poetic forms. He researched and assembled these diverse sources into a drama that reimagines Othello as an Ottoman eunuch. Robert Labaree created the role of the storyteller, based on the traditional Ottoman *meddah*, filtered through the 20<sup>th</sup> century cabaret-influenced style of Bertolt Brecht.

### Historical background

Slavery and cultural diversity in the Ottoman and American contexts are similar enough for Americans to feel a shock of recognition in the story of Sümbül Ağa. But the differences are just as striking. Plantations based on intensive slave labor like those the American South were a much less common form of agriculture in the Ottoman Mediterranean, where slaves were more often employed as household domestics (Sümbül), in the military (Frenk Mustafâ), and as concubines (Suzan). In this opera, Sümbül is presumed to have been captured as a young boy in a raid by desert-dwelling slave traders or local African middle men in his home village somewhere in the Sudan. The typical middle passage for Africans bound for the Mediterranean market was a two to three month walk across the Sahara Desert, a trek with a mortality rate at least as high as the infamous Atlantic middle passage to the markets of the New World.

Young boys chosen to be eunuchs were deposited with one of the Coptic monasteries in Upper Egypt where the monks were considered experts in the radical castration preferred by the Ottomans, in which, more often than not, all external genitalia were removed. Many boys died from the operation, but the market value of survivors like Sümbül increased beyond that of even the most highly prized category of slaves—females with light skin, like Suzan, usually from the Caucasus, the Balkans or farther west. As late as the mid nineteenth century, as many as a thousand eunuchs still served in the Ottoman court in Istanbul. Because of his learning, piety and integrity, Sümbül rose above other palace eunuchs to his high station as chief black eunuch (*Kızlarağası*), a position reserved exclusively for Africans. Few ministers or servants of the palace in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had more intimate contact with the sultan, or wielded more personal influence.

### **The music**

The performers of the opera are vocalists and instrumentalists who specialize in early European music and Turkish music. Language, musical style and instrumentation help to define the cultural background of the four main singing roles. Three of them are of mixed identity, Ottoman slaves or former slaves from Europe (Mustafa and Suzan) or Africa (Sümbül) who are converts to Islam. The fourth is a Turkish woman who is a hired servant. The storyteller is also a Turk, a respected Istanbul figure. The opera's complex cultural tapestry reflects both the institution of slavery and the diversity of peoples in the Ottoman domains of the seventeenth century. It includes Italian music from the age of Monteverdi (d.1643) and the music preserved in the famous Ottoman manuscript collection of Ali Ufki (d. 1675). Born Albert Bobowski, a Polish Protestant, Ali Ufki was a slave and Muslim convert who became a prominent musician and translator at the sultan's court. Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol has arranged and adapted these musical source materials and woven them together with original music. The resulting love story, together with the mix of languages and musical vernaculars—interpreted by the storyteller—draws the coffeehouse audience into a meditation on race, slavery and sexuality, and on the entwined histories of East and West.

### **Composer's note.**

Our coffeehouse opera begins with the concept of *opera pasticcio*, a type of Baroque opera in which composers like Handel and Vivaldi created substantial theatrical works from both original and pre-existing music. Similarly, concerts of early European music and world music today often organize repertoire from different genres and cultures around a particular theme. As a composer, however, I wanted the musical design of this opera to be more coherent than a program of pieced-together music, while still preserving the separate elements of the *pasticcio*. There are three distinct layers of music, which may stand alone, interact or merge: borrowed period music (European and Turkish); new music incorporating melodic and harmonic features of the borrowed material; and certain musical instruments and timbres—not period specific—that highlight dramatic moments. I hoped to achieve a coherent musical statement by balancing these layers within the architecture of the opera. Duets between a Turk and a European even combine music of East and West: the Turkish *makam* (mode) is used for the Turk, and the European's music is scored against it following the modal polyphonic practices of early European music. The resulting mix of the old, the traditional and the newly-composed re-purposes each musical language for a context more cosmopolitan than the musicians and audiences of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century could have imagined. I believe the combination is new—that is, never heard before—even though many of its idioms may be more recognizable and accessible than the “new music” idioms which 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences have come to expect. (Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol)

## Music and texts

(Note: Pieces arranged by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol are indicated by an asterisk \*.)

**Rast Toccata** (by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol)

### ACT I

#### Scene One

**Hüseyini Yelteme** (anonymous instrumental piece in folk style)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz* (ca. 1650), collection of Ali Ufki (ca. 1610–75)

**Güzel cariye**, by Sanlıkol (text & music)

SÜMBÜL

*Güzel cariye, selamden soñre  
Vaziyet bildik pek esefile  
Aceb deęildir dar-ı düñyade  
Hayr u şer gelüb insan başıne*

Beautiful concubine, after greeting you  
We have heard your story with regret.  
It is nothing to wonder [at] that in this world  
Good and evil things happen to us.

*Gız sevin artık, kederi bırak  
Sultan-ı cihan yanında olmak  
Ona kul olub saraya çıkmak  
Nasib eylesiñ Allah herkese*

Girl, put sorrow behind [you] and be happy now.  
To be next to the sultan of the world,  
To be his slave and to live in his palace  
I hope is granted to everyone by God.

SUZAN

*Ben sevinemem, yok sevinemem*

I cannot be happy, I cannot.

SÜMBÜL

*Gız pek cahilsin, hele bir diñle  
Misg amber tüter ol gonceligde  
garden,  
Haşa ki beñzer beharisdane  
Pür altun kaplu ol serayler de  
Gız sevin artık. . . .*

Girl, you are very simple, listen for a moment:  
Beautiful scents of musk and amber are in that

Much like a paradise,  
And the palaces are covered in pure gold.  
Girl, just be happy. . . .

SUZAN

*Ben sevinemem, yok sevinemem*

I cannot be happy, I cannot.

SÜMBÜL

*Neçiñ böyle deñ, gözümiñ nuru?*

Why do you say this, light of my eyes?

SUZAN

*Nasıl söylerim efendiciğim?*

I cannot say my Lord.

SÜMBÜL

*De güzelciğim, neyimiş derdiñ?*

Speak, my beauty, why do you suffer like this?

SUZAN

*Ben sevinemem, ikicanliyim*

I cannot be happy, I am with child

***Il tempo fugge*** (aria)

From *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* (Portrayal of the soul and the body), Florence, 1600  
Text by Agostino Manni (1548–1613); music by Emilio de' Cavalieri (ca. 1550–1602)

SUZAN

*Il tempo, il tempo fugge,  
La vita si distrugge:  
E già mi par sentire  
L'ultima tromba e dire,  
Uscite da la fossa  
Ceneri sparse, et ossa,  
Sorgete anime ancora,  
Prendete i corpi hor' hora:  
Venite à dir' il vero . . .  
Sì che ciascun' intenda,  
Apra gli occhi e comprenda,  
Che questa vita è un vento,  
Che vola in un momento. . . .  
Faccia dunque ognun prova,  
Mentr' il tempo li giova,  
Lasciar quant'è nel mondo,  
Quantunqu' in se giocondo:  
Et opri con la man', opri co' l core,  
Perche del ben' oprar frutto è l' honore.*

Time, time runs away,  
life destroys itself:  
and already I seem to hear  
the last trumpet, and the words,  
“Come out of the grave,  
scattered ashes and bones,  
rise again, souls,  
take your bodies again now;  
come and tell the truth . . .  
so that each one may understand,  
open his eyes, and comprehend  
that this life is a wind  
that flies in a moment. . . .”  
Make, then, every attempt  
while time remains favorable  
to leave what is in the world,  
however pleasant it is in itself:  
and work with hand, work with heart,  
for the fruit of good work is honor.

**Scene Two**

***Buselik Aşiran Gazel*** (vocal improvisation); text by Zârî (d. 1686)

SÜMBÜL

*Tünd-i bad-ı saht-u gerdundan kalub bi-reng-i derd  
Sümbül-ü gülden şemim-i müşg-i nab eksilmede*

From destiny's terrible typhoon, a colorless sorrow remains.  
The beautiful scent of the hyacinth and the rose is doomed to fade.

*Suz u tab-ı encümen çüñ şem-i mürde bi-fürug  
Ateş-i kanuñ-ı dilden iltihab eksilmede*

Brightness of the fire that burns the stars, because the candle of the dead has no light,  
It is the law of the heart's own fire, that it must cool down.

**Or non doveva**

Text from *Orlando innamorato*, by Matteo Maria Boiardo (1434–94), adapted by Tom Zajac  
Music by Jacquet Berchem (ca. 1510–65)

SUZAN

*Or non doveva almanco comportare  
Ch'io il potessi vedere in viso un poco,  
Che forse al quanto potea mitegare,  
A lui mirando, lo amoroso foco?  
Ben vedo che a ragion nol debbo amare;  
Ma dove é amor, ragion non trova loco,  
Per che eunuco e vecchio e nero il chiamo  
Ma sia quell che si vole io cosi l'amo.*

Now should he not at least  
let me see his face a little,  
so that, gazing at him,  
the fire of love might be somewhat quelled?  
Well I see that, in all reason, I should not love him,  
but where there is love, reason finds no place,  
for I call him a eunuch, and old and black,  
but be that as it may, I love him that way.

**Ch'io abbia dato** (recitative)

Text from Goffredo Raponi's Italian translation of Shakespeare's *Othello* (1998); music by Sanlıkol

SUZAN

*Ch'io abbia dato al Moro l'amor mio  
vivere la vita insieme a lui,  
possono proclamarlo al mondo intero  
l'aperta mia rivolta  
e la tempesta delle mie fortune.*

That I did love the Moor to live with him, *per*  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world.  
[Original lines of Shakespeare]

**Benden sana yar olmaz\*** (anonymous folk song from Artvin)

SÜMBÜL

*Benden sana yar olmaz  
Olsa vefakar olmaz  
Kışa çevirme yazımı  
Çalib diñletme sazımı  
Küstürüb sen al nazımı  
Yaralıyam yaralı. . . .*

I cannot be a lover to you  
If love cannot be sustained.  
Do not turn my summers into winters.  
Do not make me play my lute and then listen,  
Offend me and keep after my reluctance  
I am wounded . . . .

**Efendiciğim, sakın üzülme**, by Sanlıkol (text and music)

SUZAN

*Efendiciğim, sakın uzulme  
Omrum hebaye virdim havaye  
Ol karibligde dusman elinde  
Sen oldun sifa benim yareme*

My lord, do not be upset.  
My life was wasted like the thin air  
while in the distant lands of enemies.  
But you have healed my wound.

*Yar sevin artık, kederi bırak  
Senin her daim yanında olmak  
Sana kul olup hanene çıkmak  
Nasib eylesin Allah herkese*

Just be happy, leave sadness behind.  
To be forever by your side,  
To become your servant and be in your home,  
I hope is granted to everyone by God.

SÜMBÜL

*Yok güzelciğim, olmaz öyle şey*

No, my beauty, no such thing can happen.

SUZAN

*Olur sevdiğim, efendiciğim  
Ben sana bakar, seni severim  
Seninle yatar, seni operim  
Sakin uzulme, ol bana yeter*

Yes, my love, my lord,  
I will take care of you, and love you.  
I will lie with you, and kiss you.  
Hush, don't be sad, it is enough for me.

*Yar sevin artık...*

Just be happy, my love.

SÜMBÜL

*Olur mu yarım, ey güzelciğim*

Can it be, my love, my beauty?

SÜMBÜL and SUZAN

*Olur sevdiğim, olur sevdiğim*

Yes, my love, my love.

### ***A wedding celebration in honor of Sümbül and Suzan***

***Muhayyer Köçekçe*** (suite for boy dancers, assembled by Sanlıkol)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*

***Pişrev-i Varsağı*** (instrumental prelude in folk style, anonymous)

***Türki beray-ı mahabbet*** ("song for affection")

Text and possibly music by Ali Ufki; music edited by Sanlıkol

*Şunda bir kaşları kare  
Aldı gönülümü virmedi. . . .*

Right there is a beauty with dark eyebrows.  
[Who] took my heart and never gave it back. . . .

***Türki beray-ı aşk*** ("Song for love")

Text: Katibi (17th c.); anonymous music

*Çünkü mahabbetiñ yoğıdı baña  
Yanıma gelmesen ne idi ezelden. . . .*

Because you did not show me affection,  
I wish you had never come near me. . . .

***Varsağı*** (17th-century folk song, anonymous)

*Yürü ey saba, haberim ilet benim afet-i ey dil-i canıma*

O morning breeze, bring my news to the one who stuns the heart of my soul.



## Scene Three

**Zurna Taksim** (improvisation)

**Nicesin Venedik frengi** (folk song)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; text by Tasbaz Ali (17th c.); anonymous music

CHORUS OF SOLDIERS

*Nicesin Venedik frengi*

*İdüb Osmanlı'yla cengi*

*Kırdırdıñ kaç nice bin sengi*

*Serhoş sirkat küstahların. . . .*

What kind of people are you, Venetians?

Making war with the Ottomans,

A thousand rocks are broken

By your drunken arrogant thieves. . . .

**Hüseyni Peşrev\*** (instrumental prelude)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; music possibly by Osman Paşa (1526–85)

**Nişabur Murabba\*** (song in court style/aria)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; text by Frenk Mustafa (17th c.); anonymous music

MUSTAFA

*Olur melül-ü garib elem çeker mi aşık canım*

*Beni görüñ ki benim hem garib-ü hem aşık canım*

*Düşürme sagarı elden sunarsa kaseyi aşık*

*Cihan bütüñ o da yansa elem çeker mi aşık*

Sweetheart, can a poor soul bear sorrow and become sad?

Look at me, I am both sorrowful and in love.

Do not put down your glass if the lover offers a bowl.

Even if the entire world burns, can a lover bear sorrow?

**Datemi pur martiri**

Anonymous text; music by Sanlıkol

SUZAN

*Ora basta!*

That's enough!

MUSTAFA

*Datemi pur martiri,*

*Burlate i miei sospiri,*

*Negatemi mercede;*

*Oltraggiate mia fede*

*Ch'in voi vedrete poi*

*Quel che mi fate voi.*

Make me suffer,

mock my sighs,

deny me mercy;

abuse my faith,

for you will see for yourself

what you do to me.

**Semai-i efrenci\*** (instrumental postlude)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; anonymous music

**Rast Toccata**, by Sanlıkol

## ACT II

### Scene One

***Pişrev-i Rocer*** (“Prelude by Roger”)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; music by Rocer (17th c.)

***Pişrev-i efrençi yani Pavane\**** (“European peşrev meaning pavane”) / ***Pavane de Spaigne***

European version from *Terpsichore, Musarum aoniarum quinta* (1612), by Michael Praetorius

Anonymous music; text by Sanlıkol

Turkish version from *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*

CHORUS

*Viva Ruggiero,  
Il vittorioso!*

Long live Roger,  
The victorious!

***La Gelosia*** (aria)

Secular solo cantata, 1640s; text, Domenico Benigni (1596–1653); music, Luigi Rossi (ca. 1597–1653)

MUSTAFA

*Gelosia! Che a poco a poco  
Nel mio cor serpendo vai,  
Non entrar dov'arde il foco:  
Vero amor non gela mai.  
Da me che brami?  
Forse vuoi tu  
Ch'io più non ami.  
Furia dell'alma mia,  
Non mi tormentar più!  
Lasciami, Gelosia!*

Jealousy! [You] who little by little  
go winding into my heart like a serpent,  
do not enter where the fire burns:  
true love never freezes.  
What do you want of me?  
Perhaps you want me  
not to love any more.  
Fury of my soul,  
torment me no longer!  
Leave me, Jealousy!

***Tempolu Gazel and Çiftetelli Keman Taksim*** (vocal and instrumental improvisation over an ostinato)\*

***Türki şikayet ez-felek*** (“Song that complains of fate”)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; text: Katibi; anonymous music

SAADET

*Çarh-ı felek benim hatırım yıkdıñ  
Seniñ dahi hatırcığıñ sına hey  
Hicranın odına bağrımı yakdıñ  
Bencileyin kara bağrıñ yana hey*

O destiny, how you have offended me!  
I hope you examine your feelings.  
You burned my heart with the flame of sorrow.  
If you ask me, your black bosom should burn.

**Şu takarrüb iden üç günde**, by Sanlıkol (text and music)

SÜMBÜL

*Şu takarrüb iden üç günde ki tebşîr idiver  
İki gün miskin-i bîcâreye zindan-ı beşer*

In three days give me the good news,  
As the next two days will feel like a prison to this  
helpless one.

*Ol Rocer öldü bizim çün de gebersiñ fenâ  
Bana iflah o riyakar telef olmazsa gedâ*

For us, Roger is already dead, but kill him brutally.  
Until that smooth-tongued one is dead, I will feel  
no relief.

MUSTAFA:

*Ey efendim bu iş olmuş ve de bitmiş biliniz  
Koca Sümbül Ağa arz eylese ferman biliriz*

My lord, be assured that this will be done.  
The wish of the great Sümbül Ağa for us  
is a command.

## Scene Two

### **Hicaz Gazel and Recitative**

Sümbül's text, anonymous; music, a vocal improvisation  
Suzan's music by Cavalieri, adapted and texted by Sanlıkol

SÜMBÜL

*Hatırdan çıkmaz asla ahd-ü peymanıñ seniñ  
Bin yemin ettin a zalim yok mu insafıñ seniñ*

I can never forget your promise.  
O tyrant, after a thousand promises,  
have you no mercy?

SUZAN

*Bu sözlerden meramınız nedir?  
Ben zevceniz, Allah şahidimdir  
Sözüm, özüm doğru size karşı  
Bahtı kara benim kaderimdir*

What do you mean with these words?  
I am your wife, God is my witness.  
My words, my intentions are true before you.  
But what is dark is my destiny.

SÜMBÜL

*Gönlümü yıktı temelden tiri müjgânuñ seniñ  
Aşkı mahveylemek mi lûtfü ihsanıñ seniñ*

My heart was devastated by the arrow of your glance.  
Is destroying a lover your favor to him?

### **Assisa a' pie d'un salice** (Willow Song)

Text from the libretto of Rossini's *Otello* (1816), by Francesco Maria Berio di Salsi (elaborated from the core idea in Shakespeare); adapted by Sanlıkol; music, anonymous 17th c. (England)

SUZAN

*Assisa a' pie d'un salice,  
Immersa nel dolore . . .  
L'aura tra i rami flebile  
Ne ripeteva il suon.*

Seated at the foot of a willow,  
immersed in pain . . .  
the mournful breeze amid the branches  
repeated the sound [of her sighs].

### ***Dünya benim diyen beyler***

Text by Kuloğlu (17th c.), from *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; music by Sanlıkol

SÜMBÜL, SUZAN, MUSTAFA, and SAADET

*Dünya benim diyen beyler*  
*Mazul olur yatar birgün*  
*İner gökteki melekler*  
*Yerde sema tutar birgün*

Those men who say “the world is mine”  
Will one day be dismissed and lie down.  
One day the angels in the sky will come down  
And whirl in devotion on the earth.

**Zikir** (ostinato used in Sufi devotion)\* and **Ney Taksim** (improvisation)

***Türki beray-ı fena-i cihan*** (“Song for the wicked ways of the world”)

Source: *Mecmua-i saz ü söz*; text and possibly music by Ali Ufki

SAADET

*Dad elinden şu fenanın*  
*Be hey nazargahım tağlar*  
*Sürerler demi gınanın*  
*Garib içün kimler ağlar*

I ask for justice from this terrible world,  
O you mountains I see all around,  
Some enjoy times of wealth,  
But who cries for this poor soul?

### **Epilogue**

\* \* \*

**Special thanks** to Tom Zajac, for his invaluable assistance in researching and adapting much of the early European repertoire of this production; to James Nicolson, president of the Cambridge Society for Early Music for his early sponsorship of this project; to Carole Friedman for her continual guidance in the shaping of *Dünya* as an organization; to Dr. Cemal Kafadar, Vehbi Koç Professor of Turkish Studies at Harvard, for his continual guidance in all aspects of this project, both historical and artistic; to Aslı Çakım for assistance on the *Dünya* brochure; to Gül Ayyıldız for generously loaning her Ottoman coffee table and cups as props; and to Claire Nivola for making the masks and the storyteller’s kaftan.

### **About Dünya**

**DÜNYA** ("world" in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Greek) is a musicians’ collective and record label, a non-profit educational organization founded in Boston in 2004. 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, and other educational activities. *Dünya* seeks to work with a wide range of cultural and religious organizations and musical groups, but relies on no particular political, governmental or religious affiliation or support of any kind. Visit *Dünya* at [www.dunyainc.org](http://www.dunyainc.org)

Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, president • Robert Labaree, Vice President • Serap Kantarcı Sanlıkol, Development

## The Performers



**Max Sklar** (*Meddah, a storyteller*) is an actor based in Salem, Massachusetts. He received his B.A. from McGill University. He also works as the foreign language tour manager for Cambridge Historical Tours, and is co-founder of the classical theater company “The Upstart Crows of Salem.”



**Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol** (*Sümbül, ud, ney, zurna*) is a Grammy-nominated composer, a jazz pianist and a faculty member at Emerson College, with a D.M.A. in composition from NEC, and is co-founder and president of Dünya.



**Camila Parias** (*Suzan*) has performed with The Boston Camerata and La Donna Musicale, among other ensembles in the Boston area, and is a core member of the choir of the Church of the Advent. She holds an M.M. degree from the Longy School of Music of Bard College.



**Michael Barrett** (*Frenk Mustafa*, recorder, lute) is a singer and choral director who has collaborated with many early music groups, including the Boston Camerata, Huelgas Ensemble, Blue Heron, Nederlandse Bachvereniging (Netherlands Bach Society), and has performed in several recent opera productions of the Boston Early Music Festival.



**Burcu Güleç** (*Saadet, yaylı tanbur, kaşık, parmak zili*) completed her bachelor’s degree in child development and is currently pursuing her master’s degree in contemporary improvisation at NEC. As a performer and educator, she works in several genres, including jazz, Turkish, and Balkan music.

**Beth Bahia Cohen** (violin, kabak kemane) is a bowed string player of Balkan and Middle Eastern music in the Boston area, has played with Dünya since its inception, and is on the world music faculty at Tufts.

**Robert Labaree** (*çeng, voice*) is on the faculty of the NEC music history department, director of the NEC Intercultural Institute, and co-founder and vice president of Dünya.

**Bertram Lehmann** (*percussion*) teaches drums, ear training, and liberal arts at Berklee College of Music. He also performs with a variety of jazz, Latin, and world music ensembles.

**Carol Lewis** (*viola da gamba*) has toured and recorded with Hesperion XXI, Boston Camerata, Capriccio Stravagante and many other ensembles. She holds a diploma from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

**George Lernis** (*percussion*) specializes in a number of world percussion instruments, including *darbuka*, *bendir*, *daire*, and *riq*. He holds degrees from Berklee College of Music and the Longy School of Music.

**Steven Lundahl** (*recorders, sackbut*) performs on low brass instruments and recorders with such groups as Boston Baroque & Boston Camerata. He also plays with 19th-century bands and with Grand Harmonie.

**Daniel Stillman** (*sackbut, trumpet, dulcian*) is a specialist in medieval and Renaissance era wind instruments. He has performed and recorded with leading ensembles throughout the USA and Europe, and has served on several university faculties as an instructor of early wind instruments.