**Jews and Sufis: Shared Musical Traditions**

**Featured Scholar**
Edwin Seroussi

**Panelists**
Edwin Seroussi  Robert Labaree  Mehmet Ali Sanlikol

**Musical Director**
Mehmet Ali Sanlikol

**The Dünya Ensemble**
Robert Labaree/çeng, percussion, voice, Panayotis League/kemençe, voice,
Cem Mutlu/percussion, voice, Mehmet Ali Sanlikol/ ud, ney, voice, and Noam Sender/ney, voice

**PROGRAM**

**PART I. THE OTTOMAN-JEWS MUSICAL LEGACY**

Since at least the 16th century, the maftirim repertoire—Hebrew devotional poetry (piyyutim) set to Ottoman/Turkish makam music for use in the synagogue—has demonstrated the close and continuing relationship Jews established with members of Muslim mystical brotherhoods in the Ottoman regions. Some of these Sufi groups were also viewed as heterodox religious minorities by the Muslim mainstream. Unlike its Ottoman counterparts, maftirim is an a capella choral tradition, due to the banning of musical instruments in the synagogue on Sabbaths and Holy Days. The piyyutim are set either to music newly composed in the Ottoman/Turkish style by Jewish composers, or to melodies of secular Ottoman court music and Sufi devotional music. For our own time, the maftirim phenomenon may also provide models for how religious minorities can thrive and enrich each other within otherwise alien environments. Following standard maftirim practice, this first set features unaccompanied men’s voices, grouped by makam, Ottoman/Turkish melodic mode.

**Vocal Taksim** (improvisation) in Hebrew – Psalms 69:31, Jeremiah 16:19 and Judges 5:3

Ahal’la shem Elohim be’shir va’agadelenu be’toda
I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving
Adonay uzi uma’uzi um’nusi beyom tzara
Oh Lord, my strength, and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of affliction
Shim’u melachim ha’azinu rozenim anochi lashem anochi ashirah
Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes; I will sing to the Lord; I will intone a melody

**Ya’elam Shavani**

Text: Israel Najara (c. 1550-1625), Music: Avtalyon ben Mordechai (17th c.)
Makam: Hüseyini, Usul: Muhammes

Ya’elam shavani ne’elam zemani / Matay shav ani el moshav iram / Shur tsur Israel binkha eved El / Aluf magdiel / Ve-aluf iram - Ana el li ha’azen
I was captured by Ya’elam (a son of Esau, i.e. a symbol of the Christians) / My history came to an end / And when I return to their areas of settlement (of the Christians) / Watch Rock of Israel your son enslaved / by the chiefs of Magdiel and Iram (i.e. the leaders of the Christian tribes) / God, please listen to me!
El Shelah Et Tishbi
Text: Anonymous, Music: Avtalyon ben Mordechai
Makam: Isfahan, Usul: Yürük Semai

El Shelah et Tishbi / Behol beti hu neeman / Tamun hu behubbi / Le-Yisrael sham mezumman
God, send the Tishbite / “He is trusted throughout my household” / He is hidden in my bosom / For Israel he is invited there

Kezerem Kabbir
Text: Rabbi Abraham Papo (20th c.), Music: Moshe Cordova (1881-1965), Makam: Hicaz, Usul: Sengin Semai

Kezerem kabbir sa’ar katev / Shotsef bahurim beza’am ve-evra / Menudde ofel middam harev / Litmon bahorim bematsok vetsara
As a mighty stream in a destructive storm / carries away young men in fury and rage / An outcast, darkened by the blood of a sword / was to hide in holes of distress and oppression

Hadesh Kekedem
Text and possibly music by Haim Aboab (19th c.)
Makam: Hicaz, Usul: Yürük Semai

Hadesh kekedem yameinu shokhen zevula / Lishkon kavod be-artseinu na’avah tehila / Yarum venisah karneiu me’od nahahla / Nave el menukhateinu el ha-nakhala.
May the one who dwells on high renew our days once more / and may the presence to which all praise is due rest upon the earth in glory / May the one who dwells on high raise us to the highest peaks and bring us to the rest and the inheritance we seek.

PART II. BEKTAŞI SUFIS AND MAFTIRM
The close relationships between Jewish and Muslim mystics in the Ottoman world are especially visible in the musical connections with the Mevlevi and Bektaşi Sufi orders. This part of our program is based on the relationship of the maftirim repertoire with that of the Bektaşi dervishes, a heterodox form of mystical Islam with strong Shiite tendencies. In this set we include instrumental music along with Hebrew poetry adapted to pre-existing Bektaşi hymns (commonly referred to as nefes, lit. “breath”). We have interspersed some of these Hebrew pieces with a number of Bektaşi nefes in Turkish, linking them through their common melodic modes (makam) and rhythmic cycles (usul).

Taksim (improvisation) in Hüseyni Makam
Shakhar Avak’shekha - a piyyut by Shelomo Ben Yehuda Ibn Gevirol (1021-1058) adapted by Noam Sender using the music of a Bektaşi Hüseyni nefes.
Makam: Hüseyni, Usul: Ağır Düyek
Shahar avak’shekha tsuri u’misgavi, e’erokh le’fanekha shahri vegam arvi. Lifiney gedulat’kha e’emod ve’ebahel, ki ei’nekha tir’eh kol makh’shavat libi. Ma ze asher yu’khal halev ve’halashon la’asot, u’ma ko’ah ru’hi be’tokh kirbi. Hineh lekha ti’tav zimrat enosh, al ken odekha be’od nishmat Eloha bi.
At dawn I seek you, Refuge Rock sublime; My morning prayers I offer, and those at evening time. I tremble in Your awesome Presence, contrite, For my deepest secrets lie striped before Your sight. My tongue, what can I say? My heart, what can I do? What is my strength, what is my spirit too? But should music be sweet to You in mortal key, Your praises I sing so long as breath’s in me.

Yesha El Hay Tohil
Text: Israel Najara, Music: Anonymous

and

Gel Gönül Sabreyle
Text: Pir Sultan Abdal (ca. 1480-1550), Music: Anonymous
Makam: Uşşak, Usul: Curcuna

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

PART III. MEVLEVİ SÜFİS AND MAFTİRİM

In the maftirim tradition it is common to find piyütim by well-known Jewish poets set to instrumental compositions by members of the Mevlevi dervish order, known in the West as the “whirling dervishes”. This final set offers examples of well-known Mevlevi music in dialogue with examples from the maftirim repertoire, as well as other instrumental and vocal examples that can be associated with this order.

Taksim (improvisation) in Bestenigar Makam
Ani Be-Rov Hasdeka Text: Aharon Hamon (d. 1721), Music: Bestenigar peşrev by Dimitri Kantemir (1673-1723), Makam: Bestenigar, Usul: Bereşan
The text of this maftirim song here is an excerpt from a piyüt (by Aharon Hamon) which the poet intended it to be sung to the melody of the Bestenigar peşrev by Dimitri Kantemir well known during his time. Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol adapted this particular excerpt to a part of the Bestenigar peşrev.

Perde Kaldirma and Kaside (modulatory improvisations and a vocal improvisation in Turkish)
Yeheme Levavi Biroti Text: Israel Najara, Music: Neyzen Yusuf Paşa
Peşrev in Segah Makam Music: Neyzen Yusuf Paşa (1821-1884), Usul: Devr-i Kebir
My heart fills with terror, when my enemy stares at me. Gnashing teeth, working up a storm to scatter my companions. Lord of hosts, I beg, respond swiftly with your awesome miracles. How long must I wait for them? How long for that joy and glory? My enemy destroyed me, till the foundations were laid bare and will bring down the glorious city that I long for. I cry out for redemption, a tortured slave, burning in his pain. You are my strength; with you I can defeat an army. My song is for you as long as I live.

Niyaz Ayini in Segah Makam - Text and Music: Anonymous

and

Yismah Har Tsiyyon  

Text: Yehuda (anonymous, perhaps Yehuda Benaroya, late 19th century), 
Music: Anonymous, Usul: Yürüük Semai

A Jewish maftirim song alternates in a dialogue with the shortened version of a Turkish Mevlevi ayin (ceremony) music using the same usul (rhythmic cycle), only from the second part of the Mevlevi ayin. The makam (mode) and the similar melodic structure of the two pieces suggest that they most likely draw from a common ancestor.

Dinle sözümü sana derim özge edaddir  /  Derviş olana lazım olan aşkı Hüdadır  /  Aşkı nesi var ise Maşuka fedaddir  /  Sema safça cana şifa ruha gidaddir

Listen to what I am saying, it is about another way  /  What a dervish needs is the love of God  /  Whatever the lover possesses is sacrificed for the Beloved  /  The sema is joy, and it is good for body and soul

Yismah har Tsiyyon ve-tagelna benoth Yehuda  /  U-shkhon bekirbah ki Atta Eli titten odah

Let Mount Zion rejoice and the towns of Judah exalt  /  Dwell in her midst, for it is You, my God, who grants glory to her

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Dr. Edwin Seroussi is the Emanuel Alexandre Professor of Musicology, Head of the School of the Arts and Director of the Jewish Music Research Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was born in Montevideo, Uruguay and immigrated to Israel in 1971. In the past, he held lectureships at the Department of Musicology of Tel-Aviv University, Levinsky Teachers' College in Tel-Aviv, and Bar-Ilan University in 1990, where he was head of the Department of Music from 1994 to 1998. He has also held visiting professor positions at several USA and European universities. Dr. Seroussi is a recognized authority on the musical interactions between Muslims and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. He has published many works on diverse aspects of Sephardic music traditions, as well as popular music in Israel.