March 12, 1208 in Rumi’s Anatolia
A musical glimpse into the life and times of a great Sufi poet

What shall I do, O Muslims? I do not recognize myself...
I am neither Christian nor Jew, nor Magian, nor Muslim.
I am not of the East, nor the West, not of the land, nor of the sea.
I am not of nature's mine, nor from the circling stars…

Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi

directed by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (voice, ud, saz, cura, duduk)
Aaron Sheehan (voice) / Rassem El Massih (voice)
Robert Labaree (voice, çeng, percussion)
Bertram Lehman (percussion) / Cem Mutlu (voice, percussion)
Michael Razouk (voice) / Noam Sender (voice, ney) / Fred Stubbs (ney)
Tom Zajac (voice, santur, bagpipe, psalterium)

March 12, 2008    7:30 pm

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (1207-1273) is one of the most influential and revered figures of Muslim mysticism (Sufism). This concert explores the rich mix of creeds and cultures of 13th century Anatolia, where Rumi spent most of his life, through a wide range of repertoires: Turkish sufi music (Bektashi and Mevlevi), Byzantine (Greek Orthodox) music, Hebrew sacred poetry set to Turkish melodies, Turkish secular music, and music of the “Frenk”—European soldiers and traders living in or passing through the region. Throughout the concert these distinct musical idioms, instruments and languages—Greek, Latin, Provençal, Limosin, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew and Turkish—interact in a continuous conversation which illuminates the tumultuous period in which Rumi lived, a period of war and religious competition—a period with resemblances to our own.

During the first part of the concert in order to bring balance to our representations we represented the Jewish populations of Anatolia with the poetry of Ibn Ezra (1092-1167) along with the poetry of Israel Najara (b. 1555) in Yehemeh Levavi Biroti and Hayyim Bejerano (b. 1850) in Kha-desh Ke-kedem. Both of these pieces follow the long tradition of the piyut, which flourished in Spain in the 11th and 12th centuries during the life of the great Jewish poets and philosophers such as Ibn Ezra, Ibn Gvirol and Yehuda Halevi whom are more or less contemporaries of Rumi. All of these poets drew inspiration from Jewish scriptures, liturgy, Jewish mysticism and incorporated Sufi devotional elements into their poetry. Our adaptations are modeled on the mafṭīrīm choir tradition of the 16th to 20th centuries, in which Hebrew poetry was sung to the melodies of Sufi devotional music (mainly those of the Mevlevi Sufi order, of which Rumi is the spiritual founder).

In the second part the concert will also follow the Turkish tradition of chanting part of the Mevlid-i Şerif to honor an important person. A classic of Turkish literature written in 1409, the Mevlid is a long poem meditating on the birth of the Prophet Mohammed. The concert concludes with one movement of a Sufi whirling ceremony (music only) based on Rumi’s own poetry.
PROLOGUE: Detachment

The prologue consists of a musical soundscape of instruments from Anatolia which signals our separation from the present and the beginning of a journey in time.

PART I
Constantinople, the 13th Century

As a boy, Mevlana (“our lord”) Celaleddin Rumi migrated with his family from his birth place in present day Afghanistan to Anatolia, on the edge of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) empire. The name by which he is best known (“Rumi”) identifies him as a resident of this land of “the Romans”. Greek-Orthodox church music is heard first, representing Constantinople, the Byzantine capital, followed by a piece of sacred music in Latin in a style familiar to 13th century European visitors, ending with a French song dating from the Third Crusade (1189-92). Centuries of tension between the western (Roman Catholic) and eastern (Byzantine) Christian churches came to a head in 1204 when crusading European armies sacked Constantinople and a Latin crusader state was established in Anatolia until 1261, lasting through much of Rumi’s lifetime.

Anixantaria (from Psalm 103/104) anonymous

Anixantos su tin chera ta sympanta plistesontai Christotitos. Apostrep santos sou to Pro sopo tarachthisontai. Antanelis to pnevma auton kai ek kipsousi, ke is ton choun auton epistrep sos ou. Exapostelis to pnevma sou kai ki sthisonte kai anakenieis to pro sopon tis gis. Ito e doxa Kyriou is tous a eonas, efranthi sete Kyrios epi tis ergis aytou. O epivlepon epi tin gin kai pion autin tremin, o aptomenos ton oreon kai kapnizontai.

When you open your hand, they shall be filled with goodness. But when you have turned away your face, they shall be troubled. When you take away their breath, they fail, and return to their dust. You sent forth your Spirit, and they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works; who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble; who touches the mountains and they smoke.

Viderunt Emmanuel (organum in two voices in Latin) anonymous

Viderunt Emmanuel
Patris unigenitum.
In ruinam Israel
Et salutem positum.
Hominem in tempore
Verb um in principio
Ur bis, quam fund e verat
natum ut palacio.

They have seen the Savior,
The only begotten Son of the Father.
In the collapse of Israel.
Appointed for salvation
A man in the temporal world;
The word from the beginning,
Born in a palace of the city
which he founded.

Ja nuns hons pris music: anonymous

The English crusader king Richard I (“The Lion-Heart”) was captured on his way back from the Third Crusade and held for ransom for two years by the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI. This poem was composed either by Richard himself, or by his personal poet (trouvère).

Ja nus hons pris ne dira sa raison
Adroitement, se dolantement non;
Mais par effort puet il faire chançon.
Mout ai amis, mais povre sont li don;
Honte i avront se por ma reançon
—Sui ça deus yvers pris.

Ce sevent bien mi home et mi baron—
Yng lois, Norman t, Poit evin et Gascon—
Que je n’ai nul si povre compaignon
Que je lessaisse por avoir en prison;
Je nou di mie por nule retraçon,
—Mais encor sui [je] pris.

No prisoner can tell his honest thought
Unless he speaks as one who suffers wrong;
But for his comfort as he may make a song.
My friends are many, but their gifts are naught.
Shame will be theirs, if, for my ransom, here
—I lie another year.

They know this well, my barons and my men,
Normandy, England, Gascony, Poitou,
That I had never follower so low
Whom I would leave in prison to my gain.
I say it not for a reproach to them,
—But prisoner I am!
Mes compaignons que j'amoie et que j'ain—
Ces de Cahen et ces de Percherain—
D’lor, chançon, qu’il ne sunt pas certain,
Conques vers aus ne oi faus cuer ne vain;
S’il me guerroient, il feront que vilain
—Tant con je serai pris.

Contesse suer, vostre pris soverain
Vos saut et gart cil a cui je m’en clain
—Et por cui je sui pris.

Je ne di mie a cele de Chartain,
—La mere Loës.

Living in Anatolia

Three of the Jewish and Christian communities of Anatolia during Rumi’s lifetime are represented here, sung in Hebrew, Greek and Arabic.

Kha-desch ke-kedem, a piyut (liturgical poem) in Hebrew from the repertoire of the Edirne Maftirim.

Words: Rabbi Hayyim Bejerano, Chief Rabbi of Istanbul in the 1920s. Music: an unknown Turkish classical or Sufi composer (in Hicaz makam). The performers first encountered this piece in a 1989 recording of Samuel Benaroya (b. 1908, Edirne, Turkey), member of the Edirne Maftirim chorus from 1920-34.

Kha-desch ke-kedem yah-meinu sho-ken ze-vula / Lishkon ka-vod be-arts-einu na-vah te-hila /
Yarum ve-nishah kar-neinu me-od nah-ah-la / Na-vo el me-nu-kha-teinu el ha-nah-khala.

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.

Elohai kha’kartani Va’teda - [“God You Search Me and You Know”] a piyut (Hebrew liturgical poem) by Abraham Ben Meir Ibn Ezra (1092-1167), adapted and arranged by Noam Sender using a well-known Turkish Sufi melody commonly associated with the words of the 13th century Muslim mystic, Yunus Emre. This adaptation is modeled on the maftirim choir tradition.

Elohai kha’kartani va’teda mezimati vere’ee le’merakhok ve’shivti ve’kimati. Banta kol tkhoo’noti ve’arkhi ve’rivee aht zerita, ve’hisanka dra’kah lo be’atzmati. Ra’eeta dvar libi be’terem kisheh milah bil’shoni, ve’yada’ata akh’riti ve’tumati. Hen kedem ve’hen akhor tzar’tani ve’al roshi shat kaf ye’minekh, ve’yadkha be’admati. Ma’loeshay sha’akhk ve’akhrit yam, ahn me’rukhkekha elekh – ve’sham ata le’mati? Khosekh lo ye’shoo’feini, ki en mim’kha yakh’shikh, ve’ata asher totsi la’or ta’alumati hen kedem knitani uva’beten tesu’keini ve’taas be’takh’iyot et atsmi ve’rikmati. Galmi ra’ata ene’kha ve’al sifre’kha koolam yikatevu, ve’lo ekhad me’hem az bekadmati. Ve’li yakru lim’od re’eh’kha u’meh atzmu rosh’ehem, u’mah niv’ar kol da-ati ve’khokh’mati. Od’kha al pla’ekha, od’kha al kha’sade’kha, be’kha ma’am gvi’yati, le’kha roo’ki ve’nishmati!

Oh God, You have searched me and know my intentions; You discern my thoughts for afar; You are privy to my every move. You anticipate my plans; my walking and reclining. You observe and are familiar with my ways. You see the word forming in my heart before it reaches my tongue; You know when my days will end; You hem me in behind and in front and from above; You guide me with your right hand, while your left supports me. You fill the high heavens and distant sea; Where can I go from Your presence when You confront me everywhere? Darkness does not conceal me; nothing obscures your view. It is You who reveals my secrets. In the beginning You formed me; You knit me together in the womb; In the depths You crafted my delicate frame. Your eyes behold my bare limbs; they were all recorded in your book; in due time they took their separate shapes. How vast are the sum of your thoughts, they are most difficult to comprehend; my knowledge and wisdom is foolishness. I thank You for your wonders; I am grateful for your loving kindness. By your powers my body is sustained; to You belong my breath and soul.
Anarchos Theos (Greek) anonymous

Anarchos Theos kataveviken ke en tin partheno katokesen, Vasilefs ton olon kai Kyrios, erthe ton Adam anaplasasthai.
Gegenis skirtate kai xerete, taxis ton Aggelon eftreneste.
Dexou Vithleem ton Despoti sou, Vasilea panton kai Kyrie, Ex Anatolon magi erchonte, dora proskomizontai axia
Simeron h ktitis agalete ke paniyirizei ke eftrenete
Erourem Erourem, herouherouherourem, chaire Despoina, Chare Achrante.

Unbegotten God, was incarnate in the virgins womb, King of all and Lord, came to restore Adam.
People of the earth leap and be joyful, orders of the angels be delighted to receive of Bethlehem your Master, your King and Lord of all. From the East kings are approaching, bringing valuable gift.
Today creation is joyful and is rejoicing and delightful.

Ilamata ya Rabou tan sai ni (Arabic) Psalm 12/13

I la ma ta ya Ra bou tan sai ni A I la b ad I la ma ta Tas Ri fou waj ha òEa ni ha li lou yi ya / I la ma ta Ah jou sou fi naf Si mouthi ran il ah za na fi Ka bi ma da la yam i la ma ta ya ta òEa la òEa dou wi òEa lay hA li lou yi ya / Oun thour i la ya is ta mi li A you ha Ra bou i lai hi A nir òEay na ya li a la a na ma naw ma tal mawt ha li lou yi ya

How long, Yahweh, will you forget me? For ever? How long will you turn away your face from me? How long must I nurse rebellion in my soul, sorrow in my heart day and night? How long is the enemy to domineer over me? Look down, answer me, Yahweh my God! Give light to my eyes or I shall fall into the sleep of death. Or my foe will boast, I have overpowered him, and my enemies have the joy of seeing me stumble. As for me, I trust in your faithful love, Yahweh.

Meeting of the Mystics

A musical dialogue between two important streams of Turkish Sufism in Anatolia during the 13th century. On the one hand, there is the poem of Yunus Emre (1238-1320), the humble poet of the Turkish countryside, sung to a popular song form (ilahi) using the Turkish folk lute (saz) and frame drum (bendir). On the other hand, there is the poem of Rumi, the learned poet of the Persian language, sung to a classical instrumental melody by a famous 19th Greek Ottoman composer using instruments from the Persian tradition: çeng, santur, ney and küdüm. The musical conversation culminates in a collective instrumental improvisation which then connects to the words of a Jewish mystic: Israel Najara.

Ben ağlarm yane yane (Turkish) music: anonymous / words: Yunus Emre

Ben ağlarm yane yane
I cry out burning.
Aşk boyadı beni kane
Love has spattered my body with blood.
Ne akilem, ne divane
I am neither sane, nor insane.
Gel gör beni Aşk neyledi
Come see what Love has done to me.
Derde giriştar eyleedi
It has put me in sorrow.

Gah eserim yeller gibi
At times I blow like the winds.
Gah tozarm yollar gibi
At other times I am like the dust on many roads.
Gah akarim seller gibi
And also I flow like many rivers.
Gel gör beni Aşk neyledi
Come see what Love has done to me.
Derde giriştar eyleedi
It has put me in sorrow.

Baştan aşağı yareyim
I am not myself because of Love.
Aşk elinden avareyim
I am wounded from head to toe.
Ben Yunus’u biçareyim
I am Yunus the sorrowful.

Saht Hoşest Çem-i Tu (Persian) words: Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi

Saht hoşest çem-i tu an ruh-i gül feşan-i tu
Your eyes are beautiful and your cheeks are heart-captivating.
Diş çi horde dila rast bigi be can-i tu
O please tell me what have you drunk last night.
Fitnegerest nam-i tu pür sekerest dam-i tu
You’re a troublemaker and your traps are full of sweets.
Ba tarafest cam-i tu ba nemekest nan-i tu
Your glass is full of happiness, your bread is salty and tasty.
I would become the East, the West and even the skies,
If I don’t see a sign of you then there is no reason for me to live.


My heart fills with terror, when my enemy stakes 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 tormented 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.

**Love and Dance**

Secular music from Anatolia: a troubadour dance-song (estampida) of the kind familiar to European soldiers and traders of the period, and an example of village dance music from southwestern Turkey.

**Kalenda Maya** *(a troubadour song in Provençal)*  
*Raimbaut de Vaqueiras* (fl. 1180-1205)

My lovely friend, may God forfend
that the jealous bastard laugh at my expense.
His jealous bent’s dearly sold if then
a parting it’s fostered ‘tween two lovers’ sense.
My joy would be mastered without your dalliance,
the whole world festered, useless my talents.
Such road I’d go, no one would see me ever.
That day I die, lady, when we sever.

**Dirmilçik’ten Gider Yayl’ının Yolu** *(village dance song in Turkish)*  
*anonymous*

The road to the mountain passes from Dirmilcik.
My love is the rose of the mountain.
O bride, don’t go up to the pasture, it’s not summertime
People who make this bride cry are many.
PART II

Mevlid-i Şerif and Ayin

Recognized as a classic of Turkish literature, the Mevlid-i Şerif is a long poem commemorating the birth of the Prophet Mohammed written in Turkish in 1409 by Süleyman Çelebi (1351-1422). It is often chanted on special occasions such as the birth of a child or as a commemoration of the dead. Musically, mevlid is a solo form, improvised and unaccompanied, usually performed in conjunction with Koranic chant and informal group singing of devotional songs (ilahi). Tonight one section (bahir) of the mevlid will be chanted in honor of Rumi himself and in honor of the unusual overlapping of the Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox high holidays this last year. Rumi is also regarded as the spiritual father of the Mevlevi Sufi order, known in the West as the "whirling dervishes" because of the meditative turning movement used in their devotions. Our program ends with the music of one movement of a Mevlevi whirling ceremony (ayin), a setting by a 19th century Sufi composer of Rumi’s own poetry.

The Koran, I : 1-7 The Exordium

Bismil-lâ-hir-Rahmân-ir-Rahim

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,
Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. King of the Day of Judgment.
You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. Guide us to the straight way; the way of those whom you have blessed, not of those who have deserved anger, nor of those who stray.

Saba ilahi (devotional song)

Seyreyleyip yandım mah cemalini
Nurkundak içinde yatar Muhammed
Canımın cananınsı ya Muhammed

Ter ter dadakların bilmem ne söyler
Hulusî kalb ile Hakki zikreyler
Daha tîfîl iken ummetin diler

anonymous

Seeing your beauty I have been burning.
Muhammed lies in glory.
O Muhammed you’re my beloved.

I don’t understand what your lips say.
Maybe with purity of heart remembers God
Even early on wished for the good of the people.

Çargah ilahi (devotional song)

Ben dervişim diyen bir i̇n idesim gelir
Seğirdi ben sesine varıp yitesim gelir

Music: Anonymous       Text: Yunus Emre

I praise those who call themselves dervish,
I want to go to them when I hear their calls.

Excerpt from the Allah Adın Bahri of the Mevlid-i Şerif

Allah adın zikredelim evvela
Vacib oldu cümlen içte her kula

Allah adın her kim ol evvel ana
Her işi āsan eder Allah ana

Allah adın olsa her işin önü
Hergiz eber olnaya anın sonu

Her nefesde Allah adın de müdam
Allah adıyle olur her iş temam

Bir kez Allah dese şevkile lisan
Dökülür cümlen günah misli hazan

İsm-i pâkin pâk olur zikreyleyen
Her murada erişir Allah diyen

Aşk ile get imdi Allah diyelim
Dert ile göz yaş ile ah edelim

Süleyman Çelebi (1351-1422)

Allah! This name invoke we in beginning,
For this is ever due from us, his servants.

Allah! The name which brings to all who call it,
God's present aid, the weight of labour light'ning.

Did Allah's name begin each fresh endeavour,
The end would ne'er fall short of full attainment.

With every breath repeat that name, unceasing;
In Allah's name see every task completed.

Who says: Allah!, in language truly loving
Shall see his sins, like autumn leaves, removing.

That man is pure who on the pure name calleth;
Who cries: Allah!: attains his every purpose.

Come then in love, that holy name repeating;
Your woeful tears and heart felt fears commingle.
Ola kim rahmet kıl Sultan ol Padişah
Ol Kerim' ol Rahim' ol ilah

He may accord us mercy, that great Sov'reign,
The Generous, the Merciful, the Holy.

Birdir ol birliğine şey yok döürür
Gerçi yanıp söylenler çok döürür

He's One! Doubt not his Unity eternal,
Though multitudes profess their creeds of error.

Cümlle alem yok iken ol var idi
Yardımlıştıran Gani Cebbâr idi

While yet the worlds were not, Allah had being,
Mighty was he, richer than all creation.

Var iken ol yok idi ins-ı melek
Arşı ferşah ayı gün hem nih felek

He was, while yet was found nor man nor angel,
No earth, moon, sun, nine spheres nor highest heaven.

Sün ile bunlart, ol var eyledi
Birliğine cümle ikrar eyledi

His was the art by which these all were founded,
Him they confess, his Unity they witness.

Kudretin izhâr edüp hem ol Celil
Birliğine bunları kıldu delî

Omnipotence in these revealed his power
While giving proofs that testified his Oneness.

*"Ol!" dedi bir kere var oldu cihan
"Olma!" derse, mahv olur ol dem hemân

He said “be” and the universe came to being.
If he says “don’t be” it will be destroyed immediately.

*Bari ne hacet kılavuz sözü çok
Birdir Allah andan artık Tanrı yok

There is no need for more since so much is said in guidance.
There is only one God and there is no other god.

Ey azizler işte başlar söz e
Bir vasyet kıllar ıla size

O worthy friends, here we begin our story,
We charge you with a legacy most solemn;

Ol vasyiyet kim derim hem tuta
Mıs gibi koku su canlarda tüte

A charge which he who holds in due observance,
Musk-sweet shall be his soul among its fellows.

Hak Teala rahmet eyleye anâ
Kim beni ol bir dua ile anâ

May God Most High remember with his mercy.
Each one of you who me in prayer remembers.

Her kim diler bu duada buluna
Fatiha ihsan ede ben kuluna

For me, your slave, make earnest supplication;
A Fatiha I beg, your rich donation.

(Translated by F. Lyman MacCallum except marked * by Mehmet Ali Sanl kol)

Rast ilahi

Erler demine destur alalım
Pervane ey bak ibret alalım
Aşkın atesiğe gel bir yanalım
Devranı girip seyran edelim
Eyvah demeden Allah diyelim

Let’s get permission to become knowledgeable men.
Let’s look at the moth and learn from it.
Let’s burn with the fire of Love,
And whirl and dream.
Before calling out for mercy let’s say Allah.

Gûnler geceler durmaz geçiyor
Sermaye olan ömrün bitiyor
Bülükâlere bak efgan ediyor
Ey gonca aşıl mevsim geçiyor

Days and nights pass,
And your life, which is your fortune on earth will soon end.
Look at the moth, they are crying.
O rosebud it’s time to blossom the season is changing.

Nihavend Mevlevi Ayini, 1. Selam

words: Mevleva Celaleddin Rumi
music: Tanburi Musahip Seyyid Ahmed Ağa (d. 1794)

Bishnev tutu zî ney çiha mi güyed
Esrar-ı nühtiği kibriya mı güyed
Bi nutuk ı zeban hüda mı güyed
Men ba tü çihamen ey niyar-i Hu
Kender galatam ki men tü em ya tü menî
Ni men menem u ni tu tûy ni tu menî
Hem men menem u hem tü tüyi hem tü menî
Sermest-i cam-i aşıkam bi sâlum u piyale

Listen to the ney, to what it is saying.
It speaks of hidden secrets and divine greatness.
Without speech or tongue it says "God!"
O divine image, when I am with you,
I mistake myself for you, and you for myself.
I am not I, and you are not you, and you are not I,
And yet, I am I, and you are you, and you are I.
I am drunk from the goblet of divine love...[excerpt]

(Translation by Dimitri Kastritis)

Son Yürük Semai (instrumental postlude)

* * *
The Musicians

Rassem El Massih (voice) is a chanter and student at Holy Cross/Hellenic College. Robert Labaree (çeng, voice, percussion) is on the Music History faculty of New England Conservatory and Vice President of DÜNYA. Bertram Lehman (percussion) is on the faculty of Berklee College of Music. Cem Mutlu (voice, percussion), a member of the DÜNYA board, plays jazz and a variety of world music with groups in the Boston area. Michael Razouk (voice) is a chanter and student at Holy Cross/Hellenic College. Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (voice, ud, saz, cura, duduk) is a composer, jazz pianist and president of DÜNYA. Noam Sender (voice, ney) performs with a variety of ensembles in the Boston area and is a member of the advisory board of DÜNYA. Aaron Sheehan (voice) is a faculty member at Wellesley College. Fred Stubbs (ney) teaches World Music and Ethnomusicology at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Tom Zajac (voice, santur, bagpipe, psalterium) 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. 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.

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