

DÜNYA / Spring 2006 / Concert I

***Dostlar beni hatırlasın/Friends, remember me:  
Versions of Aşık Veysel, Turkish troubadour***

*traditional, borrowed and newly-created settings of Turkey's most famous folk poet*

directed by **Robert Labaree** (çeng, voice, percussion)

**Eylem Başaldı** (violin, kaşık) **Cory Cali** (guitar) **Josh Feinberg** (bass)

**Engin Günaydın** (voice, percussion) **Christiane Karam** (voice) **Cem Mutlu** (percussion, voice)

**Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol** (voice, ud, zurna, cura) **Theodoulos Vakanas** (voice, bouzouki, saz, violin)

Tuesday, March 14, 2006, Jordan Hall, 8 pm



*Aşık (minstrel) Veysel Şatıroğlu was born in 1894 in the village of Sivrialan, in Sivas province in central Anatolia. At the age of six, a smallpox epidemic left him blind, but his father noticed his son's interest in words and music and sent him to study with local masters of singing and the long-necked lute (saz). He first caught public attention at the government-sponsored Aşık Festival in Sivas in 1931 and over the next 35 years become the most visible asik in Turkey and a symbol of Turkish national consciousness. He recorded hundreds of songs and was repeatedly drawn away from his village, recruited by the new Turkish Republic to participate in its many education projects. He died in 1973, leaving a wife and son.*

The tradition of the Turkish folk singer-poet known as *aşık* ("lover") is still thriving in modern times, but its origins in Central Asia probably pre-date the beginnings of the Ottoman Turkish empire (14<sup>th</sup> c.) and perhaps even Islam (7<sup>th</sup> c.). Even today, though the *aşık* is no longer considered a healer or magician, and though he leads a settled rather than nomadic life, he still maintains his role as entertainer, voice of the community, and social critic. The questioning found in so much *aşık* poetry of the last century is prominent in the poems in this concert, with Veysel meditating on the beauty, cruelty and novelty of the world, sometimes signing his poem in the last stanza *şaşar Veysel*, "Veysel is amazed". (IV, *İşler güçler hep sinema*) In *Bu alemi gören sensin* (III), even God is not spared the poet's questioning. Many *aşık*s, especially those in the central Anatolian region where Veysel lived his whole life, were also associated with the *Alevi*, a particular Sufi group with its own ceremonies of sacred song and movement, considered heterodox and even heretical by some mainstream Muslims.

In this concert, as a tribute to Veysel, the blind village minstrel, we have projected his words into lives which he never led, but which are suggested by the humanity and universality of his poetry. Most of the poems here are less well-known and have not been preserved as songs. The progress of the concert follows the path of Veysel's immense influence out into the whole of Turkish culture, and even beyond, beginning with forms of music more familiar to Veysel himself, and moving gradually into musical idioms he may have considered alien. In **Part I (Köyde Veysel/Veyssel in the Village)**, we have placed traditional pieces which Veysel himself recorded alongside newly composed pieces exploring village styles which the poet no doubt had heard during his lifetime, but which he never employed: the *zeybek* (a men's dance form), the *atışma* (the *aşık* song-duel), and the *nenni* (lullaby). **Part II (Derviş Veysel/Veyssel the Sufi)** explores the sufism of Veysel's poems in Alevi musical forms quite common in his own region, but which he, surprisingly, made no use of in his own performance. The final piece of Part II (*Bu dünyayı kuranı mimar*) imagines Veysel as one of the aristocratic Istanbul "whirling dervishes" (*Mevlevi*) by substituting his words for the Persian poetry of the Mevlevi's famous founder, Mevlana Celaludin Rumi, in one movement of a 19<sup>th</sup> c. setting of the whirling ceremony. **Part III (Uzak ellerde Veysel/Veyssel far from home)** begins with a setting of a love song in the aristocratic style of Ottoman classical music, a familiar, but rather distant idiom for Veysel. From there the climb out of the domain of the village *aşık* gets steeper, moving through *tango*, a popular westernised form in his day, to two examples of Turkish rock music from the 1970s which were directly inspired by Veysel and the *aşık* tradition. Along the way, he is imagined as a Greek folk musician through his poem to his lute, *Sazım'a*, which becomes "Bouzouki mou", in the form of a Greek *amane* and *zeibekiko*. The concert ends as it began, with Veysel's own voice.

## PROGRAM

### Prologue

#### **Kara toprak**

words and music: Aşık Veysel

*Dost dost diye nicelerine sarıldım  
Benim sadık yarım kara topraktır  
Beyhude dolandım boşa yoruldum  
Benim sadık yarım kara topraktır...*

I have embraced many people saying, 'friend, friend'  
My faithful, beloved black earth  
In vain I have wandered, with nothing to show for it  
My faithful, beloved black earth...

### I. Köyde Veysel (Veysel in the Village)

#### **Mecnun gibi dolanıyorum** (9/4)

words: Aşık Veysel music: R. Labaree

Veysel's poem on being a poet, in the form of a *zeybek* (men's dance song, Western Anatolia)

*Mecnun gibi dolanıyorum çöllerde  
Hayal beni yeldiriyor yel gibi  
Ah çeker ağlarım gurbet ellerde  
Durmaz akar gözüm yaşı sel gibi*

Like Mecnun I wander in the desert  
Imagination driving me like a gale  
My cries exiled in a distant land  
My tears flow ceaselessly like a flood...

*Zincirsiz kösteksiz bağladı beni  
Tatlı dilleriyle eğledi beni  
Yurdumdan yuvamdan eyledi beni  
Yarsız dünya malı bana pul gibi.*

Without chains or fetters, it has bound me  
With sweet words it has amused me  
From my village, from my nest, it has been with me  
The loveless world's riches to me are nothing...

#### **Nağme gelin** (türkü/folk song) (4/4)

words and music traditional: Sivas (Veysel)

a traditional dance song from Veysel's own repertoire

*Bahçalarda hıyar  
Nazik nazik soyar  
Şimdi Nağme gelin  
Yandım Nağme gelin  
Bir tomorcuk gül iken  
Soldum Nağme gelin...*

In the gardens there is a cucumber  
Delicately she peels it  
Now, Nağme my bride  
I'm burning, Nağme my bride  
Here I am, a rosebud  
I'm wilting, Nağme my bride...

#### **Yayla havası** (a traditional fast dance in 9/8)

traditional: Cameli

#### **Çarık-Mest konuşması** (6/8)

words: Aşık Veysel music: R. Labaree

Veysel's dialogue between the shoe (*çarık*) and the slipper (*mest*), set as an aşık singing duel (*atışma*)

*Çarık: Aman, kardeş çok üşüdüm  
Sen köşede ben dışarda  
Senin ile kardeş idim  
Sen köşede ben dışarda*

*Shoe: Aman, brother, I'm cold!  
You're in the corner, I'm outside  
I used to be a brother of yours  
You're in the corner, I'm outside*

*Mest: Elin yüzün çamur bu ne?  
Git ahıra kızinsene  
Laf istemem uzun çene  
Ben köşede sen dışarda*

*Slipper: What is this mud on your face, your hand?  
Off with you to the barn!  
I don't care for idle chatter  
I'm in the corner, you're outside...*

*Çarık: You walk on carpets  
At beautiful parties  
I walk in the brush  
You're in the corner, I'm outside*

*Mest: Slipper is shoe and shoe is slipper  
When they walk, they make the same sound  
Veysel sings this little song  
Sometimes in the corner, sometimes outside*

#### **Dünya bir dolap** (6/8)

words: Aşık Veysel music: Christiane Karam

a lullaby (*nenni*) based on lines from Veysel's poem based on the Sufi image of the waterwheel

*Dünya bir dolap ki durmadan döner  
İçimde çeşitli plana ne den?  
Herkes bir maksatla serpilir süner  
Kuyruğu kınalı yalana ne den?  
Uyu, uyu, can bebeğim, uyu*

The world is a waterwheel which never stops turning  
What would you say about all these plans within me?  
Everyone grows up for a reason  
What would you say about this big lie?  
Sleep, sleep, child of my soul, sleep

## II. Derviş Veysel (Veysel the Sufi)

### **Şu dünyaya geldim** (4/4)

words: Aşık Veysel music: Aşık Ali Ekber Çiçek (arr. R. Labaree)  
a devotional song (*nefes*) which borrows the melody of another famous Alevi aşık

*Şu dünyaya geldim ne oldu karım*  
*Geçirdim günümü gaflet içinde*  
*Geldi güz ayları erdi baharım*  
*Geçirdim günümü gaflet içinde*

I came into this world, what good has it done me?  
I spent my days in heedlessness  
The fall months have come, my season has come full  
I spent my days in heedlessness

I was not a wise man that I looked ahead  
Nor a Mecnun\* who sought Leyla  
Nor did I take a right road to my goal  
I spent my days in heedlessness

Veysel, whatever you seek, look inside yourself  
Thus existence is given to mortals  
He who works to approach the true Beloved  
Spends his days in happiness.

(\*Mecnun and Leyla: the famous Romeo and Juliet figures of classical Middle Eastern poetry)

### **Bu alemi gören sensin** (7/8)

words: Aşık Veysel music: R. Labaree  
a poem questioning God, in the form of a devotional song, in Alevi style

*Bu alemi gören sensin*  
*Yok gözünde perde senin*  
*Haksıza yol veren sensin*  
*Yok mu suçun burda senin?*

You see this world  
Nothing is hidden from your eyes  
The road given to the unjust your  
Is there nothing here which is your fault?

You created the universe  
From nothing you created everything  
You threw me out naked  
Where is your generosity?

Are you married? Are you an adult?  
Are you the only one with no spouse?  
Are you the light of the turning sky?  
You are this sweet light.

### **Bu dünyayı kuran mimar** (6/8)

words: Aşık Veysel music: Abdürrahim Künhi Dede (1769-1831) (arr. R. Labaree)  
Veysel's meditation on the creation of the world, set to one movement from an *ayin* in Hicaz Makam  
originally composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for a whirling ceremony of the Mevlevi sufi brotherhood

*Bu dünyayı kuran mimar*  
*Ne boş sağlam temel atmış*  
*İnsanlığa ibret için*  
*Kısım kısım kul yaratmış*

The architect who created this world,  
What an empty, solid foundation he laid  
As a lesson to humanity  
He created mortals part by part

The world's design turns ceaselessly  
The expert of loves burns ceaselessly  
With the wine of love, they drink ceaselessly  
Love creates the companionship...

He established the order in this way  
Then he withdrew and waited  
He gave to Veysel all sorts of pain  
And set him to seeking a remedy.

\* \* \* intermission \* \* \*

## III. Uzak ellerde Veysel (Veysel far from home)

### **Güzelliğin on par'etmez** (10/8)

words: Aşık Veysel music: R. Labaree  
a song in classical Ottoman style (*şarkı*) in Karçıgar Makam

*Güzelliğin on par'etmez*  
*Bu bendeki aşk olmasa*  
*Eğlenecek yer bulaman*  
*Gönümdeki köşk olmasa*

Your beauty wouldn't be worth anything  
If I didn't have this love inside me  
You can't find a place of enjoyment  
If there is no mansion in my heart.

### **İşler güçler hep sinema** (2/4)

words: Aşık Veysel music: R. Labaree (arr. M. Sanlıkol)  
the blind Veysel's poem about going to the movies, in a popular Europeanized style of the 1940s (*tango*)

*Şaşar Veysel bu ne haldir?*  
*Hakikat de hep hayaldir*  
*Hayat filime misaldir*  
*İşler güçler hep sinema...*

Veysel is amazed—what kind of a thing is this?  
Truth is all a dream  
Life is a model for a film  
Everything we do is cinema...

### **Bouzouki mou (Sazım'a)** (9/4)

words: Aşık Veysel Greek translation and music: T. Vakanas  
Veysel's song to his lute (*saz*), as a Greek musician's song to his bouzouki: an *amane* followed by a *zeibekiko*

*Bouzouki mou diplohordo san haso ti zoi mou ta mistika mou an ta peis tha kapseis ti psixi mou meine gia panta*  
*sto siopi ke min paraponiese ta mistika mou sou afisa sta xeria mou se kratisa pote na mi m'arniese...*

*Ben gidersem sazım sen kal dünyada  
Gizli sırlarımı aşık etme  
Lal olsun dillerin söyleme yada  
Garip bülbül gibi ah ü zar etme...*

I have told you my secret sorrows  
I have tried to add my voice to yours  
I've rocked you in my arms like a baby  
Remember the visions, don't forget me

If I go, my saz, you stay in the world  
Don't reveal my hidden secrets  
Be mute and say nothing  
Don't complain like a miserable nightengale...

You are a honeycomb and Veysel is the bee  
Together, wailing to each other, we made honey  
I am the son of a man, you are the branch of a tree  
I will not forget my father, do not forget your master.

### **Güzel aşık**

words: Pir Sultan Abdal (16<sup>th</sup> c.) music: traditional (arr. Cem Karaca, (1945-2004)  
a version of the famous words of a 16<sup>th</sup> c. aşık about the difficulties of the sufi path,  
in a version from the 1970s by the controversial rock musician, Cem Karaca

*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?  
Here is sweet morsel of approval:  
You can't eat it, didn't I tell you?

### **Obur dünya**

words and music: Muhlis Akarsu (1948-93) (arr. Cem Karaca)  
another Cem Karaca rock song, with words by an important 20<sup>th</sup> c. Alevi aşık

*Karnı büyük obur dünya  
Keder dolu acı dünya  
Ne gül koydun ne de gonca  
Yedin yine doymadın mı...*

Bloated belly, greedy world  
Full of grief, painful world  
What rose have you put here, even a bud?  
Again you've eaten, aren't you satisfied?...

## **Epilogue**

### **Son şiiri**

words: Aşık Veysel music: R. Labaree, M. Sanlıkol, C. Mutlu  
Veysel's last poem, dictated to his son shortly before his death on March 21, 1973  
set as an unmetred song (*uzun hava*)

*Selam saygı hepinize  
Gelmez yola gidiyorum  
Ne karaya ne denize  
Gelmez yola gidiyorum*

The boat is waiting in the harbor,  
The crew is ready there  
My gaze is no longer in the world  
I am leaving on the road of no return

Farewell to you all.  
I am leaving on the road of no return  
Neither to the shore nor to the sea  
I am leaving on the road of no return.

My wife, my companion, and my children  
This is it, my autumn,  
Veysel's dark road.  
I am leaving on the road of no return

### **Dostlar beni hatırlasın**

words: Aşık Veysel

*Ben giderim adım kalır  
Dostlar beni hatırlasın  
Düğün olur bayram gelir  
Dostlar beni hatırlasın...*

I'm going, my name remains  
Friends, remember me  
Weddings, holidays come and go  
Friends, remember me...

\* \* \* \*

## **The Musicians**

**Eylem Başaldı** (violin, kaşık, NEC M.M. '03) teaches violin and plays with Turkish, Arabic and klezmer groups in the Boston area. / **Cory Cali** (guitar, NEC B.M. '95) is a jazz guitarist in the Boston area and has lived several years in Turkey. / **Josh Feinberg** (bass, NEC B.M. '06) is a jazz bassist and a student of Hindustani sitar. / **Engin Günaydın** (voice, percussion) is a percussionist, a graduate in music of Bilkent University in Turkey, now studying at Berklee. / **Christiane Karam** (voice, percussion, NEC M.M. '05), born in Lebanon, specializes in Middle Eastern Music and leads the *Zilzala* ensemble in Boston. **Robert Labaree** (çeng, voice, percussion) is Chair of the NEC Music History Department and director of the NEC Intercultural Institute. / **Cem Mutlu** (voice, percussion) plays jazz and a variety of world traditions with groups in the Boston area. **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol** (voice, ud, zurna, cura, NEC D.M.A. '04) is a jazz pianist and composer and president/co-founder of the DÜNYA organization. **Theodoulos Vakanas** (voice, bouzouki, saz, violin, NEC M.M. '05), born in Cyprus, plays a variety of Greek and Middle Eastern music and jazz in the Boston area.

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