

CHANTING THE WORD OF GOD: *an Ottoman tableau of devotional music*

with DÜNYA Ensemble

directed by **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**, *ney, ud, saz, cura, voice*

Beth Bahia Cohen, *bowed tanbur, violin* **Robert Labaree**, *çeng, voice*

Bertram Lehmann, *percussion* **George Lernis**, *percussion* **Elif Özdemir**, *voice*
and

Richard Barrett, *voice* **Vasil Grigoriadis**, *voice* **Samuel Herron**, *voice*

Grammenos Karanos, *voice* **Antonios Papathanasiou**, *voice*

special guest **Josh Jacobson**, *voice*

Thursday, May 8, 2017 8:00 pm The Fenway Center at Northeastern University

Part I: Devotional songs in Greek, Hebrew and Turkish

Ney Taksim (improvisation)

Segah Peşrev by Neyzen Yusuf Paşa (1821-1884) & **Yeheme Levavi Biroti** - a *piyut* (liturgical poem)
Text: Rabbi Israel Najara, (b. 1555, Damascus) poet, preacher, Biblical commentator, kabbalist, and
rabbi of Gaza. Music: Based on the classical Segah Peşrev by Neyzen Yusuf Paşa.

*Yeheme levavi biroti, tsari yiltosh einav negdi / Shinav yakharok gam yisaar, lehafitz hamon gdudi / Khish aneni Noraot,
Elohei ha'Tsvaot / Ad matai ketz plaot, esmakh yagel kvodi / Shama leshama samani, vegila avnei yesodi / Omar amar
levala, eer nakhalat tzvi hodi / Khaletz nah eved shadood, yartiakh kesir vadood / Tsur be'Kha arutz gdood, le'Kha azamer
beodi.*

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 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.

Christos Anesti Matia Mou (Greek paraliturgical song)

Anonymous

Christos anesti matia mou

Christ has risen in front of my eyes

Meta to techthinai se [Μετὰ τὸ τεχθῆναι σε]

Doxastikon of Vespers for the feast of the Theotokos' Entrance into the Temple, celebrated on November 21. This
setting in plagal fourth mode was composed by Konstantinos Pringos (1892-1964), Archon Protopsaltis of the Great
Church of Christ.

*Μετὰ τὸ τεχθῆναι σε, Θεόνομφε Δέσποινα, παρεγένου ἐν Ναῶ Κυρίου, τοῦ ἀνατραφῆναι εἰς τὰ Ἅγια τῶν Ἁγίων, ὡς
ἡγιασμένη.*

Since you are sanctified, O Lady, bride of God, having proceeded after your birth to the Temple, to be brought up in the
Holy of Holies, verily, Gabriel was sent to you with food. And all the heavens were amazed at beholding the Holy Spirit
dwelling in you. Wherefore, O pure and spotless Theotokos, glorified in heaven and upon earth, save our race.

Pencgah Nefes (devotional song)

Text: Resmi, Music: Anonymous

*Mushaf demek hatadır ol safhai cemale
Bu kitap bir sözdür fehmiden ehli hale*

It's wrong to say that The Qur'an is the face of perfection
This book is a promise to those who try to comprehend

Part II: Mevlid-i Şerif

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.

Tilavet: chanting of The Holy Koran - Surah al-Kahf (The Cave)

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا
بَٰبٍ وَإِمَامًا أَن تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا قُلْنَا يَا ذَا الْقُرْنَيْنِ إِمَامًا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ

... "Alexander!" We said, "you must either punish them or show them kindness." He replied: "the wicked we shall surely punish. Then shall they return to their Lord and be sternly punished by Him. As for those that have faith and do good works, we shall bestow on them a rich reward and deal indulgently with them."... "Alexander!" they said, "Gog and Magog are ravaging this land. Build a rampart between us, and we will pay you tribute."

Saba ilahi (devotional song)

Anonymous

*Seyreyleyip yandım mah cemalini
Nurkundak içinde yatar Muhammed
Canımın cananısın ya Muhammed*

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

*Ter ter dudakların bilmem ne söyler
Hulusi kalb ile Hakkı zikreyleyler
Daha tıfıl iken ümmetin diler*

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

Çargah ilahi

Text: Yunus Emre, Music: Anonymous

*Ben dervişim diyene bir ün idesim gelir
Seğirdi ben sesine varıp yitesim gelir*

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

Allah Adın Bahri of the Mevlid-i Şerif

Süleyman Çelebi (1351-1422)

*Allah adın zikredelim evvela
Vacib oldu cümle işte her kula*

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

*Allah adın her kim ol evvel ana
Her işi âsan eder Allah ana*

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

*Allah adı olsa her işin önü
Hergiz ebter olmaya anın sonu*

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

(Translation by F. Lyman MacCallum)

Part III: Songs of the Alevi and the Bektaşî dervishes

Hicaz Nefes (devotional song of the Bektaşî dervishes)

Trakya, 20th c.

This song recorded by a Bektaşî woman in the Thracian part of Turkey is full of special vocabulary and references to secret practices.

*Medet ya Ali'm senden medet
Meşrebidir herkese yârân olur bektaşiler
Kimse bilmez sırlarını settar olur Bektaşiler
Ödüler ölmezden evvel buldular Hakk'ı ayan
Zümreyi irfan içinde cân olur Bektaşiler
Dest-i pirden bir kadeh nûş ettiler bezm-i elest
Daima sermest gezip mestan olur Bektaşiler
Tâc-ı rehi tığbent ile mürşide teslim olur
Ey Nesimi sinesi üryan olur Bektaşiler
Medet ya Ali'm senden medet
Hakk Dost Dost*

Help Ali! I ask for your help.
It is in the nature of the Bektaşî to become companions of all
Nobody knows their secret, the Bektaşî become the forgivers of sin
They died yet evidently found God before.
They become brothers within the wisdom of their fellowship
They drank a cup from the hand of their master of devotion to God
The Bektaşî are always intoxicated and joyous.
With a crown of truth and a belt of rope they submit to their Master
O Nesimi Bektaşî hearts are purely visible.
Help Ali! I ask for your help
O God, O Friend, Friend

Ud Taksim

Alis mono den ifiche (Bektaşî Sufi song in Greek)

source: Müyesser Bacı (20th c.)

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

Ali was not left dead in the ground
he's everywhere in the world, but he's concealed
Ali didn't take his mother's breast to nurse
he was waiting for Muhammed, to converse with him

stou Kerbela ta homata o ilios protodidi
chai 'chya 'n' tou Shahi ta paidia ch' o kosmos ta gnorizi
stou Kerbela ta homata echya tha pa na katso
na psiaso penna che harti ta pathi dos na grapso

the sun rises on the ground of Kerbela
the Shah's children are there, and all the world knows of them
I'll go sit on the ground of Kerbela
I'll take pen and paper, and write of their suffering

Yesha El Hay Tohil

Text: Israel Najara, Music: Anonymous

and

Gel Gönül Sabreyle

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

Our colleague Noam Sender has adapted the poem by Najara to a melody used nowadays for a Bektaşî nefes that follows the same syllabic structure. To the same melody, Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol has adapted the original Bektaşî poem by Pir Sultan Abdal.

*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 çevre
Elbet sen'ağlatan bir gün güldürür
Niceleri kondu 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

Bir Allah'ı tanıyalım (Alevi song)

Aşık Ali İzzet (recorded ca. 1970)

A skeptical Alevi view of competing religions by a 20th century aşık or folk singer-poet.

*Bir Allah'ı tanıyalım / Ayrı gayrı bu din nedir?
Senlik benliği nidelim? / Bu kavga döğüşte nedir?
Issız dünyayı doldurdu / Kendini bulabildi mi?
Habil Kabil'i öldürdü / Orta yerde ki kan nedir?
Musa Tevrat'a Hak dedi / Firavun aslı yok dedi.
İsa İncil'e bak dedi / Sonra gelen Kuran nedir?
Bu gavur Müslüman nedir? Dost, Dost, Dost.*

Let us all believe in one God / What are all these separate religions?
'yourself', 'myself': What is all this? / Where does this fighting come from?
God filled the empty world / Was He able to find Himself?
Abel killed Cain / What is all this blood on the ground?
Moses said, 'The Torah is the Truth' / Pharaoh said, 'It's not true.'
Jesus said, 'Look to the Bible' / Then comes the Koran: what is it?
What is this 'Muslim' and 'nonbeliever'? Friend, Friend, Friend.

PART IV: A musical conversation among cantors

Çeng Taksim

Zikir in Three

This performance is modelled on *zikir*, the Sufi devotional practice of improvisational solo cantillation over repetitive group singing. Repeated phrases in different languages and musical idioms provide a framework for the three traditions to interact in a shared musical devotion. Over these *zikir* patterns soloists from each group improvise melodically on texts they have chosen in their own language.

chorus: repeated phrases in Arabic, Hebrew and Greek

Arabic: *La ilahe ilallah* (There is no god but God)

Hebrew: *Adonai hu hah-Elohim* (The Lord is God)

Greek: *Kyrie eleison* (Lord have mercy)

soloists: selected texts in Turkish, Hebrew and Greek

Part V: Liturgical and Ceremonial Music

Vocal Taksim 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.)

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!

Greek Orthodox Biblical Pericope, 1 John 1:1-7

1 Ο ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐώρακάμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς· 2 καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἐώρακάμεν καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον, ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν·

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.

Anastaseos imera and Christos anesti [Αναστάσεως ἡμέρα... Χριστὸς ἀνέστη]

Doxastikon for Orthros of Pascha. The hymn "Christ is risen," which concludes the doxastikon, constitutes a triumphant proclamation of Christians' belief in the Resurrection of Christ and is the most beloved of all Orthodox hymns. Based on oral tradition and the transcription by Petros the Peloponnesian (c. 1730-1778), this setting in plagal first mode has been further arranged by Photios Ketsetzis.

Αναστάσεως ἡμέρα καὶ λαμπρυνθῶμεν τῇ πανηγύρει καὶ ἀλλήλους περιπτυξώμεθα. Εἰπῶμεν ἀδελφοί καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἡμᾶς, συγχωρήσωμεν πάντα τῇ Αναστάσει.

It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant for the feast, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, brethren, even to those that hate us, 'Let us forgive all things on account of the Resurrection,' and so let us cry, 'Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life!'

Bowed Tanbur Taksim

Ferahfeza Mevlevi Ayini

Music: İsmail Dede Efendi (1778-1846)

The final movement of one of the most famous of the pieces composed for the whirling ceremony of the Mevlevi dervishes.

Dördüncü Selam (Fourth Movement)

Sultan-ı menî, ender dil-ü can iman-ı menî

My sultan, my belief deep in my heart and soul

Son Peşrev and Semai (instrumental postlude)