



DEVİRAN

Music of Islam, Turkey & Renaissance Europe

featuring

a new intercultural choral work
by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

with performances by

DÜNYA Ensemble

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

Beth Bahia Cohen, *bowed tanbur, violin* Burcu Güleç, *voice* Robert Labaree, *çeng, voice*
Bertram Lehmann, *percussion* George Lernis, *percussion*

and

New England Conservatory

Chamber Singers

directed by Erica J. Washburn

Holly Druckman and Rong Zhang, *graduate conductors*

Sunday, November 12, 2017 2:00 pm

First Church in Roxbury, Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry





NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

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Please do not use cameras or tape recorders during this performance.
Please switch off any devices that make noise or shed light.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Demystifying Islam:

Challenging current cultural stereotypes within and surrounding Islam
Moderated by WBUR's Louise Kennedy.

Panelists

Ali Asani
Harvard University,
Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures

Robert Labaree
New England Conservatory,
Music History & Musicology Faculty

Mehmet Ali Sanlikol
Composer
New England Conservatory,
Music History & Musicology Faculty

– *Brief Intermission* –

CONCERT

DÜNYA Ensemble

I.

In the Sufi (Islamic mystical) tradition, *zikir* (Arabic: *dhikr*) is understood as “remembering”, a special type of musical devotion in which repetition of short phrases of text and music, often combined with controlled deep breathing, creates a meditative state. The *zikir* practice is featured in the last two pieces of this set. The first two pieces in the program are taken from a related Ottoman-Jewish tradition. 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 Sufi brotherhoods in the Ottoman regions.

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 un'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

Yismah Har Tsiyyon Text: Yehuda (anonymous, perhaps Yehuda Benaroya, late 19th century),
Music: Anonymous

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

Rast ilahi

Anonymous

Gül yüzünü rüyamızda görelim ya Resul Allah O messenger of God let us see your beautiful face in our dreams
Gül bahçene dünyamızda girelim ya Resul Allah Allow us to enter your garden of roses in this world

Rast ilahi

Anonymous

Erler demine destur alalım Let us get permission to become knowledgeable men
Pervaneyeye bak ibret alalım Let us look at the moth and learn from it
Aşkın ateşine gel bir yanalım Let us burn with the fire of Love
Devrana girip seyran edelim And whirl and dream
Eyvah demeden Allah diyelim Before calling out for mercy let's say Allah

II.

The second part of our program represents the *Bektaşî* dervishes, a heterodox form of mystical Turkish Islam with strong Shiite tendencies. In this set we include instrumental music along with Hebrew poetry adapted to pre-existing *Bektaşî* hymns (commonly referred to as *nefes*, lit. “breath”).

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 beктаşiler
Kimse bilmez sırlarını settar olur Bektaşiler
Öldüler 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

Meydan Saz (Semah)

Source: Ali Ekber Çiçek (1935-2006)

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? Let us all believe in one God / What are all these separate religions?
Senlik benliği nidelim? / Bu kavga dögüşte nedir? 'yourself', 'myself': What is all this? / Where does this fighting come from?
İssız dünyayı doldurdu / Kendini bulabildi mi? God filled the empty world / Was He able to find Himself?
Habil Kabil'i öldürdü / Orta yerde ki kan nedir? Abel killed Cain / What is all this blood on the ground?
Musa Tevrat'a Hak dedi / Firavun aslı yok dedi. Moses said, 'The Torah is the Truth' / Pharaoh said, 'It's not true.'
İsa İncil'e hak dedi / Sonra gelen Kuran nedir? Jesus said, 'Look to the Bible' / Then comes the Koran: what is it?
Bu gavur Müslüman nedir? Dost, Dost, Dost. What is this 'Muslim' and 'nonbeliever'? Friend, Friend, Friend.

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

and

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

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 Bektaşî poem by Pir Sultan Abdal well known during his time. Since the early 16th century Bektaşî melody of this particular poem has been lost. Our colleague Noam Sender has adapted the poem by Najara to a melody used nowadays for a different 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 as well.

*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 cevre
Elbet sen'ağlatan bir gün güldürür
Nıceleri konu 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

III.

Ayin is the name given to the four movement musical setting of the text of the whirling ceremony which is the central ritual of the Mevlevi Sufi order. The poetry being sung in this part of the program is in Persian and Turkish, much of it drawn from the *Mesnevi*, the great mystical poetic work of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (d. 1273) that has been called "the Qur'an in Persian." One of the greatest mystics of Islam, Rumi is the spiritual father of the Mevlevi order of dervishes known in the West as the "whirling dervishes" because of the turning movement used in their devotions. His poetry has been called "the most perfect example of the spontaneous outpouring

of mystical love and visionary ecstasy in Persian, perhaps even in world literature" (W. M. Thackston).

Müşterek Taksim (collective improvisation)

Nihavend Mevlevi Ayini, 1. Selam

Text: Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (1207-1273)

Music: Tanburi Musahip Seyyid Ahmed Ağa (d. 1794)

The first movement of a composition written for the whirling ritual of the Mevlevi dervishes.

Duş-i ber dergah-i izzet kus-i sultani zedem
Hayme ber bala-i dar-ül milk-i rabbani zedem...

I am addicted to dreaming of the glorious sultan
I am addicted to the grounds of the divine home...

Son Yürük Semai

Music: Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (b. 1974)

New England Conservatory Chamber Singers

IV.

It was a common compositional practice during the Renaissance to employ the melody of a single Gregorian chant as the basis of an entire mass. This is exemplified in our program by the *Kyrie* from Josquin's *Missa Pange Lingua*, preceded by the chant on which it is based. The piece by Salomone Rossi, an Italian Jewish composer from the early Baroque, remains unique even now as it was a part of a number of compositions by Rossi which followed the Christian sacred choral model of the time, only with Hebrew text – not much different from what Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol is doing with his piece in Part V of this concert.

Pange Lingua (chant)

Anonymous

Pange, lingua, gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
quem in mundi pretium
fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit Gentium.

Sing, my tongue, the Savior's glory,
of His flesh the mystery sing;
of the Blood, all price exceeding,
shed by our immortal King,
destined, for the world's redemption,
from a noble womb to spring.

Kyrie from *Missa Pange Lingua*

Music: Josquin Desprez (c.1455-1521)

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

Elohim Hashiveinu

Text: Psalm 80:4, 8, 20, Music: Salomone Rossi (c. 1570–1630)

Elohim hashivenu,
v'haer panekha
v'nivvashe'a.

O God, restore us;
And cause Your face to shine on us,
and we shall be saved.

Elohim tsevaot
hashivenu
v'haer panekha
v'nivvashe'a.

O God of hosts,
restore us;
And cause Your face to shine on us,
and we shall be saved.

*Adonai elohim tsevaot
hashivenu;
haer panekha
v'nivvashe'a.*

O Lord God of hosts,
restore us;
Cause Your face to shine on us,
and we shall be saved.

V.

The title of this piece, DEVRAN, in Turkish has a number of meanings including the world, life, fate, time, the times we/people live in as well as whirling/turning. It is often used in Sufi (Islamic mysticism) literature and it is also included in the text of the second movement where it seems to reference the Mevlevi (so-called “whirling”) dervishes.

Composer's note

When composing DEVRAN my main goal was to honor pluralism within Islamic culture with a motet-like choral piece, the staple of Renaissance period European Christian music, while using texts written by Turkish Sufi dervishes. As a result, the musical idea behind the piece was to combine Renaissance polyphony and several Middle Eastern musical elements into an artistic whole. More specifically, while the imitative style of 16th century counterpoint is the main influence, which especially dominates the second movement, the Middle Eastern *makam* (mode) tradition and selected Turkish Sufi music elements help shape the overall musical tone. For example, the first movement incorporates *zikir*, and the second movement has a section where a solo invokes the vocal improvisations of the *Hafiz* (Koranic chanters).

DEVVRAN

Music: Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

Texts originate from two different anonymous devotional songs (*ilahi*) transcribed by Ali Ufki (1610-1675) in his collection. Translations by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol.

1. *Ey gönül neylersin sen bu cihanı*

Ey gönül neylersin sen bu cihanı (vay)

Kala sanma sana bu mülk-i fani

O soul, why do you care for this world?
Don't think that this mortal wealth will remain with you

Ne alır gidersen dünya evinden

Söyüne bir gün ömrün şem'danı

Whatever you end up doing in this world
One day the light of your life will be blown out

Hani şol aleme sultan olanlar

Koyuban gittiler nam-u nişanı

Where are those who became sultans in this world?
They are all gone with their reputations and distinctions left behind

Felekler tacını başından almış

Türab etmiş nice sahib-kıranı

Destiny took their crowns from their heads
And turned those powerful rulers into earth

Hakiki gafil olma aç gözünü

Ecel erir vermez bir gün amanı

Don't be a real fool, open your eyes
One day death will come and not let you ask for mercy

*Additional text in movement I:

Ya Allah, ya Rahman, ya Batın, ya Cabbar

O God, o the Compassionate, o the Hidden, o the Mighty

2. *Mevlam senin aşıkların devran iderler Hu ile*

Mevlam senin aşıkların

Devran iderler Hu ile

Yolundaki sadıkların (sultanım hay)

Cevlan iderler Hu ile

My Lord, those who are in love with you
Whirl while saying Hu [a name for God in Sufism]
Those loyal to you on your path (o my sultan)
Turn while saying Hu

Aşkın şarabından içip

Fani halayıktan geçip

Vaslun hevasında uçup (sultanım hay)

Meydan iderler Hu ile

They drink the wine of Love
Go beyond the mortal female servants
Sail in the skies of reunification (o my sultan)
And perform their rituals while saying Hu

Güller alıp eller varak

Bülbüller okurlar sabak

Her şeyde görür nur-u Hak

Ezan iderler Hu ile

Roses pick up those pages
Nightingales sing the lessons
They see the light of Truth in everything
And call to prayer while saying Hu

Bunca meratib geçmeye

Dost illerine uçmaya

Hakka erip raz açmaya (sultanım hay)

În'am iderler Hu ile

To pass through many ranks
To fly toward the lands of the Friend
To reach the Truth and share secrets (o my sultan)
They give blessings while saying Hu

Epilogue

(NEC Chamber Singers and DÜNYA)

Perde Kaldırma with Zikir (modulating improvisation over ostinato)

La ilahe illallah

There is no god but God

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Erica Washburn for her support and genuine appreciation of my music; Carole Friedman for believing in and continuing to work with me on numerous projects; and my dear wife, Serap Kantarcı Sanlıkol, for her endless energy, dedication toward DÜNYA, and genuine support of my music; and NEFA's Creative City project and its coordinator Kim Szeto for their support of this project.

– Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

About the Artists

Grammy nominated composer, NEC faculty member in music history and ethnomusicology, and CMES Harvard University fellow 2013-15, **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol** made his Carnegie Hall debut in April 2016 premiering his commissioned piece *Harabat/The Intoxicated* with the American Composers Orchestra. Other recent works have been heard at Tanglewood's Ozawa Hall and on A Far Cry string orchestra's recording *Dreams and Prayers*.

He hails from Cyprus and Turkey and was *DownBeat Magazine*'s September 2016 Editor's pick, and JAZZIZ's Top 10 Critics' Choice 2014. A jazz pianist, multi-instrumentalist, and singer, Sanlıkol was a recipient of The Aaron Copland Fund for Music Performance Program Grant in 2016 with his unique jazz orchestra/combo, *Whatsnext?* and has been praised by critics all over the world for his unique, pluralist, multicultural and energetic musical voice. *The Boston Globe* noted that Sanlıkol's "music is colorful, fanciful, full of rhythmic life, and full of feeling. The multiculturalism is not touristy, but rather sophis-ticated, informed, internalized; Sanlıkol is a citizen of the world", "...and he (Sanlıkol) is another who could play decisive role in music's future in the world."

Sanlıkol has composed for, performed and toured with international stars and ensembles such as Dave Liebman, Bob Brookmeyer, Anat Cohen, Esperanza Spalding, Antonio Sanchez, Tiger Okoshi, The Boston Camerata, The Boston Cello Quartet, A Far Cry string orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Okay Temiz, Erkan Oğur and Brenna MacCrimmon. His "coffeehouse opera", entitled *Othello in the Seraglio: The Tragedy of Sümbül The Black Eunuch*, a recipient of the Paul R. Judy Center grant at Eastman School of Music in 2015, bridges the musical cultures of opera house and coffeehouse, Baroque Italy and Ottoman Turkey. This unique opera has been performed eighteen times in New York City and New England since its premiere.

To hear more of Mr. Sanlıkol's music and for information about upcoming performances, please visit Sanlikol.com

DÜNYA (the Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek word for "world"), a musicians' collective and a record label, is a non-profit, tax exempt educational organization located in Boston, Massachusetts. Its goal is to explore a cosmopolitan view of the world through the lens of a wide range of Turkish traditions, alone and in conversation with the musics of the formerly Ottoman peoples—Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Arabs, Kurds, mystics—as well as with western and other world traditions. The DÜNYA collective includes specialists in Ottoman music, early European music, Middle Eastern Christian and Jewish music, ethnomusicology, jazz, contemporary composition and popular music. In DÜNYA projects, research and translation combine with original composition, improvisation and musical experimentation to create lively presentations, recordings and publications aimed at engaging contemporary audiences. DÜNYA seeks to work with a wide range of cultural and religious organizations and relies on no particular political, governmental or religious affiliation or support of any kind.

The **NEC Chamber Singers** is an auditioned ensemble, open to all majors at NEC, of 24-28 musicians that perform challenging works from all style periods, with a particular emphasis on early music and 19th–21st century a cappella works. Primarily drawn from the members of the NEC Concert Choir, they rehearse twice a week and experience choral music-making in an intimate ensemble setting. All NEC Chamber Singers are students seeking to understand the professional expectations of superior choral artistry. They diligently prepare their music outside of scheduled rehearsals so that the brief time

spent together is musically invaluable. This select choir performs several times a year: on campus in NEC's famed Jordan Hall, off campus at various venues in Boston, as well as on tour and in area high schools for community outreach programs.

New England Conservatory Chamber Singers

Erica J. Washburn, Director of Choral Activities
Holly Druckman and Rong Zhang, graduate assistant conductors
Sally Millar, administrator
Carina Inoue, rehearsal accompanist

NEC Chamber Singers

Yüksel Çınar Atilla, Allyson Bennett, Tyler Bouque, Julia Anne Cohen, Holly Druckman, Jason Dyer, Anne Fanelli, Madison Fitzpatrick, Samantha Fox, Casey Germain, Sullivan Hart, Johan Hartman, Joanna Kim, Jonathan Lawlor, Chris Melton, Ruoxi Peng, Alexandra Chace Purdy, Richard Rivale, Pepita Salim, Pauline Ann Tan, Öznur Hasibe Tülüoğlu, Qihe Wang, Tianyi Wang, Rong Zhang

Conductor and mezzo-soprano **Erica Washburn** is NEC's Director of Choral Activities. Prior to her appointment at NEC, Washburn was an instructor of voice and member of the conducting faculty at the Greatbatch School of Music of Houghton College, Houghton, NY. She has also served on the faculty for the New York State Summer School for the Arts School of Choral Studies, and as conductor of the East Carolina Women's Choir, Assistant Conductor of the Eastman Women's Chorale, and instructor of secondary voice while matriculated at East Carolina University and the Eastman School of Music.

While residing in Rochester, NY, Washburn was featured on the Eastman-St. Michael's Recital Series, performing selections of Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with the Eastman School Symphony Orchestra, Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and Vivaldi's *Gloria* with the Genesee Valley Orchestra and Chorus.

Other stage performance credits include Ravel's *Shéhérazade*, Toensing's *Night Songs* and *Evening Prayers*, Madame Lidoine in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Rebecca Nurse in Robert Ward's *The Crucible*, Aminta in Mozart's *Il re pastore*, and portraying the role of Mother/Allison in the premiere of Lee Hoiby's *This is the Rill Speaking*.

