DEVRAN
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
Creative City grants bring arts of all disciplines to all neighborhoods of Boston

nefa.org/creative-city-grant

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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 –
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

*Ahalya shem Elohim be’shir va’a’gadelenu be’toda*
I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving

*Adonay uzi uma’azi 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

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

*Yismah har Tsiyyon ve-ta’gelna 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**

*Güllüğününü riyamzda gørelim ya Resul Allah*
O messenger of God let us see your beautiful face in our dreams

*Güll bugçene dünyamzda gørelim ya Resul Allah*
Allow us to enter your garden of roses in this world

**Rast ilahi**

*Erler demine destur alalım*
Let us get permission to become knowledgeable men

*Pervane ye 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 Bektaşi 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 Bektaşi hymns (commonly referred to as nefes, lit. “breath”).

**Hicaz Nefes** (devotional song of the Bektaşi dervishes)

*Trakya, 20th c.*

This song recorded by a Bektaşi woman in the Thracian part of Turkey is full of special vocabulary and references to secret practices.
Meşrebidir herkese yârâni olur bektaşi  It is in the nature of the Bektaşi to become companions of all
Kimse bilmez surlarını settar olur Bektaşi  Nobody knows their secret, the Bektaşi become the forgivers of sin
Öldüler ömezden evvel buldular Hakk’i ayan  They died yet evidently found God before.
Zümreyi irfan içinde cân olur Bektaşi  They become brothers within the wisdom of their fellowship
Kimse bilmez sırlarını settar olur Bektaşi  Nobody knows their secret, the Bektaşi become the forgivers of sin
Öldüler ölmezden evvel buldular Hakk’i ayan  They died yet evidently found God before.
Zümreyi irfan içinde cân olur Bektaşi  They become brothers within the wisdom of their fellowship
Dest-i pirden bir kadeh nûsettiler bezm-i elest  They drank a cup from the hand of their master of devotion to God
Daima sermest gezip mestan olur Bektaşi  The Bektaşi are always intoxicated and joyous.
Tâc-ı rehi tığbent ile mürde teslim olur  With a crown of truth and a belt of rope they submit to their Master
Ey Nesimi sinesi üryan olur Bektaşi  O Nesimi Bektaşi hearts are purely visible.
Medet ya Ali’im senden medet  Help Ali! I ask for your help
Hâkk Dost Dost  O God, O Friend, Friend

**Meydan Saz** (Semah)  
Source: Ali Ekber Çiçek (1935-2006)

**Bir Allah’ı tanıyalım** (Alevi song)  
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 benliğim nedir?** / Bu kavgâ dögüste neder?  
What is all this? / Where does this fighting come from?

**Issız 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’ / Pharoah said, ‘It’s not true.’

**İsa İncil’e bak 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

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

The text of the first maftûrûm song here is a piyyût 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. Our colleague 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.

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**Yesha el hay tohil lev soled behil**  
Living God provide deliverance to an exulting heart

**Ki od el hay eliyon atiyon**  
The Heavenly Living God will still favor Zion

**Lev nishbar venidka pedut el hakeh**  
Broken and dismayed heart, expect heavenly redemption

**Lev ashuk veratzutz od tashuv lasus**  
Weary and exhausted heart, you shall rejoice again!

**Gel gönül sabreyle katlan bu cevre**  
O my heart, be patient and bear this pain

**Elbet sen’ı ağıltatan bir gün güldürür**  
Surely, who makes you cry, will make you smile one day

**Nicerleri konda göçtu bu hane**  
So many came to, and left this inn

**Elbet sen’ı ağıltatan bir gün güldürür**  
Surely, who makes you cry, will make you smile one day

**III.**

Ayiñ 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 izzard-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)

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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 hashiveinu,
- 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
- hashiveinu
- 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  O Lord God of hosts,  hashivenu; restore us; haer panekha Cause Your face to shine on us, v’nivvashe’a. and we shall be saved.

V.
The title of this piece, DEVRA, 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 DEVRA 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).


1. Ey gönül neylerin sen bu cihanı
Ey gönül neylerin 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  Süyüne bir gün ömrün şem’Dani  Whatever you end up doing in this world  One day the light of your life will be blown out

Hani şol aleme sultan olanlar  Köybulan 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-kirani  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 Bānn, ya Caḥbaḥ  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*  
*Vasılan 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

**Epilogue**

*(NEC Chamber Singers and DÜNYA)*

**Perde Kaldırma with Zikir** (modulating improvisation over ostinato)

*La ilaha illallah*  
There is no god but God

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**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 sophisticating, 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**

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*. 