

# ***Kuş Dili: The Language of Birds***

***Bird sounds, bird music and bird poetry from the Middle East and Europe***

Tuesday, March 4, 2008 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

directed by **Robert Labaree**

***The Dünya Ensemble and special guests***

**Shanteri Baliga**/ney **Beth Bahia Cohen**/yayli tanbur, violin **Wallace Corey-Dunbar**/male soprano  
**Héloise Degrugillier**/recorder **Justin Godoy**/recorder **Engin Günaydın**/percussion, voice  
**Robert Labaree**/çeng, percussion, voice **Sophie Labaree**/voice **Warrick Moses**/clarinet  
**Cem Mutlu**/percussion, voice **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**/voice, ud, ney, saz, *laouto*  
**Reinmar Seidler**/cello **Noam Sender**/ney **Frederick Stubbs**/ney **Lucy Tan**/piano  
**Thomas Zajac**/recorder



This concert begins long before the first instrument has sounded—with the songs of birds, which for human musicians of many places and times in history have represented models of both delicacy and strength, of worldly as well as spiritual passion, and of sheer musical prowess. In the **Prologue**, *The Blind Minstrel in the Forest*, the words of the famous Turkish folk troubadour Aşık Veysel Satioğlu, blind from childhood, emerge from a collage of birds sounds, the first of several times in the concert when musicians seem to take a lesson from nature. **Part II**, *Cantemir's Flock of Birds and Rameau's Nightingale*, combines bird compositions associated with two celebrated aristocratic musical figures of 18<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul and Paris, Dimitri Cantemir (1673-1723) and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764). Two anonymous instrumental pieces preserved in Prince Cantemir's special notation system frame two vocal pieces characteristic of each culture: an Ottoman *gazel* or vocal improvisation, and an aria from a French opera. The 16<sup>th</sup> century *gazel* text (as much Persian as Turkish) is secular, but its images are saturated with allusions to Islamic mysticism (Sufism). In the aria, a young shepherdess (performed, in keeping with a common 18<sup>th</sup> century European practice, by a high male voice) sings an evocation to the Goddess Diana. **Part III**, *Birds of Paradise*, opens with a movement from Olivier Messiaen's famous *Quartet for the end of time*, composed while he was in a Nazi prison camp at Görlitz in 1941. For this Roman Catholic mystic who spent a lifetime meticulously recording birdsong in musical notation, the sound of birds at sunrise evokes "the harmonious silence of heaven", an image elaborated in the Turkish Sufi songs which immediately follow it. An Ottoman sultan describes the tumult of the birds at sunrise as a call to awaken from heedlessness and sin. To village Sufi (Alevi-Baktaşî) poets, the nightingale singing in the garden resembles their own passionate longing for union with God. *Nightingales, cuckoos and thrushes* (**Part IV**) is an assemblage of instrumental pieces from Renaissance Europe and the contemporary Greek and Turkish countryside which explicitly imitate the virtuosic variety of birdsong. This section closes with one musician's attempt to master the complexities of a Wood Thrush's songs by slowing them down to something closer to conventional human music. **Part V**, *The Bird in the Gilded Cage*, consists of Turkish folk songs in which birds remind the singer of his human lover. The set closes with the most basic and universal of all songs, the lullaby (*nenni*), in which the crane and the nightingale hover like parents over a sleeping child.

## I. Prologue: The Blind Minstrel in the Forest

Aşık Veysel speaks to the birds.

American Goldfinch, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, Cardinal, Cassin's Finch, Downy Woodpecker, Evening Grosbeak, Flicker, Housefinch, Junco, Mourning Dove, Nuthatch, Pine Siskin, Redwing Blackbird, Scrub Jay, Song Sparrow, Stellar's Jay, Titmouse, Towhee, White-crowned Sparrow, Woodpecker  
(Thanks to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York) C. Mutlu, *voice*

### **Türkü** [folk song]: **Seherde ağlayan bülbül**

Aşık Veysel Satiroğlu (1894-1973)

*Seherde ağlayan bulbul  
Sen ağlama ben ağlayım  
Ciğerim dağlayan bulbul  
Sen ağlama ben ağlayım bülbül...*

The nightingale crying at sunrise  
Don't cry, instead I'll cry  
O nightingale which sears my lungs  
Don't cry, instead I'll cry...

## II. Cantemir's Flock of Birds and Rameau's Nightinögale

Courtly bird poetry and music from 18<sup>th</sup> century Turkey and France.

S. Baliga/*ney* B. Cohen/*violin, yaylı tanbur* J. Godoy/*recorder* E. Günaydın/*percussion*  
R. Labaree/*çeng* C. Mutlu/*percussion* M. Sanlikol/*ney, voice, ud*  
R. Seidler/*cello* N. Sender/*ney* F. Stubbs/*ney*

### **Karkara** ("the cooing of birds") in Neva Makam and Muhammes Usul (16/8)

Anonymous

notated by Dimitri Cantemir (1673-1723)

### **Gazel: "İrişür bir dem"** (vocal improvisation)

words: Taşcalı Yahya Bey (d. 1582)

*İrişür bir dem ki murg-ı canunı sayd eyleyüp  
Nagehan şehbaz-ı ömr-i bi-karar elden gider*

A time will come when the bird of your life will be hunted  
Suddenly, the royal falcon of this life will leave the hand.

### **Rossignols amoureux** (aria from *Hyppolyte et Aricie*)

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

*Rossignols amoureux répondez à nos voix  
Par la douceur de vos ramages  
Rendez le plus tenders hommages à la divinité  
Qui règne dans nos bois*

Nightingales of love answer our voices  
With your sweet warbling  
Offer your tenderest homage to the divinity  
Who reigns in our wood.

### **Kuzgun** ("crows") in Şehnaz Makam and Düyek Usul (8/8)

Anonymous

notated by Dimitri Cantemir

## III. Birds of Paradise

The religious mystic on the meaning of birdsong.

Beth Bahia Cohen/*violin* Wallace Corey-Dunbar/*voice* Engin Günaydın/*percussion, voice*  
Robert Labaree/*çeng, percussion, voice* Warrick Moses/*clarinet* Cem Mutlu/*percussion, voice*  
Mehmet Ali Sanlikol/*saz, voice* Reinmar Seidler/*cello* Lucy Tan/*piano*

### **Quatuor pour la fin du temps** (Quartet for the end of time)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-92)

Movement I: *Liturgie du crystal* (Liturgy of Crystal)

*Between three and four in the morning, the awakening of birds: a solo blackbird or nightingale improvises, surrounded by a shimmer of sound, by a halo of trills lost very high in the trees. Transpose this on to a religious plane and you have the harmonious silence of heaven. (Olivier Messiaen)*

### **Uyan ey gözlerim** (ilahi: Sufi devotional song)

music: anonymous words: Sultan Murad IV  
(Ottoman Sultan from 1623-40)

*Uyan ey gözlerim gafletten uyan  
Uyan uykusu çok gözlerim uyan  
Azrail'in kasdı canadır inan  
Uyan ey gözlerim gafletten uyan  
Uyan uykusu çok gözlerim uyan*

Awake, my eyes, from heedlessness!  
From your drowsiness, awake!  
Know that the Angel of Death seeks your soul  
Awake, my eyes, from heedlessness!  
From your drowsiness, awake!

*Seherde uyanırlar cumle kuslar  
Dillü dillerince tesbihe başlar*

At sunrise the birds waken with a tumult  
Touching the heart with their tongues, they begin to pray

*Tevhid eyler dağlar taşlar ağaçlar...*

Mountains, stones, trees—all proclaim the Oneness of God...

**Seher vakti kalkan kervan** (*nefes*: song of the Alevi-Bektaşî Sufis) Pir Sultan Abdal (1480-1550)  
*Seher vakti kalkan kervan* The caravan rising at dawn  
*İniler de zarlanır* Descends and begins to move  
*Bir güzele düşen gönül* The heart which has fallen for a beauty  
*Çiçeklenir gorulanır* Blossoms and ages  
  
*Bahçemizde güller biter* In our garden the flowers blossom  
*Dalında bülbüller öter* On their branches the nightingales twitter  
*Engel gelir bir kal katar* Then an obstacle arises  
*Olan işler gerilenir* And we fall behind

**Ötme bülbül ötme** (*nefes*: song of the Alevi-Bektaşî Sufis) words: Pir Sultan Abdal (1480–1550)  
*Ötme bülbül ötme, şen değil bağı* Do not sing, nightingale, my garden is not a cheerful place  
*Dost senin derdinden ben yana yana* I'm burning from the pain you have caused me, O Friend  
*Tükendi fitilim eridi yağım* My wick is exhausted, my oil is spent  
*Dost senin derdinden ben yana yana* I'm burning from the pain you have caused me, O Friend  
  
*Deryadan bölünmüş sellere döndüm* I turned into rivers separated from the sea  
*Ateşi kararmış küllere döndüm* And I turned into ashes left over from a fire  
*Vakitsiz açılmış güllere döndüm* So I turned into flowers untimely blossomed  
*Dost senin derdinden ben yana yana* I'm burning from the pain you have caused me, O Friend

## INTERMISSION

### **IV. Nightingales, cuckoos and thrushes**

Imitating birds with instruments in Greece and Renaissance Europe.

B. Cohen/*violin* W. Moses/*clarinet* H. Degrugillier/*recorder* J. Godoy/*recorder*  
M. Sanlikol/*laouto* T. Zajac/*recorder* Hermit Thrush

**Der Engels Nachtegaeltje** (the English Nightingale) Jacob van Eyck (1590-1657)  
**Skaros/Sta Dhio** (improvisation and dance) traditional Greek: Epiros (Northwestern Greece)  
**Coockow as I me walked** John Baldwine (1581-1606)  
**Nightingale** Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)  
**A lesson with the Hermit Thrush** Beth Bahia Cohen

### **V. The Bird in the Gilded Cage**

The voice of the lover in Turkish folk song.

E. Günaydın/*percussion, voice* R. Labaree/*percussion, voice* S. Labaree/*voice*  
C. Mutlu/*percussion, voice* M. Sanlikol/*saz, voice*

**Bülbülüm altın kafeste** (*türkü*/folk song) traditional: Trakya  
*Bülbülüm altın kafeste* My nightingale is in a golden cage  
*Öter aheste aheste* He sings gently  
*Ötme bülbül yarım haste...* Do not sing, nightingale, my love is ill...  
  
**Ne ötersin dertli dertli** (*türkü*/folk song) traditional: Sivas  
*Ne ötersin dertli dertli* What do you sing so sorrowfully?  
*Dayanamam zara bülbül* I can't bear the bitterness, nightingale  
*Hem dertliyim hem firkatli* I'm in pain and separated from her  
*Yakma beni nara bulbul* Don't consume me with your cries, nightingale

**Nenni** (lullaby) traditional:  
Elaziğ

Bebeğin beşiği çamdan  
Yuvarlandı düştü damdan  
Telli durna gelir Şamdan (nenni oy)  
Bübulün kanadı sarı  
Sen ağlarsın zarı zarı (nenni oy)

The baby's cradle is made of pine  
It came tumbling down from the roof  
The crane comes from Syria  
The wings of the nightingale are yellow  
Why do you cry so bitterly?

Translations: R. Labaree, M. Sanlıkol, W. Anderson. Thanks also to Greg Smith.  
Program notes: R. Labaree

*Special thanks to Beth Bahia Cohen, who first suggested the idea of a bird song concert nearly 20 years ago. The range of repertoires she has mastered over many years has been key to the realization of this program.*

### **The musicians**

**Shanteri Baliga** (*ney*) has been a student of Frederick Stubbs for over 12 years, and plays with a number of Boston based ensembles. **Beth Bahia Cohen** (*bowed tanbur, violin*) plays and teaches bowed strings from the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and is a Music faculty member at Tufts University. **Wallace Corey-Dunbar** (male soprano) is a singer and musicologist serving as Coordinator of Firestone Library Services at NEC. **Héloïse Degrugillier** (*recorder*) has a Masters in Music from Utrecht Conservatory and has worked extensively as a recorder performer and teacher throughout Europe and the U.S. **Justin Godoy** (*recorder*) is a performer and composer, appearing regularly with leading period ensembles, including the *Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra* and *Hesperus*. **Engin Günaydın** (*voice, percussion*) has a degree in classical percussion from Bilkent University in Turkey, and is studying at Berklee. **Robert Labaree** (*çeng, voice, percussion*) is chair of the Music History Department of New England Conservatory and Vice President of *DÜNYA*. **Sophie Labaree** (*voice*) is a sophomore at Beloit College in Wisconsin. **Warrick Moses** (*clarinet*) is a graduate of the Boston University School of Music and teaches in the Boston Public Schools. **Cem Mutlu** (*voice, percussion*), a member of the *DÜNYA* board, plays jazz and a variety of world musics with groups in the Boston area. **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol** (*voice, ud, saz, ney, lauto*), completed his doctorate in composition at NEC in 2004, is a composer and jazz pianist and president of *DÜNYA*. **Reinmar Seidler** performs and teaches 400 years of cello repertoire, serves as principal cellist of the Handel and Haydn Society, and performs Scottish fiddle tunes with *New Rigged Ship*. **Noam Sender** (*voice, ney*) performs with a variety of ensembles in the Boston area and is a member of the advisory board of *DÜNYA*. **Frederick Stubbs** (*ney*) teaches World Music and Ethnomusicology at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. **Lucy Tan** (*piano*) is a student of Bruce Brubaker at NEC, and recently performed in Messiaen's *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* and *Oiseaux Exotiques*. **Thomas Zajac** (*recorder*) is a specialist in Medieval and Renaissance music, performs with leading early music groups in the US, and teaches at Wellesley College.

**DÜNYA** (*the Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek word for "world"*) is a non-profit, tax exempt educational organization founded in Boston in 2004. 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.

**DÜNYA** seeks to work with a wide range of cultural and religious organizations and musical groups, but relies on no particular political, governmental or religious affiliation or support of any kind.

Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, *President* Robert Labaree, *Vice president*

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