

East of the River Hamsa

Music from Andalusia, the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, and the Sephardic Diaspora



April 30 Hicks Memorial Chapel, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary



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Music from Andalusia, the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, and the Sephardic Diaspora

Daphna Mor voice & recorders
Nina Stern recorders & chalumeau

Ronnie Malley oud & voice

Tal Mashiach bass

Shane Shanahan percussion

Ein K'Eloheinu

Liturgical, Sephardic Instrumental interlude by Daphna Mor

Porke Llorach Rast Sirto Traditional Sephardic song Ottoman Dance

Kürdi Hafifi

Solakzade Mehmed (1592-1658)

From the manuscript of Prince Demetrius Cantemir, c.1700 Transcription: Prof. Walter Zev Feldman

Achot Katana Ya Bint Bladi Liturgical, Moroccan Arab Andalusian

Yigdal Elohim Chai

Liturgical, Sefarad-Yerushalaim

Una Tarde de Verano

Traditional Sephardic song Variations by Nina Stern

Hicaz Sirto Hija Mia Sultan Abdülaziz (1830-1876) Traditional Sephardic song Instrumental interlude by Kane Mathis

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Program Notes

To a large degree, context defines many of the main principles at play in any piece of music. This program contains music from Turkey to Morocco and other regions of the Sephardic Diaspora, which was intended for a wide variety of contexts, from dance to liturgy.

Several of the works included in today's program belong to the liturgical tradition. The texts are Jewish liturgical poems, referred to as piyutim. Ein K'Eloheinu is recited by most communities towards the end of the morning prayer, both on Shabbat (the Sabbath) and during the week. One of the more ancient piyutim, Ein K'Eloheinu, is first mentioned in the writings of R. Amram Gaon in the 9th century. This rendition is sung to a Moroccan melody, alternating between Hebrew and Ladino, in the tradition of Sephardic communities. Yigdal Elohim Chai is sung to a text by the 14th-century R. Daniel ben Yehudah, the Judge of Rome. The poem lists the Thirteen Principles of Faith as written by Maimonides in his commentary on the Mishna. Achot Katana, with text by R. Abraham Hazan Girundi (Spain, 13th century), is sung on Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish new year holiday) and concludes with the powerful message: May this year and its curses end and may the new year and its blessings begin.

Hija Mia represents the secular folk storytelling of the Sephardi repertoire. It is a lively debate between a daughter and her mother as the daughter refuses her mother's heavy-handed attempt at matchmaking.

...

Two beloved Sephardic folk songs are performed instrumentally. The melancholy melody of **Porke Llorach** reflects the text: Why do you cry, fair maiden? Why do you cry, fair flower? I cry for you, knight, you that shall depart and leave me... Una Tarde de Verano (A Summer's Afternoon), an early romanca or ballad, is reimagined, with original variations by Nina Stern.

Completing the program are pieces from the Ottoman court tradition, a tradition of high scholarship and complex repertoire. Ottoman music is generally defined by three factors: modal content, rhythmic accent scheme (usul), and sequence of sections. Kürdi Hafifi, for example, is written in Kürdi mode (makam), which has its own set of compositional rules. It is based on a rhythmic scheme of 32 beats per measure divided into eight groups. Its form is a peşrev, containing sections called Hâne, which are the 'verses,' as well as a repeating section called Taslim, which acts as the unifying material. The phrasing of Ottoman music is strongly tied to the accent scheme (usul) of each piece. The way the melody aligns or diverges from this accent scheme constitutes one of the main techniques for creating tension in a piece.

The unifying principle of the program is the use of a modal system known as Makam (plural Makamat). Makam is used in most parts of the Near East and North Africa, is known as Dastgâh in the Persian tradition, and is known as Mugam in the Azeri tradition. Makam can be characterized as the main organizing principle in near eastern music. Makamat are sometimes errantly considered as scales, but in practice, a given Makam comes with sets of tendencies, dictating pitch material, registral development, cadence points, and typical areas of modulation. These rules are equally adhered to in both improvisation and composition. The taksim is an improvised form that may take place in the context of a piece as a solo. A taksim may also precede a piece to introduce the Makam, to modulate between Makamat, or to orient the singer to the first pitch of the piece. While in the past, hundreds of separate Makamat were identified, today there are only about one hundred in common use. Names of Makamat often give clues about their origins, when deriving from names of regions, as in Makam Hicaz, Ussak, or Isfahan, or when deriving from names of ethnicities, as in Makam Kurdi or Ajam.

The Hamsa is a palm-shaped amulet popular throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Depicting the open right hand, an image recognized and used as a sign of protection throughout history, the Hamsa is believed to provide defense against the evil eye.



Translations

Ein K'Eloheinu / There is none like our God Anonymous

There is none like our God, there is none like our Lord, There is none like our King, there is none like our Savior. Who is like our God, who is like our Lord, Who is like our King, who is like our Savior.

Achot Katana / Little Sister R. Abraham Hazan Girundi, Spain, 13th century

The little sister - her prayers she prepares and proclaims her praises. O God, please, heal now her ailments. *Let the year and its curses conclude.*

With pleasant words she calls upon You, and with song and praises, for such befits You. Why do you avert Your eyes? Look! Enemies devour her heritage! Let the year and its curses conclude.

When will You raise up Your daughter from the pit; and from the dungeon, [will You] break her yoke? May You act wondrously when You go forth like a hero, to bring an end and conclusion to her ailments. Let the year and its curses conclude!

May this year and its blessings begin.

Yigdal Elohim Chai / Exalted be the Living God

R. Daniel ben Yehudah, Rome, 14th century

Exalted be the Living God, and praised, He exists and his existence is unbound by time

He is One and there is no unity like his Oneness, inscrutable and infinite is his Oneness

He has neither form of body nor is he corporeal nor may his holiness be compared to aught

He preceded all that was created, the First, and nothing preceded His precedence

Behold, the Master of the universe, to all creations demonstrating His greatness and sovereignty

An abundance of prophecy he has bestowed upon His treasured and splendorous people

There has not arisen in Israel another like Moses, a prophet who beheld His image

A Torah of truth God gave his nation by means of His prophet, the faithful of His house

God will never exchange or alter His Law for any other, for all eternity

He sees and knows our most hidden secrets, He perceives a matter's outcome at its inception

He rewards man with kindness according to his works

He places evil on the wicked according to his wickedness

He will send our Messiah at the End of Days to redeem those waiting for His final salvation

God will revive the dead in His abundant kindness

May His splendorous Name be blessed forever more

Hija Mia / My Daughter Anonymous

My daughter, my dearest one, I shall give you a handsome man. No, my mama, I do not want him. It does not impress me that he is handsome, No, I don't want him.

My daughter, my dearest one, I shall give you a tall man.
No, my mama, I do not want him.
He is tall, I cannot reach him,
No, I don't want him.

My daughter, my dearest one, I shall give you a short man.
No, my mama, I do not want him.
With a short one I have to bend,
No, I don't want him.

My daughter, my dearest one, I shall give you a drunkard. Yes, my mama, he is the one I desire! With the drunkard I shall marry, Yes, my mama, he is the one I desire!

ABOUT EAST OF THE RIVER

East of the River, founded by internationally-renowned recorder players Nina Stern and Daphna Mor, explores the timeless gems of the Medieval European classical repertory together with virtuosic and haunting melodies of the traditions of the Middle East, Armenia, North Africa, and the Balkans. East of the River's music is arranged and interpreted by musicians whose backgrounds are of classical, jazz, and folk traditions. The group has performed on the concert series of presenters including San Francisco Early Music Society, Early Music Now (Milwaukee), Madison Early Music Festival, Academy of Early Music (Ann Arbor), Indianapolis Early Music, Five Boroughs Music Festival (New York), Chautauqua Institution, Montclair State University's Peak Performances, the Logan Series at Penn State Erie, and in New York City venues as varied as Bargemusic, Joe's Pub, Le Poisson Rouge, and the Brooklyn Public Library. Stern and Mor, called "recorder virtuosos" by The New York Times, both have impressive careers as soloists and chamber music players and have appeared as a duo with the New York Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Music Before 1800, and the world music ensemble Pharoah's Daughter.

In East of the River, Stern and Mor are often joined by renowned performers such as Kane Mathis on oud and kora, Balkan violinist Jesse Kotansky, and percussionists Shane Shanahan and John Hadfield. Other collaborators include virtuoso Turkish kanun player Tamer Pinarbasi, acclaimed oud player and composer Ara Dinkjian, accordionist Uri Sharlin, oud/bass player Omer Avital, and legendary percussionist Glen Velez. East of the River's artists have recorded and performed with Yo-Yo Ma, Philip Glass, Jordi Savall, Sting, Natalie Merchant, Aerosmith, Simon Shaheen, Joyce DiDonato, and many others.

East of the River has recorded two albums: its self-titled debut album and Levantera.

www.eastoftherivermusic.com

DAPHNA MOR - recorders & voice

Daphna Mor has performed throughout Europe and the United States as both a soloist and ensemble player. Mor's "astonishing virtuosity" (*Chicago Tribune*) has been heard in solo recitals in the United States, Croatia, Germany, and Switzerland. She appeared as a soloist at Tanglewood and the Met Museum with Apollo's Fire, as well as with the New York Collegium, New York Early Music



Ensemble, Little Orchestra Society at Carnegie Hall, and more. As a member of the orchestra, Mor performed with the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, and Orchestra of St. Luke's. Mor was awarded First Prize in the Settimane Musicali di Lugano Solo Competition and the Boston Conservatory Concerto Competition.

Devoted to new music, Mor has recorded on John Zorn's Tzadik label, and has performed the world premiere of David Bruce's *Tears*, *Puffes*, *Jumps*, *and Galliard* with the Metropolis Ensemble. She co-composed WAVES for recorders, voice, cello, and a beat boxer for Carolyn Dorfman Dance and performed it in summer 2017 in New York's Summer Stage. Mor has also performed with the band Pharaoh's Daughter and Rachid Hailial's ensemble Layali al Andelus. She can also be heard on Sting's album *If On a Winter's Night* for Deutsche Grammophon.

Daphna is co-director, together with Nina Stern, of the ensemble East of the River. Mor serves as the Music Director of Beineinu, a New York initiative dedicated to the modern cultivation of Jewish culture, and is a performer and teacher of liturgical music of the Jewish diaspora.

www.daphnamor.com

NINA STERN - recorders & chalumeau

Nina Stern has carved a unique and diverse career as a world-class recorder player and classical clarinetist. A native New Yorker, Stern received a Soloist's Degree from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel, Switzerland. Stern performs widely on recorders, chalumeaux, and historical clarinets. She has appeared as a soloist or principal player with orchestras such as The New York



Philharmonic, New York City Opera, American Classical Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Philharmonia Baroque, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, La Scala Theatre Orchestra, Clarion Orchestra, I Solisti Veneti, Hesperion XX, Opera Lafayette, Handel and Haydn Society, and Tafelmusik.

Stern's latest projects include performances and recordings of traditional music of Eastern Europe, Armenia, and the Middle East, as a soloist, and with her ensembles Rose of the Compass and East of the River (Daphna Mor, co-Director). Stern was appointed to the faculty of Juilliard's Historical Performance program in 2012 and has served on the faculties of the Mannes College of Music (where she directed the Historical Performance Program from 1989 to 1996), the Civica Scuola di Musica (Milan, Italy), Oberlin Conservatory, and the Five Colleges in Massachusetts. Stern is the Founder and Artistic Director of "S'Cool Sounds," a hands-on music education project for school-age children. The Washington Post applauded this program as a model in its "innovation in the classroom" series (11/9/03). For this work, Stern was awarded an Endicott Fellowship in 2003 and was honored by Early Music America in 2005 and again in 2019. Stern authored "Recorders Without Borders," for beginning recorder players and percussion. She has worked to establish recorder programs in schools in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya, at Village Health Works in Kigutu, Burundi, and at a school for Syrian refugee children in Azraq, Jordan.

RONNIE MALLEY - oud & voice

Ronnie Malley is a multi-instrumentalist musician, theatrical performer, producer, and educator. He has collaborated with artists internationally, composed and consulted for many cultural music projects in film and theater, appeared as a guest artist on several works, and is executive director of Intercultural Music Production in Chicago. Malley has a degree in Global Music Studies from



DePaul University. He is a teaching artist with Chicago Public Schools, Global Voices Initiative, and Chicago Arts Partnership in Education; a faculty member at Old Town School of Folk Music; and a guest lecturer at universities. He is an international artist and has performed with the music groups Allos Musica, Apollo's Fire, Diwan Al-Han, EMME (East Meets Middle East), Lamajamal, Mucca Pazza, Newberry Consort, Surabhi Ensemble, and the University of Chicago Middle East Music Ensemble.

www.ronniemalley.com

TAL MASHIACH - bass

Tal Mashiach is a Grammy-nominated multiinstrumentalist, performer, and composer based in Brooklyn, NY, combining his skills to create a prominent and original voice in the world/jazz music scene.

Born in Israel in 1993, Mashiach studied classical guitar from age 10 and began studying double bass at age 17. At age 18, Mashiach won first



prize at the national guitar competition at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, and then received annual scholarships from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, for classical and jazz studies. Upon receiving a full scholarship at the The New School, Mashiach moved to New York in 2015. He has performed and recorded with Anat Cohen, Avishai Cohen, Mulatu Astatke, Jeff Ballard, Nasheet Waits, Jason Lindner, Ravi Coltrane, Justin Brown, Shai Maestro, and Omer Avital, in venues including Carnegie Hall, Blue Note (New York), Newport Jazz Festival, Lincoln Center, SFJAZZ, Umbria Jazz, Montreal Jazz Festival, and others.

As a band leader, Mashiach has formed various projects to fulfill his diverse musical visions. His TM Street Band is a funky world music party band that fuses genres with no borders. TM Street Band has toured Europe and plays frequently in New York clubs. The GTO Trio, a contemporary jazz trio that he co-leads with pianist Gadi Lehavi and drummer Ofri Nehemya, has toured in Japan and Europe, played at the Blue Note, and headlined at the Jerusalem Jazz Festival.

Mashiach's most recent project, *Tiyul*, is a solo album featuring his original compositions on classical guitar.

www.talmashiach.com

SHANE SHANAHAN - percussion

Shane Shanahan has combined his studies of drumming traditions from around the world with his background in jazz, rock, and Western art music to create his own unique style. Since 2000, he has toured the globe, performing with Yo-Yo Ma as a founding member of the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble, and he has served as Co-Artistic Director (2017-2020) and



Learning Programs Advisor (2012-2020) for the organization. His arrangements and compositions are featured on several of the group's recordings.

Shanahan has also performed and/or recorded with Bobby McFerrin, Aretha Franklin, James Taylor, Philip Glass, Alison Krauss, Deep Purple, Jordi Savall, Sonny Fortune, Chaka Khan, Bill Frisell, and Glen Velez, among others. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Concertgebouw, Santory Hall, Disney Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, the White House, and the Kennedy Center. Shanahan frequently presents workshops and clinics at universities including Princeton, Harvard, Cornell, The Eastman School of Music, Juilliard, and the University of Michigan. He is currently on faculty at the Hartt School and was also the Lead Teaching Artist for Silkroad's arts-integrated education initiative, Silk Road Connect, which brought music, dance, and visual arts into New York City public schools. For the last several years, Shanahan has worked with students at the Lame Deer School on a Native American reservation in Montana. He also collaborates with dance, theater, and yoga communities in New York. When not on tour, he teaches drumming classes and lessons out of his studio in Brooklyn, NY. Shanahan has also played in the pit orchestras of several Broadway musicals, including Caroline, or Change, The Color Purple, Shrek, Spider-Man, Fun Home, Tuck Everlasting, and Mean Girls.

www.shaneshanahanmusic.com



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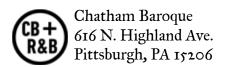
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