

# عصر ۱۷.

## *Music from 17<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul*

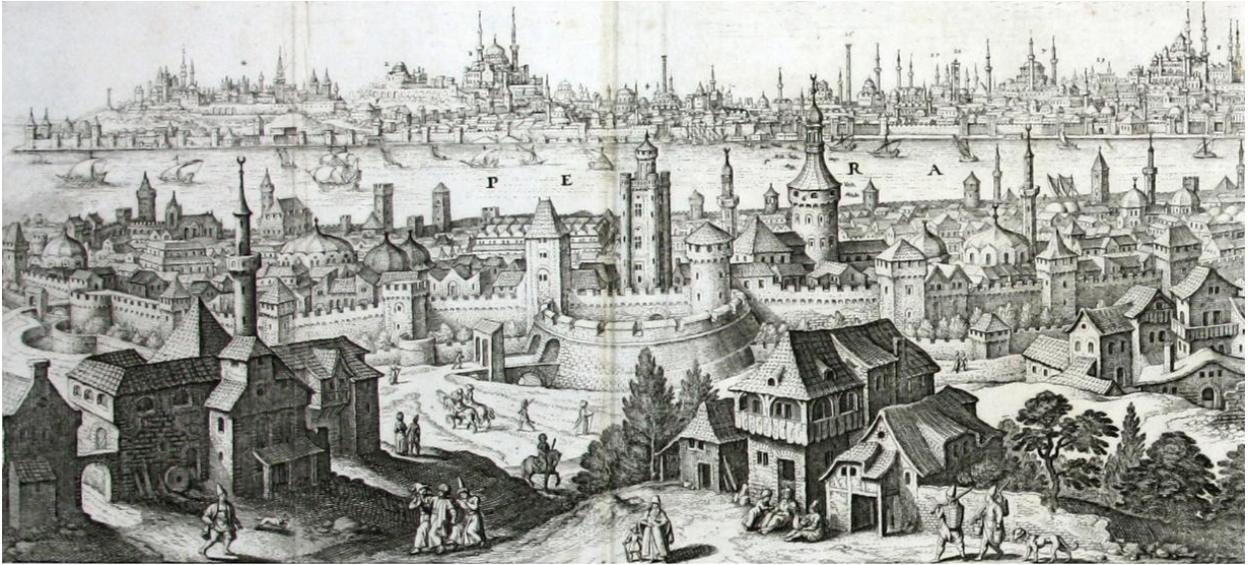
directed by **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**

*featuring*

**DÜNYA ensemble** with

*Beth Bahia Cohen*, kemane, rebab, *Burcu Güleç*, voice, percussion, *Bulut Gülen*, voice, *Robert Labaree*, çeng, cymbals, voice, *Bertram Lehmann*, percussion, *George Lernis*, percussion, santur, *Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol*, cura, ney, saz, ud, üç telli, voice, and *Barış Doğukan Yazıcı*, trumpet, voice

*November 27, 2018, 7:30 pm, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory*



*(a portion of "Constantinople" from M. Merian's "Theatrum Europaeum", 1638)*

It is hard not to wonder about the music of the past. What was the music of Istanbul like back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century? For insight into this question, we can turn to Ali Ufuki (also Wojciech or Albert Bobowski), a Polish Protestant born in 1610 who was raised as a church musician, taken prisoner by the Crimean Tartars and sold to the court of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV (1642-1693). He converted to Islam at age 18 in Istanbul, and soon found a place in the palace ensemble, compiling a vast and detailed collection of Ottoman/Turkish music which dates from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. It is the first use of western staff notation in Turkish music where the notation is written from right to left like Arabic script.



(“Pişrev-i Mah u Dünya” from Ali Ufuki’s collection in modified European staff notation)

Ali Ufuki most likely knew as many as 14 languages including Arabic, French, Greek, Hebrew and Latin, which allowed him to rise quickly at the Ottoman court. He later translated the Bible into Ottoman Turkish, produced a Turkish edition (words and music) of John Calvin’s Genevan Psalter, and wrote an explanation of Islam in Latin. However,

today he is remembered primarily for his musical contributions. After 20 years in captivity Ufuki regained his freedom while visiting Egypt. He continued to live there, and became an important *dragoman* (an official translator) in the Ottoman Empire.

I have assembled this concert program from Ali Ufuki’s collection by selecting those pieces that have not been recorded or even heard in our time. However, this was not the only criterion. While selecting these never-before performed pieces I have also tried to exemplify several ways of assembling suites which reflect the richness and diversity of the music of 17<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul. As a result, the five sets in this program feature, for example, *makam* (mode), Sufi/religious music, and what we would consider today songs with obscene lyrics (Tr. *müstehcen*). I believe that, taken together, these suites display some of the stylistic variety and rhythmic complexity that is not to be found in current Turkish music.

Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

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**PROGRAM**

**I. RAST TAKIM: a 17<sup>th</sup> century suite**

This set features a variety of styles ranging from the so-called “Ottoman Janissary Band” (*mehter*) music to light classical songs all sharing the same *makam* (mode).

**Zurna Taksim** (instrumental improvisation)

**Şedd-i Asır Pişrevi** (Prelude to a “Brutal Century”)

Music: Anonymous

**Segah Raksiyye** (a short dance)

Text and music: Anonymous

*Bir afet beni eyler helak*

A goddess made me miserable

*Tiğ-i gam ile kalır çak çak*

Tore me apart with the sword of sorrow

*Hak etti beni pir ü pak*

She crushed me completely

*Kime yanam ya kime halim ağlayayım?*

To whom shall I complain about my troubles and cry?

**Ara Taksim** (connecting improvisation)

**Rast Murabba** (a classical song)

Text and music: Anonymous

*Halimi ta aşık-ı zar olmayınca bilmedin* You could not understand me until you became a desperate lover  
*Derdimi derde giriftar olmayınca bilmedin* You could not understand my sorrow until you were in sorrow

**Rast Nakış Semai** (a classical song in 6 beats)

Text and music: Anonymous

*Ey İsa vü Meryem hakkı ruhbane söyleñ söylesün* Someone tell the priests in the name of Jesus and Mary  
*Yusuf'la Yakub firak iken ane söyleñ söylesün* Someone tell Joseph and Jacob during their separation  
*Yar zağına o lalden beru can-u gönülden mayıl* Since tasting your lips I have been eager for your coyness  
*Çektiğim arz iştiyakı canana söyleñ söylesün* Someone tell the beloved the longing I bear

**Rast Nakış Semai**

Text and music: Anonymous

*Lezzet arttırır tatlu diliñ sükkere cana* Your sweet tongue adds flavor to sugar and to my soul  
*Kıymet arttırır lal-i lebiñ gevhere cana* Your lips add value to jewels and to my soul

**Rast Semai** (instrumental postlude)

Music: Anonymous

## II. SUFİYANE: music of the dervishes

**Segah İlahi** (devotional song)

Text and music: Anonymous

*Şem-i ruhuna cismimi pervane düşürdüm / Evrak-ı dil-i ateşi suzane düşürdüm*  
To the candle of your soul I have become a moth / I have placed burning layers of my heart in fire  
*Takrir edemem derd ü derunum elemim var / Mevlayı seversen beni söyletme gamım var*  
I cannot explain how deep a sorrow, a pain I feel / If you love God don't make talk of my sorrows

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

**Tesbih-i Arabi** (an Arabic ode)

Text and music: Anonymous

*Esselamü aleyke ya şehrel lütfi vel ihsan...* Greetings to you, Oh city of beauty and kindness...

**Acem Varsağı** (folk song)

Text: Ali Ufuki, Music: (possibly) Ali Ufuki

*Ya İlahi senden uddet* O God instill fear in us from you  
*Bize vir islahı müddet* Give us time to correct ourselves  
*Mevt yetişmedin ba-şiddet* Before violent death draw upon us,  
*Ya mühmil bid-derecat* and the examples of neglect

**Hüseyini İlahi**

Text: Eşrefoğlu Rumi (d. 1484) Music: Anonymous

*Bahr-i umman dürriyem yerim mekanım Andadır* I am a teardrop of oceans, my place is with Him  
*Bunda sora sora geldim dü-cihanım Andadır* I came here wondering, my two worlds are with Him  
*Bunda geldim Eşrefoğlu Rumi didiler bana* I came here, they called me Eşrefoğlu Rumi  
*Bunda özge dahi benim ad-u sanım Andadır* I too am a stranger here, my name and reputation are with Him

**Uzzal Semai**

Music: Anonymous

## III. MÜSTEHCEN: songs with 'obscene' lyrics

Ottoman norms of sexuality and standards of inappropriateness were clearly different from the norms established under western influence beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. All of the songs in this set are chosen based on their many explicit sexual references and lyrics which are today

considered at least controversial in both Turkey and the West. I have been selective in translating the words.

**Muhayyer Türki** (folk song)

Text: Ali (17<sup>th</sup> c.), Music: Anonymous

Possibly written by a Sufi dervish describing his love for a young male apprentice.

*Dede külahı başında,*

Wearing the hat of a Master

*Henüz on, on bir yaşında*

Only ten, eleven years old

**Türki Cansiner Halife beray-ı medh Hasen** (“A song praising Hasen”)

Text: Meftuni (17<sup>th</sup> c.), Music: Anonymous

*Güzelliğın ermiş kemale beğim*

Your beauty has ripened, sir

*Hüsanın ser çeşmesisin meleğim*

You are the first fountain of Hüsa my angel

**Sultan İbrahim’in huzurunda oynanılan Raks** (“The dance performed before Sultan Ibrahim [1615-1648]”)

Text and music: Anonymous

*Saçbağı takar saçına*

She puts on a hair band

*Gider sarayın içine*

And goes to the palace

*Güzel sevenin suçu ne*

What’s the guilt in loving someone beautiful?

*Saçbağı devran seniñdir*

O Hair Band, this is your time

**Hüseyni Türki Mahabbet** (“A Love song”)

Text: Mustafa (17<sup>th</sup> c.), Music: Anonymous

*Mustafa der benim Alim, niçin sormaz garib halim?*

Mustafa wonders why my Ali won’t ask why I am so sad

**Hüseyni Raksiyye**

Text and music: Anonymous

A song about a *köçek*, a male dancer dressed as a woman.

*Sen oynadıkça kademi, sevindirirsin ademi*

You make men happy as you dance on your feet

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INTERMISSION

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## IV. SERÂÛ: music of the court

**Çeng Taksim**

**Nişabur Pişrev**

Music: Solakzade Mehmed (1592-1658)

**Buselik Murabba**

Text and Music: Anonymous

*Nice vâsf itsün o şuh-i dil-i hoş dem ne disün?*

Abundant praise this kind hearted beauty, what can be said?

*Misli yok benzedecek hüsn-ü müselleme ne disün?*

There is no one like this astonishing beauty, what can be said?

**Merdana nasihat için Türki** (“A song of advice to the brave”)

*Söz tutub uludan, dinleyiñ öğüt*

Listen to advice of the elderly

*Edebli er erkanından bell’olur*

A decent man is known by his manners

**Tempolu Gazel** (vocal improvisation over ostinato)

**Nakş-ı Uşşak** (a song in Persian)

Text and Music: Anonymous

*Ger şevved ber men müyesser dide ez didar-ı tü...*

If I appear easily it’ll be to see your face...

**Hüseyni Tekerleme** (a playful folk song)

Text and Music: Anonymous

A song addressed to the santur, the trapezoidal stringed instrument played with small hammers. The song criticizes religious fanatics who condemn music.

<i>Hay santuruñ kırk şen teli</i>	The forty happy strings of the santur
<i>Ötmez oldu bağırıñ yeli</i>	Your bosom is no longer singing
<i>Hey Allah'ın asi kulu</i>	Hey, God's fanatical servant
<i>Neyledi bu santur saña</i>	What has this santur done to you?
<i>Bu bir ağaç paresidir</i>	This is a piece of wood
<i>Dertli canıñ çaresidir</i>	It's a remedy for sorrow
<i>Şeytan bunuñ neresidir</i>	Where is the devil in this?
<i>Neyledi bu santur saña</i>	What has this santur done to you?

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## V. BİR USUL OYUNU: a play of rhythms

A good number of the rhythmic cycles (*usul*) in Ali Ufuki's collection cannot be found in current Turkish musical practice. Many such *usuls* (rhythmic cycles) are based on various combinations of 3s and 2s. This set will transition from one piece to another by simply dropping the last 2 beats of each usul cycle: a musical feat that is simply impossible to achieve with current Turkish musics.

**Pişrev-i Mah u Dünya** ("A prelude to the moon and the world") [usul: 16/8, 3-3-2-2-2-2-2]

Music: Anonymous

**Şarki Fırak** ("A song of separation") [usul: 12/8, 3-3-2-2-2] Text: Ali (17<sup>th</sup> c.) Music: Anonymous

<i>Uçurdum şahini konmaz koluma</i>	I have had my falcon fly, now it won't come back
<i>Fırsatın düşürdüm girmez elime</i>	I have lost the chance and now it's gone
<i>Cümle alem ağlar benim halime</i>	Everyone weeps for my plight
<i>Felek beni sevdiğimden ayırdı</i>	Destiny separated me from my love

**Uşşak Türki** [usul: 10/8, 3-3-2-2]

Text: Ahmed (17<sup>th</sup> c.), Music: Anonymous

This particular *uşşak türki* is a janissary (an elite military unit) poet song. These troops were officially attached to the Bektaşî Sufis. At this time there were a number of famous janissary poets in Istanbul.

<i>Bağdad'ı, Basra'yi seyrân eylesen</i>	If I was to go see Baghdad and Basra
<i>Aceb derviş olsam Yarı bulam mı?</i>	Or become a dervish, could I find the Beloved?
<i>Aşkuñ ile beni hayran eylesen</i>	If you were to amaze me with Your love
<i>Aceb derviş olsam Yarı bulam mı?</i>	If I became a dervish, could I find the Beloved?
<i>Yohsa hasretiñle ölem, kalam mı?</i>	Or shall I die with your longing?

**Türki beray-ı bızâr-ı yar** ("The song for a fed up lover") [usul: 4/4, 3-3-2] Text and Music: Anonymous

<i>Her sabahı çıkar yolu beklerim</i>	Every morning I look for you
<i>Şakı bülbül var uyandır yarimi</i>	O nightingale, sing and awake my love
<i>Hasretini can içinde saklarım</i>	Your longing is hidden inside me
<i>Şakı bülbül var uyandır yarimi</i>	O nightingale, sing and awake my love

**Uşşak Varsağı** [usul: 6/8, 3-3]

Text and Music: Anonymous

<i>Çıkamadım kayalarıñ başına</i>	I couldn't climb to the top of a rocky cliff
<i>Tavşancıklar yuva yapar eşine</i>	Rabbits make a nest for their mates
<i>Benim sevdiğimiñ işi, gücü ne</i>	What's my lover busy with?
<i>Ey nazlı yarim, yine mi canım melullüğüñ var</i>	O my coy love, are you sad again?

## Acknowledgements

**SPECIAL THANKS to Turkish Airlines** for sponsoring the DÜNYA ensemble throughout the 2018-2019 season.

I would also like to thank my dear wife, Serap Kantarcı Sanlıkol, for continuing to support me while playing a crucial role as DÜNYA's chief development officer.

## Musicians

**Beth Bahia Cohen**, violinist, has been playing with Dünya since its inception in 2004 and has been performing Turkish, Greek, and Hungarian music for many years throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe. She specializes in bowed string instruments from various cultures and is on the faculty of Berklee College of Music and Tufts University.

**Burcu Güleç** completed a bachelor's degree in child development as well as a master's degree from New England Conservatory in contemporary improvisation. As a performer and educator, she works in several genres, including Jazz, Turkish, and Balkan musics.

**Bulut Gülen** is a trombonist who won the first prize in MIAM Chamber Music Competition with Istanbul Trombone Ensemble. In 2015 his first album "Su" was released. Currently, he is completing his Master's degree at the New England Conservatory.

**Robert Labaree** is an ethnomusicologist and performer specializing in Turkish music. He is retired as a full time faculty in the NEC Musicology faculty, where he has served since 1984, and is founder of the conservatory's Intercultural Institute and co-founder of *Dünya*.

**Bertram Lehmann** teaches drums, Ear Training, and Liberal Arts at Berklee College of Music when he's not busy performing with a variety of Jazz, Latin, and World music ensembles in the New England area and beyond, which also has taken him to far-flung places including India, Ghana, South Korea, Turkey, and Russia.

Born and raised in Nicosia, Cyprus **George Lernis** is a drummer and world percussionist. George holds a bachelor's degree from Berklee College of Music in Jazz Performance and a master's degree from Longy Conservatory in Modern American Music. George has performed in venues such as the Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

Grammy nominated composer **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol** (DÜNYA, president) holds a Master's Degree in Jazz Composition and a Doctoral degree in Composition from New England Conservatory. He is currently a full-time faculty member at New England Conservatory and is the recipient of a number of awards including the Live Arts Boston Grant from The Boston Foundation, Creative City Grant from New England Foundation for the Arts, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music Performance Program Grant as well as a Fellowship in Turkish Culture and Art granted by Turkish Cultural Foundation.

**Barış Doğan Yazıcı** has studied trumpet at the Istanbul University State Conservatory. He has performed with the TRT Big Band featuring artists such as Christian McBride, Joshua Redman and Roy Hargrove. Currently, he is continuing his studies at Berklee College of Music.

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