DÜNYA presents Ali Ufki'nin Mezmurları / The Psalms of Ali Ufki

An interfaith concert at the intersection of Judaism, Turkish Sufism, Greek Orthodoxy and Protestant Christianity



Psalm 13 from The Genevan Psalter, as notated in Ali Ufki's Mezmurlar (ca. 1665)

directed by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol (voice, ney) and Robert Labaree (voice, çeng, percussion) co-producers: Nektarios Antoniou (voice) and Noam Sender (voice, percussion)

Andrew Bisset (voice), Beth Cohen (yaylı tanbur, violin), William Hudson (voice), Allen Hulsey (voice), Stephen Landau (voice), Cem Mutlu (voice, percussion), Martin Near (countertenor), Dan Nissenbaum (voice), Haralampos Pavlou (voice), Kareem Roustom (oud), Bogomil Sabtchev (voice), Joel Segel (voice), Steven Soph (voice), Scott A. Tepper (voice), Panayiotis Thoma (voice), Rick Vanderhoef (voice)

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Ali Ufki, born Wojciech Bobowski in 1610, was a Polish Christian who converted to Islam after his capture by the Ottoman Turks at the age of 30, becoming renowned as a musician and translator in the imperial court. Contemporary accounts say that he was fluent in as many as seventeen languages, including Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, in addition to Polish and Turkish. He is revered by music specialists as the creator of a unique manuscript—the famous *Mecmua-i saz ü söz* of 1650—which preserved for modern times several hundred classical Ottoman songs and instrumental pieces, the first instance in which western staff notation was applied to Turkish music. However, he is better remembered internationally for a very different legacy: as the translator of the current Turkish version of the Bible (*Kitabi Mukkades*), the equivalent of the King James version (1611) so famous in the English-speaking world.

Much less widely known are the poetry and music of Ali Ufki which serve as the starting point of tonight's concert, a musical exploration of the psalm tradition shared by the three monotheistic religions. His manuscript of 1665 entitled *Mezmurlar* (The Psalms) consists of rhymed Turkish translations of psalms 1-14 set to simple tunes preserved in western staff notation (see excerpt above). While Turkish scholars have generally assumed that these tunes were composed by Ali Ufki himself, a comparison with early European sources of the psalms reveals a startling fact: these 14 tunes are, note-for-note, identical to psalms 1-14 in the famous Genevan Psalter, assembled at the end of the 16th century under the watchful eye of one of the giants of Protestant Christianity, Jean Calvin, for use in the Reform congregations of Geneva, Switzerland. For Muslims, the psalms (*Mezmur* or *Davud*) are revered (along with *Tevrat*/Torah, *İncil*/Gospels, and *Kuran*) as one of "The Four Books" they consider the world's indispensable legacy of monotheism. But the psalms never entered the mainstream of Muslim devotions as they have in Judaism and Christianity. As one who was raised a Christian and therefore steeped in the psalms as tools of worship, Ali Ufki, the recent Muslim convert, may have been attempting to bring into his new religious practice an aspect of worship which he missed. If this

was his wish, it was not fulfilled. Instead, the more lasting impact of his *Mezmurlar* is the ecumenical spirit which they embody, remnants of the cosmopolitan and tolerant environment in which Ali Ufki lived at the eastern end of the Mediterranean in the 17th century, insulated from the religious wars which raged in Europe throughout his lifetime.

PROGRAM

Prologue

The program begins where Ali Ufki began when he created his Turkish psalm settings: with the words and melodies of the psalms of Jean Calvin's *Genevan Psalter*. Psalm 13 is followed by the simple words of a sufi singer-poet (*aşık*/"lover") from the Turkish countryside which set the tone of open questioning which characterizes this collaborative concert.

Psalm 13 from the Genevan Psalter (1562)

Rhyming text in French by Clément Marot, melody by Guillaume Franc. Jusques à quand as establi / Seigneur, de me mettre en oubli? / Est-ce à jamais? Par combien d'aage How long Lord wilt thou me forget? / For evermore? and wilt thou let /My prayer be remember'd never? Destourneras tu ton visage / De moy, las! d'angoisse rempli?... Lord wilt thou hide thy face for ever / From me with woes and foes beset?...

Turkish sufi song (nefes): Bir Allah'ı tanıyalı	Mark Ali İzzet (recorded ca. 1970)
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 doğuşte nedir?	What is all this 'yourself' and 'myself'? / How did this struggle
begin?	
Issız dünyayı doldurdu / Kendini kula bildirdi?	God filled the empty world / He let himself be know to man.
Habil Kabil'i öldürdü / Orta yerde ki kan nedir?	Abel killed Cain / What is all this blood on the ground?
Musa Tavrat'a Hak dedi / Firavun aslı yok dedi.	Moses said, 'The Torah is the Truth' / Pharoah said, 'It's not
true.'	
İsa İncile bak dedi / Sonra gelen Kuran nedir?	Jesus said, 'Look to the Bible' / After that comes the Koran:
what is it?	
Bu gavur Müslüman nedir?	What is this 'non-believer' and 'believer'?

Part I. Shared Devotions

In this first part of the concert, the distinctness of the four participating traditions is emphasized. Selections in each tradition follow on each other with little direct interaction, displaying the unique qualities of their texts and musical practices.

Turkish sufi song (ilahi): Uyan ey gözlerim gafletten uyan

notated by Ali Ufki in his *Mecmua-i saz ü sçz* (1650) music: anonymous words: Sultan Murad III (ruler of the Ottoman Empire from 1574-95) *Uyan ey gözlerim gafletten uyan / Uyan uykusu çok gözlerim uyan* **Awake, mine eyes, from heedlessness! / From your drowsiness, awake!** *Azrail'in kasdı canadır inan /Uyan ey gözlerim...* **Know that the Angel of Death seeks your soul / Awake, mine eyes...**

Seherde uyanırlar cümle kuşlar / 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 /Uyan ey gözlerim... Mountains, stones, trees—all proclaim the Oneness of God / Awake, mine eyes...

Bu dunya fanidir sakın aldanma / Mağrur olup tac-ü tahta dayanma Do not be so deceived by the permanence of this world / Do not be so proud as to trust in thrones Yedi iklim benim deyu güvenme / Uyan ey gözlerim gafletten uyan Do not be so confident, saying, "Seven regions are mine!" / Awake, mine eyes...

From Psalm 150 (Hebrew words; melody adapted from a Sufi Pakistani Qawwali by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan) Halleluyah /Hallelu-el be-kodsho / Hallelu-hu birkiya uzo / Hallelu-hu bi-gvu-rotav / Hallelu-hu kerov gudlo/ Hallelu-hu be-teka shofar / Hallelu-hu be-nevel ve-khinor / Hallelu-hu be-tof u-makhol / Hallelu-hu be-minim ve-ugav/ Hallelu-hu be-tsil-tseley shama / Hallelu-hu beh-tsil-tse-ley tru-ah / Kol ha-n'shama tehallel yah / Halleluyah

Praise God in the sacred sanctuary; praise God in the mighty heavens / Praise God for vast power; praise god for abundant greatness / Praise God with the sound of shofar (horn); praise God with the lute and the harp / Praise God with drum and with dance; praise God with strings and flute / Praise God with the resounding cymbals; praise Him with the clanging cymbals / Let every thing that breathes praise God. Halelu-yah. Praise God.

Evloyiso ton Kyrion (Greek Orthodox, Psalm 33/34)

Evloyiso ton kyrion en panti kero dia pantos i enesis avtou en to stomati mou. Allilouia! I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. Alleluia! En to kyrio epenesthsete i psychi mou akousatosan prais ke evphranthitosan. Allilouia! My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Alleluia! Megalinate ton kyrion sin emi ke hipsomen to onoma avtou epi to avto. Allilouia! O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. Alleluia! Exercitisa ton kyrion ke epikousen mou ke ek pason ton parikion mou errisato me. Allilouia! I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. Alleluia! Proselthate pros avton ke photisthite ke ta prosopa imon ou mi kateschinthi. Allilouia! They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. Alleluia! Outos o ptochos ekekraxen ke o kyrios eisikousen avtou ke ek pason ton thlipseon autou esosen avton. Allilouia! This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. Alleluia! Paremvali angelos kyriou kyklo ton phovoumenon avton ke risete avtos. Allilouia! The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Alleluia! Yevsasthe ke idete oti chistos o kyrios makarios anir os elpizi ep avton. Allilouia! O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. Alleluia! Phovithite ton kyrion i ayii avtou oti ouk estin histerima tis phovoumenis avton. Allilouia! O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. Alleluia! Plousii evtochevsan ke epinasan i dhe ekzitountes ton kyrion ouk elattothisonte pantos agathou. Allilouia! The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*. Alleluia! Devte tekna akousate mou phovon kyriou didaxo imas. Allilouia! Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Alleluia!

A Mighty Fortress is Our God ("Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott", based on Psalm 46)

words and music by Martin Luther (1529), trans. by Frederick Hedge (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1853)

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal. Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, ein Gute Wehr und Waffen Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not, die uns jetzt hat betroffen Der alt böse Feind der ernst ers jetzt meint Gross macht und viel List sein grausam Rüstung ist Auf Erd ist nicht seins gleichen.

Noam's Niggun

A *niggun* is an untexted melody used especially by Hasidic traditions of eastern Europe for the purpose of lifting the soul to higher dimensions of spiritual experience. This *niggun* was composed by Noam Sender.

Modzitzer Niggun

An untexted melody thought to be from the tradition of the Modzitzer Hasidim.

Exomoloyiste to Kyrio (in Greek) Psalm 135/136

Exomoloyisthe to kyrio oti avgathos. Allilouia! Oti eis ton eona to eleos avtou. Allilouia!
O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!
Exomoloyisthe to theo ton theon. Allilouia! Oti eis ton eona to eleos avtou. Allilouia!
O give thanks unto the God of gods. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!
Exomoloyisthe to kyrio ton kyrion. Allilouia! Oti eis ton eona to eleos avtou, Allilouia!
O give thanks to the Lord of lords. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!
To give thanks to the Lord of lords. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!
To piounti thavmasia megala mono. Allilouia! Oti eis ton eona to eleos avtou. Allilouia!
To him who alone doeth great wonders. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!
To piisanti tous ouranous en sinesi. Allilouia! Oti eis ton eona to eleos avtou. Allilouia!
To him that by wisdom made the heavens. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!
To stereosanti tin yin epi ton hydaton. Allilouia! Oti eis ton eona to eleos avtou. Allilouia!
To him that stretched out the earth above the waters. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!
To piisanti phota megala mono. Allilouia! Oti eis ton eona to eleos avtou. Allilouia!
To him that made great lights. Alleluia! For his mercy endureth forever. Alleluia!

Part II. Synagogue, Tekke and Church: Jews, Sufis and Greeks in Istanbul

Synagogue, *tekke* (the meeting place of Muslim mystics, or sufis) and Greek Orthodox church were three important venues of sacred music in Istanbul in the 20th century as well as in the time of Ali Ufki. The interaction among Sephardic Jewish congregations, Turkish Muslim mystical brotherhoods and Greek liturgical musicians in Istanbul is reflected in several of the pieces of Part II. The poetry of the first two pieces follow the tradition of the famous Rabbi and mystic Israel Najara (1555-1625), the legendary founder of the *Maftirim* choir tradition in the Ottoman empire, in which Hebrew poetry was sung to the melodies of secular Ottoman court music or sufi devotional music.

Kha-desh ke-kedem, a piyyut (sacred song) in Hebrew from the repertoire of the Edirne Maftirim

Text: Rabbi Hayyim Bejerano, Chief Rabbi of Istanbul in the 1920s

Music: an unknown Turkish classical or sufi composer (in *Hicaz makam*)

The performers first encountered this piece in a 1989 recording of Samuel Benaroya (b. 1908, Edirne, Turkey), member of the Edirne *Maftirim* chorus from 1920-34.

Kha-desh ke-kedem yah-meinu sho-khen ze-vula / Lishkon ka-vod be-arts-einu na-vah te-hila / Yarum ve-nisah kar-neinu me-od nah-ah-la / Na-vo el me-nu-kha-teinu el ha-nah-khala. Renew as of old our days, Dweller of the Celestial Abode / To live honorably in our land so full of praise/ Exalt and enoble us, Much Elevated One / We will come to our rest, to our portion.

Kakhashekha Kaora (Psalm 139, verses 1-12) Music: Based on the Maftirim song Azkir Hasdei El Ne'eman

Ado-nai kha-kar-ta-ni va-te-da / Ah-ta ya-da-ta shiv-ti ve-koo-mi ban-ta le-re-ee me-ra-khok / Ar-khi ve-riv-ee ze-ri-ta ve-khol drah-khai his-kan-ta / Ki en mi-lah bil-sho-ni hen Ah-do-nai ya-da-ta kkoola / Akh-or va-ke-dem tsar-ta-ni / va-ta-shet ah-lai ka-pe-kha / Pe-li-ah-ha da-aht mi-me-ni nis-ge-va lo oo-khal lah / Ahna eh-lekh me-roo-khe-kha / ve-ana mi-pa-ne-kha ev-rakh / Im es-sak sha-ma-yim sham ah-ta ve-ah-tsi-ah she-ol hi-ne-ka /

Eh-sa khan-fey sha-khar esh-ke-na beh-akh-rit yam / Gam sham yad-kha tan-khe-ni ve-to-kha-zeh-ni ye-min-ne-kha / Vaoh-mar akh kho-shekh ye-shoo-fe-ni ve-lie-la or ba-ah-deh-ni / Gam kho-shekh lo yakh-shikh mi-meh-ka ve-lai-la ka-yom ya-eer ka-kha-she-kha ka-oh-ra

God, you have scrutinized me and you know / You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts from afar / You encompass my path and my repose, You are familiar with my ways / For the word is not yet on my tongue, behold, God, You know everything I am about to say / You have shaped my past and my future, Your hand gently on my shoulder / Awareness of you is beyond me; it is beyond my skills to fathom / Where can I withdraw from Your spirit? And where can I flee from Your presence? / If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in the lowest depths, behold, You are there / were I to soar on the wings of dawn, were I to dwell in the distant west, there too, Your hand would guide me and Your right hand would hold me in safety / Would I say, "Surely darkness will shadow me," then the night would become as light around me / Even darkness obscures not from You; and night shines like the day; Darkness and light are the same.

Dolap niçin inilersin (Turkish sufi devotional song) music: anonymous words: Yunus Emre (d. 1321)

Dolap niçin inilersin / Derdim vardır inilerim Ben mevalaya aşık oldum / Anın için inilerim Benim adım dertli dolap / Suyum akar yalap yalap Böyle emreylemiş çalap / Anın için inilerim Suyu alçaktan çekerim / Çeker yükseğe dökerim Ben mevalaya zikrederim / Anın için inilerim Waterwheel, why do you cry out? / In my suffering, I cry out I am in love with my Lord / I groan because I remember My name is the waterwheel of suffering / I draw the water, *yalap yalap* Working this way as I have been commanded / I groan... I draw water from the depths / I draw it up and spread it I sing the praises of my Lord / I groan because I remember

Breath zikir and memory.

In the Turkish Muslim 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. Here, listeners are invited to allow the breath *zikir* to evoke their own personal memories of religious tradition, triggered by a tapestry of musical sounds specific to Christian, Jewish or Muslim experience.

Pasa Pnoe Enesato ton Kyrion (Greek Orthodox, Psalm 150:6)

Pasa pnoi enesaato ton kyrion. / Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.

Grates Nunc Omnes Reddamus by Johann Walter (1496-1570), an important figure in the early German Reformation who composed multipart devotional music in both Latin and German.

Grates nunc omnes reddamus Domino Deo, qui sua nativitate nos liberavit de diabolica potestate Let us offer thanks to the Lord who through his birth has freed us from the power of the devil

Part III. From Geneva to Istanbul and beyond: The Journey of Ali Ufki's Psalms

The 14 psalm settings in Ali Ufki's *Mezmurlar*, written in Istanbul, originated in Geneva, Switzerland, in the psalm books of French-speaking Protestants. As the bloody conflicts between Roman Catholics and Protestants raged in Europe, Ali Ufki continued to correspond regularly with leaders of the Christian Reform movement in Europe from his new home in the Ottoman capitol. This final section of the concert begins with the Genevan version of Psalm 13 in French, followed by Hebrew, Greek, and Turkish versions of the same psalm and tune, adapted to the performance practices of each of these communities.

Psalm 13 in Four Traditions

To the chief musician. A psalm of David. 1 How long will you forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt you hide your face from me? / 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long will my enemy be exalted over me? / 3 Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; / 4 Lest my enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. / 5 But I have trusted in your mercy; my heart will rejoice in your salvation. / 6 I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

PROTESTANT VERSION

From *The Genevan Psalter* (1562) sung in French and English Rhyming text in French by Clément Marot, melody by Guillaume Franc. Four part setting from *Les cent cinquante psaumes de David* by Claude Le Jeune (1601)

Jusques à quand as establi / Seigneur, de me mettre en oubli? / Est-ce à jamais? Par combien d'aage / Destourneras tu ton visage / De moy, las! d'angoisse rempli?...

JEWISH VERSION

The Genevan Psalter melody (1562) sung in Hebrew

Ahd ah-nah Adonai tish-kakheni netz-akh ahd ana tas-tir eht pah-neh-kha mi-meh-ni Vah-ani be-khas-deh-kha vah-takh-ti yah-gel li-bi biyeh-shoo-atekha ah-shira lah-Adonai ki gah-mal ah-lai

GREEK ORTHODOX VERSION (Psalm 12 in the Greek tradition)

The Genevan Psalter melody (1562) sung in Greek

Eos pote Kyrie epilipsimou is telos Eos pote apostrepsis to prosoposou apemou...

TURKISH SUFI VERSION

The *Genevan Psalter* melody (1562) as it was notated with rhyming Turkish text in the *Mezmurlar* of Ali Ufki (Istanbul, 1665).

Ya Allah nice bu hamuş / İdersin beni feramuş / Daima böyle mi eylersin . Nice dek benden yüzin gizlersin / Sana ümıtvar kalmış her tümüş...

Zikir: A musical conversation on the psalms

The concert ends with a final *zikir*. Repeated phrases in different languages and musical idioms provide a framework for the three traditions to interact in a shared musical devotion. Over these *zikir* patterns soloists from each group improvise melodically on texts they have chosen in their own language.

<u>chorus</u>: repeated phrases in Arabic, Hebrew and Greek Arabic: *La ilahe ilallah* (**There is no god but God**) Hebrew: *Adonai hu hah-Elohim* (**The Lord is God**) Greek: *Kyrie eleison* (Lord have mercy) soloists: selected psalm texts in Turkish, Hebrew and Greek

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Beginning in the fall of 2005, *Dünya* will be taking the *Ali Ufki Community Project* to schools, universities and religious groups in the New England area, offering a combination of performance and open discussion of interfaith issues built on the materials in tonight's concert.

acknowledgements

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The Musicians

Nektarios Antoniou (*voice*) is a professional singer and conductor of Greek sacred music and is currently a graduate student at Yale school of Sacred Music. Andrew Bisset (voice) is a composition student and student of Turkish music at New England Conservatory. Beth Bahia Cohen (bowed tanbur, violin) plays and teaches bowed strings from Eastern Europe and the Middle East and performs with Ziviá and Orkestra Keyif. William Hudson (voice) is a singer in the Boston area, Allen Hulsey (voice) is a student at Berklee College of Music. Robert Labaree (ceng, voice, percussion) is on the Music History faculty of New England Conservatory. Stephen Landau (voice) is a singer and a Rabbinical student at Hebrew College in Newton and serves Temple Beth Zion as an intern. Cem Mutlu (voice, percussion) plays jazz and a variety of world musics with groups in the Boston area. Martin Near (countertenor) is a graduate of New England Conservatory. Dan Nissenbaum (voice) is a student at Berklee College of Music. Haralampos Pavlou (voice) is a student at Hellenic College. Kareem Roustom (oud) is a composer and teacher who performs Arabic classical music with the Sharq ensemble. Mehmet Ali Sanlikol (voice, mey, ney) is a composer and jazz pianist and president of DÜNYA. Bogomil Sabtchev (voice) is a student at Hellenic College. Joel Segel (voice) is a singer and co-author, with Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, of Jewish with Feeling: A Guide to Meaningful Jewish Practice. Noam Sender (voice, percussion) performs with a variety of ensembles in the Boston area and is a board member of Temple Beth Zion in Brookline. Steven Soph (voice) is a singer in the Boston area. Scott A. Tepper (voice) is a Ba'al Tefillah (prayer leader) who has been involved with numerous Boston area congregations, currently Temple Beth Zion in Brookline. Panayiotis Thoma (voice) is a student at Hellenic College. Rick Vanderhoef (voice) is a singer of Greek sacred music, and an instructor and librarian at Hellenic College.