

A Faculty Recital by

Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol  
& the DÜNYA Ensemble

*performing classical Ottoman/Turkish music,  
original jazz compositions  
& introducing the **SANLIKOL Renaissance 17***

Tuesday September 20, 2022

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

Tonight's program presents a number of musical styles I regularly perform as a composer/performer fluent in a variety of Western and Ottoman/Turkish music traditions. However, this occasion lining up with the introduction of a new digital microtonal keyboard instrument (with 17 keys per octave) I conceived and designed was completely unintentional. That being said, returning back to Jordan Hall after a three year-long break, I cannot think of a better occasion than this faculty concert for the debut of the *Renaissance 17* (R17).

I first had the idea for the R17 back in 1999 when NEC professor and celebrated composer Daniel Pinkham took us to the Carr Organ room in the Jordan Hall building to demonstrate unequal temperaments that were used during the Renaissance and early Baroque Europe on an organ. Until that moment I did not realize that not only such historical unequal temperaments resembled the classical Turkish music tuning system but also keyboard instruments with split keys were utilized especially in Italy in order to accommodate what we would now consider microtonal flavors. Right there and then I remember thinking "why not create a digital instrument that can switch between a variety of temperaments/tuning systems easily while utilizing all kinds of possible instrument sounds via high quality sample libraries?"

After starting to secure a number of prestigious grants in recent years, I started becoming encouraged about pursuing this dream more seriously, as a result of which I secured a LAB grant from The Boston Foundation and over the past 2,5 years worked with Jacob Kaeser, an experienced harpsichord/organ luthier who built an amazing keyboard; Sage Radachowsky who designed the electronics; and my dear friend Melanie Howell Brooks who advised on the technical development of the R17.

Since the R17 was first inspired by early European music, I cannot think of a better way to start this concert than a Baroque organ piece that was intended for an instrument with split keys. The *Toccata quarta per l'elevatione* by Gregorio Strozzi (1615-1687) is indeed an ideal composition with its slow moving harmonies that fully display the microtonal qualities of this period.

Music from mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Naples will be followed by music from the Ottoman court of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul in the first part of the program. Ali Ufki (also Wojciech or Albert Bobowski), a Polish Protestant who converted to Islam after being taken prisoner by the Crimean Tartars and sold to the court of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV (1642-1693), 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. I have assembled this first suite from Ali Ufki's collection by selecting a diverse range of pieces with varying rhythmic cycles and modalities that have not been recorded or even heard in our time.

While the first suite featured never-before performed pieces, the second suite is compiled from what could be considered as the 'standards' of the classical Turkish tradition. Even though a few of these pieces may date from 17<sup>th</sup> (or even possibly earlier) centuries, unlike the previous set, these compositions would be well known amongst the practitioners of this tradition currently and performed on the spot with

lots of improvised ornamentations.

Contrapuntal compositions and arrangements based on *makam* (main modal concept in the Near and the Middle East) have been an interest of mine for at least two decades by now. The *Rast Tevşih* achieves polyphony by way of adapting the Sufi *zikir* where an ostinato praising God creates contrapuntal texture against the main melodic line.  $\text{E}\Sigma\text{r}\text{Q}$ , on the other hand, is modeled after imitative polyphony from the Renaissance but based on the *Nihavend makam*. This composition will slowly evolve and start incorporating a groove oriented collective jazz improvisation during which the *Continuum Fingerboard*, a flat surfaced keyboardless microtonal synthesizer, and the R17 will be featured along with other soloists.

I wrote the *Şedd-i Araban Şarkı* dreaming about an instrument like the R17 many years ago. The tuning I will be using for this piece is based on the Şedd-i Araban makam but the harmonic structure as well as the form of the piece follows the jazz tradition. The *Hüseyni Jam* has been created in the spirit of a jazz jam session and it features harmonies complementing the melody of a microtonal Turkish folk song in the Hüseyni makam which I adapted. This set will end with *Can't put you aside*, a piece influenced by makam I wrote back in 1996.

We will end the entire concert with a light Turkish pop song I wrote in the spirit of the Anatolian Rock/Pop genre popular in Turkey during the 1970s.

### The DÜNYA Ensemble

Beth Bahia Cohen, yaylı tanbur

Burcu Güleç, voice, percussion

James Heazlewood-Dale, bass

Bertram Lehmann, percussion

George Lernis, drums, percussion, santur

Jerry Sabatini, trumpet, flugel horn

Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, Renaissance 17, Continuum Fingerboard,  
piano, duduk, ney, ud, voice

## PROGRAM

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### Prelude

**Gregorio Strozzi**  
(1615–1687)

*Toccata quarta per l'elevatione*  
(Tuning: 1/4 Comma Meantone with  
G-sharp/A-flat and C-sharp/D-flat on split keys)

### 17<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Court

**Instrumental Improvisation**

*Nişabur Taksim*

**Solakzade Mehmed**  
(1592–1658)

*Nişabur Pişrev* (instrumental prelude)

**Anonymous**

*Buselik Murabba*

*Nice vasf 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 müsellem ne disün?*

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

**Köroğlu**  
(16<sup>th</sup> c.)

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

*Söz tutub uludan, dinleyiñ öğüt*  
*Edebli er erkanından bell'olur*

Listen to advice of the elderly  
A decent man is known by his manners

**Modulating Improvisation over  
ostinato**

*Perde Kaldırma*

**Anonymous**

*Nakş-ı Uşşak* (a song in Persian)

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

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

## Classical Turkish Music

*Uşşak Taksim*

**Salih Dede**

(d. 1888)

*Uşşak Saz Semaisi* (instrumental prelude)

**Baba Nevaî**

(17<sup>th</sup> c.)

*Beyati Yürük Semai* (classical song)

*Gül yüzlülerin şevkine gel nuş edelim mey*

Let us desire those with faces like roses and  
drink

*İşret edelim yar ile şimdide midir hey*

Let us drink with our beloved now

**Anonymous**

*Hüseyni Nefes* (Sufi devotional song)

*İptidadan yol sorarsan*

*Yol Muhammed Ali'nindir*

*Yetmiş iki dil sorarsan*

*Dil Muhammed Ali'nindir*

If you ask for the first of all ways

The way is the way of Muhammed (and) Ali

If you were to ask in 72 languages

The language would be the language of

Muhammed (and) Ali

Şah Hatayi (1487-1524)

## Polyphonic Makam

### *Rast Taksim*

#### **Nalburizade**

(d. 1720)

arr. Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

#### *Rast Tevşih* (Sufi devotional song)

*Merhaba ey mevlid-i peygamberi*

Welcome, the birth of our prophet

İbrahim Hakkı Erzurumi (d. 1703-1780)

#### **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**

(b. 1974)

#### ΕΣΓΙϞ

*Olmayanlar kaşif-i esrar-ı ders-i men a'ref*

Those who have not become the discoverers  
of the mystery of the forbidden lessons

*Anlamaz can vermeyi uğrunda ey Şah-ı Necef*

Cannot understand to perish in your honor o  
King of Najaf

*Kainata nur-ı şemsindir veren şan ve şeref*

It's the illumination of the sun that you are  
which gives glory and honor to the universe

Neyzen Tevfik Kolaylı (1879-1953)

## Jazz and Makam

#### **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**

#### *Şedd-i Araban Şarkı*

*Gerçi sen bu leblerinle halk-ı alem canısın  
Sorduğum ayb eyleme billah kimin cananısın?*

With such lips you are the sweetheart of all  
Don't think of me as rude but who is your  
lover?

#### **Anonymous**

arr. Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

#### *Hüseyni Jam*

**Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**

*Can't put you aside*

## **Postlude**

**Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**

*Gel gönül gurbete gitme*

*Gel gönül gurbete gitme  
Ya gelinir ya gelinmez  
Her dilbere mey(i)l etme  
Ya sevilir ya sevilmez*

Come, let's not go far from home  
One may come back, or not  
Don't flirt with all of the beautiful girls  
You may love, or no

Text adapted by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol from the variants of a poem attributed to Erzurumlu Emrah and Karacaoğlan from Turkey as well as Turkmenistan

**Special thanks** to The Boston Foundation, Jacob Kaeser, Sage Radachowsky, and Melanie Howell Brooks. 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.

**Beth Bahia Cohen** 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.

**James Heazlewood-Dale** has performed with some of the world's most prominent jazz musicians including Maria Schneider, Terrence Blanchard, George Garzone, Ernie Watts, James Morrison and Will Vincent. He is currently at Brandeis pursuing his PHD in Musicology.

**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 two master's degrees from Longy Conservatory and the Global Jazz Institute at Berklee. George has performed in venues such as the Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

**Jerry Sabatini** earned a master's degree in Contemporary Improvisation at New England Conservatory and performs and records often in the US, Europe, and the Middle East with some of the world's most innovative musicians and bands. Jerry's influences range from the music of traditional combo, big band, and avant-garde jazz, to Eastern European Roma brass bands, Middle Eastern, Indian, Asian, European, and American Classical music, as well as American blues, pop, rock, soul, and funk.

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, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music Grant as well as a South Arts Jazz Road Creative Residency Grant.

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and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.  
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