



Friday, February 20, 2015, 8pm  
First Congregational Church

## Jordi Savall & Hespèrion XXI

### PROGRAM

*Istanbul: Music from Ottoman Empire in Dialogue with the  
Armenian, Greek, and Sephardic Traditions*

#### I

- Der makâm-ı “Uzzâl uşüleş Darb-i feth” Dervis Mehmed, Mss. Dimitrie Cantemir (209)  
La rosa enflorece — Maciço de rosas Sephardic (I. Levy I.59, III.41)  
Alagyeaz & Khnki tsar Armenian traditional  
Der makâm-ı Hüseyinî Semâ’î Mss. D. Cantemir (268)

#### II

- Hisar Ağır Semai Ottoman lament  
Ta xyla (Greek) / Çeçem kizi (Turkish)  
Ene Sarére Armenian lament  
Der makâm-ı Uzzâl Sakil “Turna” Semâ’î Mss. D. Cantemir (324)

### INTERMISSION

## III

Paxarico tu te llamas    Sephardic (Sarajevo)

Al aylukhs    Armenian song and dance

Der makām-ı Râst “Murass’a” uşüleş Düyek    Mss. D. Cantemir (214)

Hermoza muchachica    Sephardic traditional  
Taksim

## IV

Hov arek    Armenian lament

Koniali    Turkish-Greek song and dance

Una pastora    Sephardic traditional

Taksim

Der makām-ı Hüseyinî Sakil-i Ağa Rızâ    Mss. D. Cantemir (89)

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Cal Performances' 2014–2015 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

HESPÈRION XXI

TURKEY

Hakan Güngör, *kanun*

Yurdal Tokcan, *oud*

ARMENIA

Haïg Sarikouyoumdjian, *ney & duduk*

GREECE

Dimitri Psonis, *santur*

MOROCCO

Driss El Maloumi, *oud*

SPAIN

David Mayoral, *percussion*

Jordi Savall, *vièle à archet, lyre & direction*

**Istanbul: Dimitrie Cantemir's *The Book of the Science of Music*  
and the Sephardic and Armenian Musical Traditions**

**I**N 1693, the city that stands at the crossroads of the continents of Europe and Asia, called "Istanbul" by the Ottomans and "Constantinople" by the Byzantines, was experiencing a high point in its history. Despite the memory and very palpable presence of the old Byzantium, it had become the true heart of the modern Muslim religious and cultural world. It was an extraordinary melting-pot of peoples and religions, and a magnet for European travelers and artists.

Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723) arrived in the city that year at the age of 20. In spite of being ensnared in the political turmoil of his time, this learned son of the ruler of Moldavia became a renowned scholar and author. Famous as a virtuoso of the *tanbur*, a kind of long-necked lute, Cantemir was also a highly regarded composer, thanks to his work *Kitab-i ilm-i musiki* ("The Book of the Science of Music").

Cantemir's *The Book of the Science of Music* is an exceptional document in many ways. As a fundamental source of knowledge concerning the theory, style, and forms of 17th-century Ottoman music, it is also one of the most interesting accounts of the musical life of one of the foremost Oriental countries. This collection of 355 compositions (including nine by Cantemir himself), written in a system of musical notation invented by the author, constitutes the most important collection of 16th- and 17th-century Ottoman instrumental music to have survived to the present day.

Whereas the earliest notation used by Turkish musicians resembled alphabetical notation, the notation invented by Cantemir is a highly intelligent and precise system, allowing us to clearly differentiate the various tunings of the flats and the sharps, depending on the modes used. As for his mastery of the *tanbur*, which can be plucked or bowed, Cantemir asserted that it "is the most complete and perfect of all known instruments or those that we have seen" and one that "faithfully and flawlessly imitates the human song and voice."

In the present concert, we aim to present the "cultivated" instrumental music of the 17th-century Ottoman court, as preserved in Cantemir's work, in dialogue and alternating with "traditional" popular music. We have selected music from the oral traditions of Armenian musicians and the music of the Sephardic communities who, after their expulsion from Spain, settled in the Ottoman Empire in such cities as Istanbul and Izmir.

I first began to discover this repertory in 1999, during the preparation of our project on Isabella I of Castile. A year later, on our first visit to Istanbul to give a concert with Montserrat Figueras and Hespèren XX, we acquired a copy of the first modern edition of the music contained in Cantemir's *The Book of the Science of Music*. Determined to find out more about the historical and aesthetic context of his work, I set about studying both Cantemir and the music.

The enormous diversity and cultural richness of Istanbul at the time of Cantemir was increased by the presence at the imperial court of Greek, Armenian, and Jewish musicians. According to the Comte de Saint-Priest, the French ambassador to Istanbul, "Most of the Great Sultan's musical retainers, including Cantemir himself, who are the musical élite of the Turkish Empire, are of Greek, Jewish, or Armenian origin."

Around 1700, Cantemir observed, in his *History of the Ottoman Empire*: "I would even venture to say that the music of the Turks is much more perfect than that of Europe in terms of meter and the proportion of words, but it is also so difficult to understand that one would be hard put to find more than a handful of individuals with a sound knowledge of the principles and subtleties of this art."

Cantemir's remark on the complexity of Turkish music concurs with the conclusions we have drawn from our own studies. In the nine *makam* that we have selected for the present concert, the following meters (or

rhythms) are found: 14/4, 16/4, 10/8, 6/4, 12/4, 48/4 and 2/4. Of these seven meters, only the 6/4 and 2/4 are usual in the West.

In the process of reducing the vast materials to a coherent concert, we had the difficult task of selecting about ten pieces from the 355 compositions in *The Book of the Science of Music*, choosing the most representative and varied pieces from among the *makam* which struck us as being the most beautiful.

For the Sephardic music, we chose pieces from the Ladino repertoire preserved in the communities of Izmir, Istanbul, and other regions of the former Ottoman Empire. For the Armenian repertoire, we selected some of the most beautiful pieces collected in the *Voskeporik*, or *Thesaurus of Armenian Melodies*, published in 1982 in Yerevan, Armenia, by the musicologist Nigoghos Tahmizian.

In 2008, as a natural continuation of our original project on the dialogue between East and West, we succeeded in bringing together an exceptional group of musicians (*oud*, *kanun*) from Turkey, together with musicians from Armenia (*duduk*, *ney* "Beloul"), Morocco (*oud*), and Greece (*santur*), as well as our principal specialist soloists in Hespèrion XXI.

Without their talent and knowledge this project would never have been possible.

All these songs have their history. In the heroic echoes and the laments of the exile, in the tribute to the beauty of the country and in the lovers' repartee, the attentive ear will recognize some constant features. They can all be heard here as elements of a strong musical identity: all the melodies seem to recall the prevailing symbolism in medieval modes codified by the Church, which no doubt borrowed them to some extent from a pre-existing secular repertory, each rhythm closely identified with the meter of the text.

In Western Europe, our image of the Ottoman Empire has been distorted by that Empire's long bid to expand toward the West. We have been blinded to the cultural richness and, above all, the atmosphere of tolerance and diversity that existed in the Empire during that period. The music of this concert supports a more enlightened view of Istanbul.

Jordi Savall

*I would like to thank Amnon Shiloah, Stefan Lemny, and Ursula and Kurt Reinhard for their research and analysis on the history, music and the period, which I have used in documenting some of the sources in my commentary.*



**Jordi Savall** (*vièle à archet, lyre, direction*) is one of the most multifariously gifted musicians of his generation. His career as a concert performer, teacher, researcher, and creator of new projects, both musical and cultural, make him

David Ignaszewski

one of the principal architects of the current reevaluation of historical music. Together with Montserrat Figueras, he founded the ensembles Hespèrion XXI, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, and Le Concert des Nations. He has recorded over 170 CDs, most of which are on Alia Vox. In 2001, Mr. Savall received a Grammy Award for *Dinastia Borja* and the Midem Classical Music Award for *Jerusalem, City of Two Peaces*. In 2008 he was appointed as an Artist for Peace into the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador's program, and in 2009 he was appointed as Ambassador of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation by the European Union. Most recently, he received the Léonie Sonning Music Prize in Denmark, joining the company of Daniel Barenboim, Cecilia Bartoli, Mstislav Rostropovich, Olivier Messiaen, and others.

For 39 years, Hespèrion has led the way into the vibrant world of medieval, Renaissance, and baroque music. From Hespèrion XX's beginning in Basel, the founding director, Jordi Savall, and his co-founders Montserrat Figueras, Lorenzo Alpert, and Hopkinson Smith never wavered from their initial motivation. Thanks to the energy of its members, Hespèrion XXI has conquered a new world of nations and extracted the precious ore of their musical traditions. Harvesting the music of Europe, the Middle and Far East, and the New World, Hespèrion XXI has revealed Sepharad through live performances and recordings of Judeo-Christian songs, Golden Age Spain, the Madrigals of Monteverdi, the

Creole *villancicos* of Latin America, and much more. Guided by the energy and commitment of Mr. Savall and Ms. Figueras, Hespèrion XXI has succeeded in uniting the common threads of disparate cultures.



**Driss El Maloumi** (*oud*) was born in 1970 in Agadir, Morocco. He earned a master's degree from Ibn Zohr University in Arab literature in 1993.

At the same time, Mr. El Maloumi was studying classical music forms of the Middle East and Western Europe, and received three prizes (1992–1994) from the Conservatoire National de Musique in Rabat for his outstanding *oud* playing.

Combining his love for words and music, Mr. El Maloumi has written and composed such French shows as *Les Oiseaux de lune*, *Lamour sorcier*, and *Caravane de lune*. He has earned a reputation for successfully mixing traditional Moroccan Sufi music with jazz and baroque idioms in such albums as *Noches* and *Jazz aux Oudayas*.

In addition to his work with Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI, Mr. El Maloumi has appeared with other leading musicians from Europe, as well as Iran, India, the Middle East, and Africa. In his innovative project “3MA,” he collaborates with musicians from Madagascar and Malawi.



Born in Ankara, Turkey, in 1973, **Hakan Güngör** (*kanun*) received his first music lessons from his father, Ali Osman Güngör, a professional *oud* player. Following his early *kanun* lessons with Ozhan Kayhan,

Mr. Güngör studied for two years at Gazi University. In 1992, he matriculated into the Composition Department of the Turkish

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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Music Conservatory of Istanbul Technical University, where he studied for six years with its esteemed faculty. Studies in *kanun* technique and other aspects of Turkish classical music alternated with courses in Western classical solfège, composition, harmony, and counterpoint.

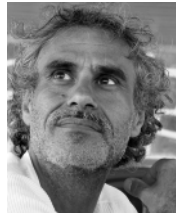
Since 1993, Mr. Güngör has performed and recorded with many renowned artists. In addition to Jordi Savall and his Hespèrion ensembles, he has appeared with Yo-Yo Ma, Kudsi Ergüner, Renaud Garcia-Fons, Fazıl Say, and Okay Temiz. Mr. Güngör is on the faculty of Halic University, is a resident *kanun* player at Istanbul Radio House, and produces the popular *Mûzik Deyince* show for the music channel of Turkish Radio and Television.



A frequent member of Jordi Savall's ensembles since 2005, **David Mayoral** (*percussion*) is a wide-ranging and versatile percussionist. In his student years he worked with renowned masters

of piano, ear training, historical percussion, and classical Arabic percussion, and studied in formal courses and master classes with Glen Velez (frame drum, *req*), Keyvan Chemirani (*zarb*), and Pejman Haddadi (*zarb*, *daf*).

Many ensembles devoted to medieval, Renaissance, and baroque music invite Mr. Mayoral to perform and record with them. He has appeared in concerts throughout the world, performing traditional ethnic music as well as the fusion of musical traditions. He has been heard in venues from Carnegie Hall in New York to the Cervantes Institute in Beirut, from the Festival of Sacred Music in Fez to the Oud Festival of Jerusalem. He is a founding member of Transit, an educational project that presents a journey through the musical traditions of India, Cuba, or the Middle East through their percussion instruments.



**Dimitri Psonis** (*santur*) studied music at conservatories in Athens, Madrid, and Amsterdam. In his native Athens, he studied not only such theoretical disciplines as analysis, harmony, and

counterpoint, but also performance practices of a wide range of Mediterranean instruments, such as the *santur*, Moorish guitar, *oud*, *tzura*, and various percussion instruments. At the conservatory in Madrid, Mr. Psonis earned the top degree in percussion and musical pedagogy.

An enthusiastic ensemble player, Mr. Psonis founded the groups Metamorphosis, Krusta, Acroma, and P'An-Ku, and he has worked with singers and instrumentalists of many nations. His music interests range from specialized studies and interpretation of classic Ottoman music, to the performance of popular music of Greece and Turkey. His work can be heard on CDs and film soundtracks. Collaborating with early music ensembles like the Limoges Baroque Orchestra and Speculum, Mr. Psonis has performed and recorded regularly with Jordi Savall and Hespèrion since 2000.



**Haïg Sarikouyoumdjian** (*ney*, *duduk*) made his début on the *duduk* in 1998 at the age of 13. Subsequent studies with different Armenian masters of the double-reed instrument refined his

knowledge of playing techniques, as well as of the traditional repertoire of the *duduk*. With these teachers, he learned the subtleties of intonation and intervals, ornamentation, rhythmic complexities, and the modal scales of traditional Armenian music.

Mr. Sarikouyoumdjian was profoundly influenced by his collaboration with the *duduk* master Gaguik Mouradian, with whom he has performed and recorded. Their exploration of

the tradition of *medjlis*, assemblies of the poetic and musical heritage of Armenia, combines contemporary music with the traditional arts of the Caucasus regions. He has collaborated with Jordi Savall and Hespèrion since 2009. With them, he has participated in many performing and recording projects around the world. Their collaboration on the CD *Armenian Spirit*, released in 2012, has been widely praised.



**Osman Yurdal Tokcan** (*oud*), born in Ordu, Turkey, in 1966 and graduated from the Turkish Conservatory of Istanbul Technical University in 1988. While completing his master program, he joined the faculty as an *oud* instructor from

1989 to 1997. In 1990, he was appointed as an *oud* performer to the Istanbul Government Music Ensemble.

Mr. Tokcan has combined traditional performance practices with music and instruments of today. He is also an avid and respected teacher of the *oud* in workshops and master classes. Active in the music culture of his homeland, Mr. Tokcan founded the Istanbul Sazendeleri (“Musicians of Istanbul”) in order to encourage the spread of instrumental Turkish music. In addition, he has performed and toured with ensembles throughout the world. He has worked on film scores (*The Passion of the Christ* and *Kingdom of Heaven*) and on many CDs released in Europe and the United States. Among them are two recordings with Jordi Savall, *Sublime Porte* and *Dimitrie Cantemir: Istanbul*.