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Darkness Is Your Candle

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PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

World Premiere!

East of the River

Darkness Is Your Candle

Daphna Mor and Nina Stern, recorders, ney, chalumeau
Ara Dinkjian, oud
Jesse Kotansky, violin
Peter Stan, accordion
Omer Avital, bass
Shane Shanahan, percussion
Glen Velez, percussion

Program	
“Kruk” “Kani Vor Janim” “Yis Kou Ghimetn Chim Giti”	Komitas Vardapet (1865–1935) Sayat Nova (1712–1795) Sayat Nova
“Lamma Bada”	Traditional Andalusian
“Samai Hijaz”	Abdel Rahman Jabakji (d. 2003)
“Sandansko Horo”	Traditional Bulgarian
~~Intermission~~	
“Ghaetta”	Italian, late 14th century Arranged by Nina Stern
Percussion Duo	Glen Velez, Shane Shanahan
“Longa Farahfaza” “Longa Nahawand”	Riyad Al-Sunbati (1906–1981) Traditional Turkish
“Cveta moma ubava”	Traditional Macedonian
“Krivo Sadovsko Horo”	Traditional Bulgarian
“Kozarica Kolo” “Sirto”	Traditional Serbian Traditional Greek

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices.
The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted.
No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

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Montclair State’s **Office of Arts & Cultural Programming** (ACP) presents and produces leading artists of the world in dance, music, theater, and opera. Under its signature series Peak Performances, ACP has produced works such as *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* by Robert Wilson, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Toshi Reagon, and Jacqueline Woodson; *Dog Days* by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek; Harry Partch’s *Oedipus*; and Ridge Theater’s *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field* by David Lang. In addition, ACP has commissioned works by Bill T. Jones, Kronos Quartet, Jan Fabre, Liz Lerman, Wayne McGregor, Laurie Anderson, Romeo Castellucci, Richard Alston, Susan Marshall, Fred Hersch, and David Gordon.

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Alexander Kasser Theater
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The 2013/14 season is made possible in part by funds from:

- The National Endowment for the Arts
- The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts
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- National Dance Project (NDP) of the New England Foundation for the Arts
- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- Alison and James T. Cirenza
- The Honorable Mary Mochary

To view our complete season and for more information, visit peakperfs.org.



December 21, 2013
8:00 p.m.

Alexander Kasser Theater



Program Notes

“Kruk”

“Kruk” (“Crane”) is based on a text from the late medieval times and exists in various manuscripts dating from that period. Stylistically, the work is similar to a liturgical chant and was transmitted orally through the centuries. In the 19th century, Komitas Vardapet notated it and made an arrangement of it for voice and piano. Komitas, arguably Armenia’s most famous musician, was also a priest (Vardapet means “doctor of the church” or “divine scholar”). He traveled extensively around the Armenian countryside, listening to and writing down Armenian folk songs and dances. He collected and published upward of 3,000 songs, later adapting many of them for choir, solo voice, and piano.

“Kani Vor Janim” and “Yis Kou Ghimetn Chim Giti”

“Kani Vor Janim” and “Yis Kou Ghimetn Chim Giti” are two songs written by the Armenian poet and *asugh* (troubadour) Sayat Nova. Born Harutyun Sayatyan, he adopted the name Sayat Nova, meaning “Master of Songs” in Persian. Sayat Nova was an itinerant musician who sang and played the kamancheh, a bowed stringed instrument used in the classical music of Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Sayat Nova is considered one of the most important poets of his time. His compositions became part of Armenian oral tradition and have been sung throughout the centuries.

“Lamma Bada”

“Lamma Bada” is written in the *samai thaqil* rhythm (also called *samai* for short). The song is a Muwashah—an Arabic poetic form as well as a secular musical form originating in Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain).

“Samai Hijaz”

The *samai* is a composed instrumental piece comprised of four sections (*khana*, pl. *khanat*), each followed by the refrain (*taslim*). The *samai* uses the 10/8 rhythmic mode (called *samai thaqil*) throughout the *taslim* and the first three *khanat*. The fourth *khana*, which precedes the last refrain, is typically composed in 3/4 meter. This *samai* was written in the *hijaz* mode (*maqam*) by the Syrian oud virtuoso Abdel Rahman Jabakji, who died in 2003.

“Sandansko Horo”

A distinctive feature of Balkan folk dance music is asymmetrical or compound meters with various combinations of “short” and “long” beats. “Sandansko Horo” (*horo* means “dance”) is in 22/16 time.

“Ghaetta”

“Ghaetta” is one of 15 estampies from a manuscript in London’s British Library (MS Add. 29987)—an extraordinary collection of Italian virtuoso solo dances from the late 14th century. Originally written for one melody instrument, the version performed tonight debuts an original arrangement of the work for two recorders and percussion.

“Longa Farahfaza” and “Longa Nahawand”

The *longa* is a lively instrumental piece of Turkish/Eastern European origin, usually in simple 2/4 meter. The form of the *longa* is similar to the *rondo*, consisting of two to four couplets (*khanaf*) with a recurring refrain (*taslim*). These two pieces are written in the related modes (*maqam*) of *farahfaza* and *nahawand*.

“Cveta moma ubava”

“Cveta moma ubava” is a *lesnoto*—a line dance, usually in 7/8 time, from Macedonia. This particular *lesnoto* is often sung. The lyrics to the song are:

Cveta, the beautiful girl, sheds bitter tears, and asks herself, “Why, Dimcho, don’t you come to see me?

Didn’t you tell me, Dimcho, that you would love me truly, only me? I’m sending you a gift, you madcap, come back to me!

Pull your cap down over your eye, wink at me, raise your cap so I can see you. I’m burning up for you!

I wait for you every day, to see you near me. I’ll go take another love if you don’t come!

Come, Dimcho, come this evening, lordy, but I’m burning up for you!”

“Krivo Sadovsko Horo”

“Krivo Sadovsko Horo” is a Bulgarian folk dance in 13/8 time.

“Kozarica Kolo”

“Kozarica Kolo” is a Serbian/Romanian circle dance in 2/4 meter.

“Sirto”

Syrtos, or *sirtos*, is the name of a group of traditional Greek folk dances. Along with the *kalamatianos*, they are the most popular dances throughout Greece. Both are line dances and use the same dance steps, but the *syrtos* is in 2/4 or 4/4 meter, whereas the *kalamatianos* is in 7/8.

Notes by Nina Stern.

About the Artists

Omer Avital (bass), hailed by the *LA Times* as “a pioneer in combining jazz with myriad world music elements,” is a composer, a virtuosic bassist, and an oud player and has been an active force on the world music scene for well over a decade. Born and raised in Israel to parents of Yemenite and Moroccan descent, Avital was surrounded from an early age by the diverse musical and cultural landscape of his native land. In 1992, Avital moved to New York and became an internationally recognized bass player and bandleader. Signed by Impulse (Universal Music) at age 26 to produce his first album, Avital recorded and toured with Wynton Marsalis, Kenny Garrett, Brian Blade, Joshua Redman, Brad Mehldau, Roy Haynes, and many others. During this time, Avital became increasingly interested in his own Arabic heritage and that of Sephardic Jews, especially ancient Andalusian music. In 2008, Avital was awarded the Prime Minister’s Award, the most prestigious distinction for artists in Israel. His work seeks to create a highly individual yet instantly recognizable sound, the essence of Israel with all its contradictions and beauty.

Ara Dinkjian (oud) was born in New Jersey and graduated from Hartt College of Music, earning the country’s first and only special degree in the oud. His groundbreaking and highly influential group Night Ark recorded four CDs for RCA/BMG and PolyGram/Universal. He has given concerts in 21 countries throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. His compositions have been recorded by renowned musicians and singers in 14 different languages. Dinkjian’s composition “Homecoming” (“Dinata, Dinata”) was performed at the closing ceremonies of the 2004 Athens Olympics. His recent CDs *An Armenian in America*, *Voice of Armenians*, and *Peace on Earth* were recorded live at the 2005, 2006, and 2007 Jerusalem International Oud Festivals. The Secret Trio, a collaboration with Tamer Pinarbasi and Ismail Lumanovski, has just released its first CD, *Soundscapes*, and Dinkjian has two forthcoming CDs: *Conversations with Manol*, a solo oud recording, and *Finding Songs*, featuring 12 new compositions performed by the Ara Dinkjian Quartet.

Jesse Kotansky (violin), born to dancers Stephen and Susan Kotansky, was exposed to and surrounded by Balkan and Middle Eastern music from the time he was a very young child. At age two he was given his first violin and from an early age had many opportunities to study and perform with master musicians. Kotansky has bridged many worlds of music as a professional recording artist and performer with Aerosmith, David Bowie, Teddy Thompson, Merita Halili, Raif Hyseni, J Mascis, and Ivan Milev. He is the co-founder of the Brooklyn-based Indi rock band Walking Shapes, whose album has a February release date. He will make his film-scoring debut with the up-and-coming film *Blemished Light*.

Daphna Mor (recorders, ney), praised for her virtuosity by the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, has performed throughout Europe and the United States. Her appearances include solo recitals in Croatia, Germany, and Switzerland; at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Trinity Church; and for Music Before 1800. Mor has performed as a soloist with the New York Collegium, New York Early Music Ensemble, and the Little Orchestra Society and as a member of the orchestra with the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, and Trinity Church Baroque Orchestra. She was awarded First Prize in the Settimane Musicali di Lugano Solo Competition and the Boston Conservatory Concerto Competition. Mor is also an active performer of world music, appearing in festivals all over the US, Canada, Poland, Italy, Spain, Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Greece, and Israel. She acts as a musician to the Education Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and is a musician-in-residence at B’nai Jeshurun Synagogue in New York.

Shane Shanahan (percussion), a percussionist/composer/arranger, has been touring the globe performing with Yo-Yo Ma since 2000 as an original member of the Grammy-nominated Silk Road Ensemble. His arrangements and compositions are featured on several of the group’s recordings for Sony Classical. He can also be heard and seen on Ma’s Grammy Award–winning holiday CD/DVD release, *Songs of Joy & Peace*. He has performed and/or recorded with Bobby McFerrin, Aretha Franklin, Philip Glass, Alison Krauss, Deep Purple, Jordi Savall, Sonny Fortune, Fantasia, Chaka Khan, and Glen Velez, among others. Shanahan’s dynamic performances have brought people to their feet in the greatest concert halls of the world, including Carnegie Hall, after which the *New York Times* proclaimed, “By the time he finished in a virtuosic jester’s dance, limbs flying as he whirled back and forth between doumbek, cymbals and body parts, the audience roared with delight.” A strong believer in the power of education, Shanahan has taught and/or presented workshops at schools and universities around the world including Princeton, Harvard, and NYU.

Peter Stan (accordion) is of Romani Balkan heritage. Born and raised in Australia, he moved to the US at age twelve. He was taught to play the accordion at an early age by his father, also an accordionist. He has won prizes in several prestigious accordion competitions, including those sponsored by the American Accordion Musicological Society and the Long Island Music Teachers Association. Stan is fluent in a broad range of musical styles, including Balkan, classical, Klezmer, and contemporary. He has also performed in movies and on soundtrack recordings and has played for the Mark Morris Dance Group. Stan has played at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, and Irving Plaza as well as in Hong Kong, France, Germany, Sweden, Turkey, Denmark, Serbia, and throughout much of the US.

Nina Stern (recorders, chalumeau) has carved a unique and extraordinarily diverse career for herself as a world-class recorder player and classical clarinetist. A native New Yorker, Stern studied at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland, where she received a Soloist’s Degree. From Basel, she moved to Italy where she was immediately offered a teaching position at the Civica Scuola di Musica in Milan. Stern has performed widely as a soloist, with the ensembles East of the River and Rose of the Compass, and as a principal player with orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, Philharmonia Baroque, Opera Lafayette, and American Classical Orchestra. She has recorded for the Erato, Harmonia Mundi, Sony Classics, Newport Classics, Wildboar, Telarc, and Smithsonian labels. Stern teaches for Juilliard’s Historical Performance program and has served on the faculties of the Mannes College of Music, Oberlin Conservatory, and the Five Colleges in Massachusetts. She is founder and artistic director of S’Cool Sounds, an award-winning music education project serving public-school and underserved children in the US and Africa.

About the Company

East of the River was founded by internationally renowned recorder players Nina Stern and Daphna Mor. The project explores haunting and virtuosic melodies from the traditional repertoires of the Balkans, Armenia, and the Middle East as well as gems of the Medieval European classical repertory. The music is arranged and interpreted by musicians whose musical backgrounds include classical, jazz, and world music. Together they create the unique blend that is East of the River.

Hailed as “recorder virtuosoi” by the *New York Times*, Stern and Mor each have impressive careers as soloists and chamber music players and have appeared as a duo with groups as varied as the New York Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and world music ensemble Pharaoh’s Daughter in venues including Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

Glen Velez (percussion), a four-time Grammy award winner, is an internationally acclaimed soloist and seminal figure in the history of the frame drum. Legendary among musicians and audiences worldwide, he brought a new genre of drumming to the Western world by creating his own compositional style inspired by years of percussion and frame-drumming studies from various cultures. Velez’s virtuosic combinations of hand movements and finger techniques, along with his original compositional style, which incorporates stepping, drum language, and Central Asian overtone singing (split-tone singing), have undoubtedly opened new possibilities for musicians around the globe, resulting in a shift in modern percussion. After 15 years performing and recording with the Steve Reich Ensemble and the Paul Winter Consort, Velez records for the Sounds True label, works as a soloist and with the Ta Ka Di Mi duo featuring Loire, and continues to collaborate in many styles with prominent artists, including Pat Metheny, Richard Stoltzman, Zakir Hussain, and Sonny Fortune.

East of the River is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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East of the River has performed in concert halls and clubs including Bargemusic, Joe’s Pub, and Le Poisson Rouge, at universities including Hofstra and University of Pennsylvania, and at the Chautauqua Institute, Connecticut Early Music, and Indianapolis Early Music Festivals. Members of the ensemble have recorded and performed with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Philip Glass, Jordi Savall, Sting, Natalie Merchant, Aerosmith, and Simon Shaheen. East of the River released its first album, *East of the River*, in 2009, and its latest recording, *Levantera*, in spring 2013.

East of the River performs courtesy of Gemslive Artist Management, a project of Gotham Early Music Scene: Gene Murrow, director; Wendy Redlinger, senior artist manager.