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**Darkness Is Your Candle**

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

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World Premiere!

East of the River

 Darkness Is Your Candle

Daphne Mor and Nina Stern, recorders, nay, chalumeau
Ara Dinkjian, oud
Jesse Kotansky, violin
Peter Stum, accordion
Omer Avital, bass
Shane Shanahan, percussion
Glen Velez, percussion

Program

Komitas Vardapet (1865–1935)
Sayat Nova (1712–1795)
Sayat Nova
Sayat Nova
Sayat Nova
Sayat Nova

Modern Albanian
Abdel Rahman Jabakji (d. 2003)
Traditional Bulgarian

Intermission

“Ghaetta”
Italian, late 14th century
Arranged by Nina Stern

Glen Velez, Shane Shanahan

Percussion Duo

“Longo Farahfara”
“Longo Nahawand”
“Cveta moma abava”
“Krivo Sadoskvo Hero”
“Kazarica Kolo”
“Sfta”

Traditional Macedonian
Traditional Bulgarian
Traditional Serbian

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The Honorable Mary Marchy

To view our complete season and for more information, visit peakperfs.org.
“Ghazha”
“Ghazha” is one of 15 manuscripts from a project in London’s British Library (MS Add. 29876)—an extraordinary collection of Italian virtuoso solos dances from the late 14th century. Originally written for one melody instrument, the version performed tonight features an original arrangement of the work for two recorders and percussion.

“Longa Farahzah and “Longa Nahawand”
Longa is a lively instrumental piece of Balkan-European origin, usually in simple 2/4 meter. The form of the song is similar to the rondo; consisting of two to four couplings (alisam) with a recurring refrain (jasal). These two pieces are written in the related modes (jasan) of balkash and nahawand.

“Cevda muna abava”
“Cevda muna abava” is a jenox—a live dance, usually in 7/8 time, from Macedonia. This particular jenox is often sung. The lyrics to the song are:

Cevda, the beautiful girl, shells bitter tricks, and asks her:
“Why, Dimcho, don’t you come to me?
Don’t you tell me, Dimcho, that you would love me truly, only me?
I am sending you a gift, you ladship, come back to me!
Pull your cap down over your eye, wink at me, raise your cap so I can see you. I’m turning you up for you!
I wait for you every day, to see you near me. I’ll go take another love like you don’t go.
Come, Dimcho, come this evening, lovely, but I’m turning up for you!”

“Krivo Sadovsko Horo”
“Krivo Sadovsko Horo” is a Bulgarian folk dance in 3/4 time.

“Kozala Koko”
“Kozala Koko” is a Serbian/romanian dance in 2/4 meter.

“Sito”
Sito, or sinto, is the name of a group of traditional Greek folk dances. Along with the kalamatianas, they are the most popular dances throughout Greece. Both are live dances and use the same dance steps, but the sito is in 2/4 or 4/4 meter whereas the kalamatianas is in 7/8.

Notes by Nina Stem

Omer Avital (bass), hailed by the LA Times as “a pioneer in combining jazz with worldly musical element,” is a composer, a virtuoso bassist, and an oud player. His music 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 band leader. Signed by Impulse (Universal Music) at age 26 to perform 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 Arabic 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 global artistic group Ark recorded four CDs for BCMJ and Universal. Avital has given concerts in 25 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” (Dirasa, Dinija) was performed at the prestigious Kennedy Center in 2004. Among his many honors include his 2007 Oscar for Music. His recent CD, An American in Armenia, Voice of Armenia, and Peace on Earth were recorded live at the 2005, 2006, and 2007 International Oud Festivals. The Secret Trio, a collaboration with Tamir Tannoura and Ismail Lumangrouli, has just released its first CD titled, Levantera. Also At the same time, Dinkjian has forthcoming CDs with Moroccan, a solo oud recording, and Finding Songs, featuring 12 new compositions performed by the Ara Dinkjian Quartet.

Jesse Kotansky (percussion), born to dancers Stephen 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 producer. He worked with such artists as David Rosen, Nils Landgren, Menta Halli, Rhythm Jones, J. Mascis, and Ivan Miličev. He is the co-founder of the Brooklyn-based indie rock band Wildboar. Shalom album has a February release date. He will make his film-scoring debut with the up-and-coming film Illuminated Light.

Daphne Mor (recorders, rey), praised for her virtuosity by the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune, has performed throughout Europe and the Americas. Daphne’s performances have been featured in prestigious venues in Croatia, Germany, and Switzerland; at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Trinity Church; and for Music Before 1600. Mor has performed as a soloist with the New York Collegium, New York Early Music Ensemble, and the Little Orchestra Society. She performed as soloist with the orchestra of the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, and Trinity Church Baroque Orchestra. She was awarded First Prize in the Seminale Musicale di Lugano Solo Competition and the Boston Cantometrics Contemporary Composers. Mor is also an active performer of world music, appearing in Iran and all over the US, Canada, Poland, Italy, Spain, Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Greece, and Israel. She acts as a musicologist for the Education Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and is a music-in-residence in all his Hansen Synagogue in New York.

Shane Shanahan (percussion), a percussionist/composer/conductor 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 Max’s Grammy Award-winning holiday studio CD/DVD, Songs of A New Bells. He has performed and/or recorded with Bobby McFerrin, Andrea Franklin, Philip Glass, Anson raina, Deep Purple, Jordi Savall, Sunnny Fortune, Fantasia, Chaka Khan, and Glen Velez, among others. Shanahan’s dynamic performances have brought people to the presentation in the greater New York music world, including Carnegie Hall, after which the New York Times proclaimed, “By the time he finished in a virtuoso performance, fans were flying him back and forth between drumset, cymbals and body parts, the audience roared with delight.” In a strong belief in the power of education, Shanahan has taught and promoted world music in 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 ten. 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 Accordionists Association and the Long Island Music Teachers Association. Stan is fluent in a broad range of musical styles, including Balkan, East European, klezmer, and contemporary. He has also performed in movies and on soundtrack recordings and has played for the Mark Morris Dance Group. Stan served as the Abravanel Hall Music Director and has appeared as special guest with Yo-Yo Ma, Philip Glass, Jordi Savall, Stéphane Grappelli, Natalie Merchant, Aminossad, and Simon Stalenhage. East of the River released its first album, East of the River, in 2006, and its latest, recording, Zanzibar, in spring 2013.

Glen Velez (percussion), a four-time Grammy award winner, is an internationally acclaimed soloist and seminal figure in the history of the hand 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-drum studies from various cultures. Velez’s virtuosic combinations of hand movements and finger techniques, along with his own compositional approach, which incorporates sweeping, drum language, and Central Asian overtone singing (gul-bone singing), has undoubtedly opened new possible lines for musicians around the globe, resulting in a shift in modern percussion.

East of the River has performed in concert halls and clubs including Bargemusic, Jori Pub, and Le Poisson Rouge, at universities including Hildota and University of Pennsylvania, and at the Chautauqua Institute, Connected 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, Stéphane Grappelli, Natalie Merchant, Aminossad, and Simon Stalenhage. East of the River released its first album, East of the River, in 2006, and its latest recording, Zanzibar, in spring 2013. East of the River performs cumbia music. A project of Gotham Early Music, the artists are Marc Stein, director; Nina Stem, artistic director.