Merima Ključo
The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book

Wednesday, October 28, 2015
Welcome to the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art’s performing arts series brings together thoughtful, fascinating, and beautiful experiences, comprising a concert calendar notable for its boundless multiplicity. This year we look forward to visits from old friends and new, bringing us music from around the globe and spanning many centuries. Here is the place where performance is intended to explore connections of cultures, the heart, the human spirit.

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Photography and audio/video recording in the performance hall are prohibited.

The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book

Merima Ključo, composer and accordion
Seth Knopp, piano
Bart Woodstrup, artist
Geraldine Brooks, special guest

Wednesday, October 28, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
Gartner Auditorium, the Cleveland Museum of Art

Program

Introduction by Geraldine Brooks

La Bendision de Madre (The Mother’s Prayer) found in a Sarajevo synagogue

The Creation

La Convivencia (The Coexistence)

Al Mora

Alhambra Decree

Exodus

In Silenzio

Stampita Italkim

The Inquisitor

Sarajevo 1941

Derviş Korkut

Siege of Sarajevo

La Bendision de Madre

The program is approximately 75 minutes in length without an intermission. Please join us after the performance in the lobby for a book/CD signing with the artists.
COMPOSER’S NOTE

I am fascinated by the Sarajevo Haggadah not only because of its amazing and fascinating history, but also because it reminds me of my own life and the “Exodus” I had to experience. I was forced to leave my own country, under the strangest and heaviest circumstances.

In its journey the Haggadah suffered transformations which make it even more special by giving it a richer history that reflects its passage through different cultures.

I also travel around the world and with every journey I get a new “scar,” positive or negative, but I keep my dignity and get richer by travelling through different circumstances, and sharing my culture with others through my music.

My composition The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book is based on the Sephardic traditions of different countries that the Haggadah visited as it traveled through history. Sephardic Jews observed the traditions of their home countries, and infused Jewish culture into the music of their adopted lands. This resulted in musical similarities. For example, Bosnians and Sephardic Jews use the same scales and rhythms. They share the same emotion in their songs, the same pleasures, and the same pain. In the end they share the same country, the same customs, and the same food. They learn from each other. And an interesting note: many Sephardic songs from Bosnia are about celebrating Passover.

I have learned most of these songs from my dear friend Flory Jagoda, the Bosnian expert in the field of Sephardic music. Flory is a Sephardic Jew who left Bosnia during the Second World War and is now living in Washington, DC. We understand each other on many levels as we share a very similar destiny, with a difference of just a few decades.

One of the important aspects of the Sarajevo Haggadah is its illustrations. In the historical novel The People of the Book, author Geraldine Brooks relates the story that the Haggadah was beautifully illustrated in order for a deaf child to follow and understand it.

Next to the musical journey of the Haggadah, video artist Bart Woodstrup created a visual backdrop to the music that subtly interweaves the imagery of the Sarajevo Haggadah with elements of the book’s history. Inspired by the textures found in the illustrations, as well as the stains and signs of aging found in the book, Bart literally “illuminates” and animates those elements with a variety of digital software techniques. His animations are almost entirely composed of imagery from the book, yet arranged in an abstract way that blend with the musical composition to make a unified aural-visual experience.

—Merima Ključo

PROGRAM NOTES

The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book—dedicated to Tamara Brooks—is in twelve movements, which together tell the story of the Haggadah’s journey from its birth in 14th-century Spain through five centuries of near-destruction and survival at the hands of many peoples and cultures, from the “Edict of Expulsion” of 1492 to the Siege of Sarajevo of 1992. Today the Haggadah is included in the collection of the National Museum of Bosnia Herzegovina. [Haggadah is the Hebrew word for “telling” and refers to the text recited on the first nights of the Jewish Passover, including the story of the Exodus.]

The Creation

La Convivencia (The Coexistence)

Now considered to be an idealized recasting of history, “La Convivencia” spanned four centuries in a Medieval Spain under Moorish rule, where peace and cultural interaction existed between Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

Al Mora

A special place in the Sarajevo Haggadah’s depiction of the Seder table is reserved for a Moorish woman, who appears seated in a saffron-colored robe. She seems to represent a cultural interaction that certainly existed in 14th-century Spanish Catalonia, at the time the Sarajevo Haggadah was created.
Alhambra Decree
Also known as “The Edict of Expulsion,” the Alhambra Decree was issued in 1492 by the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabelle and ordered “Jews and Jewesses of our kingdoms to depart and never to return or come back to them or to any of them...and they shall not dare to return to those places, nor to reside in them, nor to live in any part of them, neither temporarily on the way to somewhere else nor in any other manner, under pain that if they do not perform and comply with this command and should be found in our said kingdom and lordships and should in any manner live in them, they incur the penalty of death and the confiscation of all their possessions by our Chamber of Finance, incurring these penalties by the act itself, without further trial, sentence, or declaration.” The decree was not revoked until 1968.

Exodus

In Silenzio

Stampita Italkim
“Stampita” is a medieval dance and musical form. “Italkim” is the Hebrew word for “Italians” and refers to a specific community of Jews (also known as “Bené Roma,” or “Children of Rome”) that have lived in Rome for over 2000 years.

Thus, this movement is a tipsy Stampita shared by two Italkim.

The Inquisitor
Most likely smuggled out of Spain after the Alhambra Decree of 1492, the Sarajevo Haggadah resurfaces in 1609 in Venice. Here, Jews are allowed to live but confined to the ghetto of Cannaregio and prohibited from printing books. Indeed, all books are subject to inspection by the Inquisition and those considered a threat to the teachings of the Church, burned. This movement is devoted to the priest for the Inquisition who evidently allowed the Sarajevo Haggadah to be spared. His notation appears inside the Haggadah: “Revisto per me”, or “Revised by me”, and signed Giovanni Dom. Vistorini.

Sarajevo 1941

Derviš Korkut
Hitler wished to establish a “museum of an extinct race” that would house artifacts like the Sarajevo Haggadah. Derviš Korkut, the chief librarian at the Bosnian National Museum, had the foresight to understand that the Haggadah was threatened and when the Nazi commander Johann Fortner arrived at the museum to claim the Haggadah, Korkut hid it underneath his coat so that it would not be found when the museum was searched. Quietly leaving the museum, Korkut entrusted the Haggadah to a Muslim imam who hid it in his mosque’s library until after the war.

Siege of Sarajevo
The “Siege of Sarajevo” began on April 6, 1992. Under constant fire, the inhabitants of the Bosnian capital were cut off from food, medicine, water and electricity. Thousands were killed and wounded. The Siege lasted for nearly four years. It had become one of the most dramatic and emblematic events of the violent breakup of the former Yugoslavia and had left an estimated 200,000 people killed and 2.7 million displaced as refugees—the largest displacement in Europe since the Second World War. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina were witness to almost unimaginable violations of human rights and abuse in the name of ethnic cleansing, ranging from rape to mass executions and starvation.

La Bendision de Madre (The Mother’s Prayer)
This prayer was especially intended to be used by elderly Jewish women who never had the opportunity to study Hebrew, and who considered Ladino (a language derived from Old Spanish and spoken predominantly by Sephardic minorities) to be their Jewish language.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Merima Ključo, accordion (Sarajevo, Bosnia), imbues a dizzying variety of music with playing that moves with its depth of understanding and experience. Whether performing in recital, with ensembles such as Serendipity 4 (with Theodore Bikel), MusikFabrik, and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble, or as guest soloist with orchestras such as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, the soulful traditions of her instrument are not only given a unique voice, but they are given new life and meaning.

Merima’s love of world music, and the music of Bosnia in particular, is something she seeks to share with audiences everywhere. In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Siege of Sarajevo in 2012, the East West Theater Company and renowned Bosnian theater director Haris Pasovic invited Merima as musical director to compose, arrange, and perform a music poem “Sarajevo Red Line” (“Sarajevska Crvena Linija”). The piece, which incorporated traditional and pop songs, as well as classical music—music with deep cultural significance, was performed on April 6, 2012 to an audience of 11, 541 empty red chairs lining the main boulevard in Sarajevo, with one chair for every life lost in the siege. On that day, thousands of people from all walks of life congregated to witness and remember.

Seth Knopp, piano (Baltimore, MD), is Artistic Director of Yellow Barn and the founder and Co-Artistic Director of its Young Artist Program. He serves as Artistic Director of Soundings: New Music at the Nasher, a concert series at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas. He is a founding member of the Naumburg Award–winning Peabody Trio, Ensemble-in-Residence at the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University where he serves as a member of the piano and chamber music faculties. As a member of the Knopp-Melançon Duo, he was a winner of the USIA Artistic Ambassador Competition, which resulted in tours throughout Europe, the Far East, the Middle East, and Japan. Seth has recorded on the CRI, Analekta, New World Records, and Artek labels.

Bart Woodstrup, artist (DeKalb, IL), seeks to understand and manipulate the aesthetics, semiotics, and narratives of various time-based media. His work often takes the form of traditional musical composition, real-time interactive audio/video performance, multimedia installation and networked experience. Using custom software that is capable of rendering sound and visuals in real-time, Bart explores the creation of Live Cinema experiences. Through the use of digital effects and editing techniques these performances often subvert traditional narratives by enveloping them in irony, metaphor, and abstraction. His work is shown regularly throughout the U.S. and abroad, and has been included at Siggraph, Inter-Society for the Electronic Arts, SEAMUS, Spark Festival of Electronic Music and Arts, Not Still Art Festival, Version>03, and the Chicago Underground Film Festival.

Geraldine Brooks is the author of five novels—her latest, The Secret Chord, the Pulitzer Prize–winning March, and the international bestsellers Caleb’s Crossing, People of the Book, and Year of Wonders. Caleb’s Crossing was the winner of the New England Book Award for Fiction and the Christianity Today Book Award, and was a finalist for the Langum Prize in American Historical Fiction. People of the Book was named the Australian Book Industry Book of the Year in 2009. In 2010 she received the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for Lifetime Achievement. She worked as a reporter for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Wall Street Journal, where she covered crises in the mideast, Africa, and the Balkans. She is also the author of three works of non-fiction. Her first book, Nine Parts of Desire, is a rich and riveting account of her six years living among the women of the Muslim mideast. Foreign Correspondence is a memoir of an Australian childhood enriched by penpals from around the globe, and her adult quest to find them. The Idea of Home: Boyer Lectures 2011 is a series of four lectures distilling her experiences as an environmentalist, foreign correspondent, and novelist. Born and raised in Australia, she lives on Martha’s Vineyard with her husband, the author Tony Horwitz.
UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, November 4, 6:00 p.m.
Gallery 217, 1916 Building
The Case/CIM Collegium Musicum performs a program titled “The Beginning of Joy: Italian Music of the Late Middle Ages.” Free, no tickets required.
cma.org/cim

Calder Quartet
Monday, November 16, 7:30 p.m.
Transformer Station
Winners of the 2014 Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Calder Quartet is known for the discovery, commissioning, and recording of some of today’s best emerging composers. The group’s distinctive approach is exemplified by musical curiosity, whether it’s Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, or sold-out rock shows with bands like The National or the Airborne Toxic Event. Known here for their groundbreaking collaboration with Iva Bittová and their guest appearance with the Cleveland Orchestra as part of the “California Masterworks” series, the quartet continues its residency of regular appearances in the intimacy of the Transformer Station. Program: Daniel Bjarnason, Stillshot; Benjamin Britten, String Quartet No. 2 in C major, Op. 36; Beethoven, String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat major, Op. 127. $25; CMA members $22.
cma.org/calder

Tri-C Classical Piano Series
Orazio Maione
Sunday, November 22, 2:00 p.m.
Gartner Auditorium
Winner of the Unisa International Piano Competition in Pretoria, South Africa, Mr. Maione makes his Cleveland debut in a recital of works by Prokofiev and Chopin. Free, no tickets required.

Performing Arts

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Ellen Fullman
Thursday–Saturday,
September 24–26, 7:30

Ustatshakirt Plus
Sunday, October 4, 2:00

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, October 7, 6:00

Merima Ključo:
The Sarajevo Haggadah
Wednesday, October 28, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, November 4, 6:00

Calder Quartet
Monday, November 16, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, December 2, 6:00

James Feddeck
Sunday, December 6, 2:00

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, January 6, 6:00

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, February 3, 6:00

CIM Organ Studio
Sunday, February 14, 2:00

JACK Quartet
Tuesday–Wednesday,
March 1–2, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, March 2, 6:00

Dervish
Friday, March 11, 7:30

Qasida
Wednesday, March 16, 7:30

Calder Quartet
Thursday, March 31, 7:30

Patricia Kopatchinskaja
Sunday, April 3, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, April 6, 6:00

Orlando Consort
Wednesday, April 6, 7:30

Fanfare Ciocărlia
Wednesday, April 13, 7:30

Amir ElSaffar’s Rivers of Sound
Friday, April 15, 7:30

Tarek Abdallah & Adel Shams El-Din
Wednesday, April 27, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, May 4, 6:00

Otomu Yoshihide
Monday, May 9, 7:30
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DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS, MUSIC, AND FILM
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