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A CONCERT OF TRADITIONAL TURKISH ART MUSIC

Tanburi Necdet Yaşar, Soloist
Neyzen Karl Signell, Accompanist

February 8, 1973

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The presence of the ney (with its Mevlevi associations) in the first part of the program made it appropriate for the selections in that part to be from the Mevlevi repertoire. The makam SABA has certain mystical associations, too; it is introduced by a short improvisation on the tanbur. The following Peşrev (prelude) in SABA is taken from the music for the processional of the dervishes in the Mevlevi ritual. This piece has, incidentally, also entered the classical repertoire. After the Peşrev, the tanbur improvises a more expansive Taksim (improvisation), this time modulating from the makam SABA to the makam FERAHFEZA. The first part of the program concludes with two short pieces from the music for the final dances of the dervishes in the Mevlevi ceremony.

The second part of the program is strictly secular and more modern. The characteristic and virtuoso qualities of the tanbur are exploited in this part, both in the compositions and in the improvisations. The makam KURDILI-HICAZKAR is a popular one and tends to have connotations of joy and brightness; there is a brief improvisation to introduce the makam, after which the Peşrev in the same makam by Tanburi Cemil Bey is played. Tanburi Cemil Bey is known as the greatest musician of modern times in Turkey. The Peşrev is followed by an extended modulating Taksim, during which the artist's technical abilities and command of the makam system will probably be tested. After this Taksim establishes the makam NIHAVENT, the famous

Saz Semaisi (postlude) in that makam will be performed. The piece itself is probably the single most successful of all 20th century attempts to wed traditional Turkish with Western music; it is also a severe test of the performer's technical abilities. The final composition is of a more popular nature than the rest of the program. The Sirto in a "classical" program is a stylized version of what used to be a popular urban folk dance in Istanbul.

TURKISH ART MUSIC

The term "Turkish Art Music" refers to the aristocratic music enjoyed at the courts of the Ottoman Empire from approximately the 13th through the beginning of the 20th centuries. Noted musicians from this period include: a general, a holy man, a Greek, a sultan, a government official, an Armenian, and a Jew. A very large percentage of the upper classes of the empire regularly practiced music, along with other "refined arts", such as poetry and calligraphy.

The role of patron to this music in the modern Turkish Republic has passed to the all-powerful State Radio; the single most concentrated assemblage of excellent musicians today, for example, is to be found at Radio Istanbul.

Monophony, in the case of Turkish art music, has allowed for a formidable development along three lines: minute pitch inflections, modes (makam), and rhythmic cycles (usul). Grounded in Pythagorean, or "pure", intervals, the complex pitch inflections in Turkish scales combine to bring about a minimum of 24 available notes to the octave. Combinations of these intervals make up scales which are the basis of the modal system. Modes are distinguished one from the other not only on the basis of scales, but also on the basis of final note, sequence of tonal centers, stereotyped phrases, typical modulations, and other such factors. The other formal organizing system is that of the rhythmic cycles. There are a vast number of these, varying in complexity, length, and tempo, from 2/4 to 120/4.

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Necdet Yaşar, tanbur soloist
Karl Signell, ney accompanist

PROGRAM

	<u>MAKAM (mode)</u>	<u>FORM</u>	<u>USUL (rhythmic cycle)</u>	<u>COMPOSER</u>
15'25" Tape I	I. a) SABA	Giriş (introduction)	--	(impromptu)
	b) SABA	Peşrev (prelude) 2 hane	muzaaf devri kebir (56/4)	Tanburi Osman Bey (1816-1885)
	c) SABA to FERAHFEZA	Geçki taksimi (modu- lating improvisation)	--	(impromptu)
	d) FERAHFEZA	Son Peşrev (concluding peşrev)	velveleli düyek (8/8)	Zeki Mehmet Ağa (1776-1846)
	FERAHFEZA	Son Yürük Semai	yürük semai (6/8)	Anon.
Tape II	II. a) KURDİLİ- HICAZKAR	Giriş	--	(impromptu)
	b) KURDİLİ- HICAZKAR	Peşrev (3 hane)	muhammes (32/4)	Tanburi Cemil Bey (1871-1916)
	c) KURDİLİ- HICAZKAR to NIHAVENT	Geçki Taksimi	--	(impromptu)
	d) NIHAVENT	Saz Semaisi (postlude)	aksak semai (10/8), mandıra (7/8)	Mesut Cemil Bey (1902-1963)
	e) KURDİLİ- HICAZKAR	Sirto (an urban folk dance)	nim sofyan (2/4), düyek	Anon.

1'50" Encore I

4'15" Encore II

THE ARTISTS

Necdet Yaşar is recognized in Turkey today as one of the two or three outstanding instrumental virtuosi of traditional art music. As Visiting Artist at the Center for Asian Arts for the current year, Mr. Yaşar is bringing serious studies of this music to the West for the first time.

Born in the Gaziantep province of Turkey in 1930, Necdet Bey did not know of the tanbur until 20 years later, during his days as a student of economics at the University of Istanbul. After a few years of intensive study, however, his ability had developed so impressively that the leading tanburist of the time, Mesut Cemil Bey, invited him to be his disciple. At the present time, Necdet Bey is the last representative of this school of tanbur playing.

Mr. Yaşar is especially known in Turkey for his extraordinary knowledge and facility with the makam system, his powers of improvisation, and familiarity with the repertoire (all three traits are related). Of the recordings available in the U.S., he can be heard on the two UNESCO discs: Turkey I and Turkey II.

Karl Signell returned recently from two years in Turkey, where he studied the ney and the Turkish makam system. Mr. Signell is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Ethnomusicology at the University of Washington.

THE INSTRUMENTS

The tanbur (long-necked lute) has been the favorite instrument of composers and serious musicians throughout the history of Turkish art music; together with the ney (flute) and kemence (fiddle), it is considered to be more typically "Turkish" than, say, the ud (short-necked lute) or the kanun (zither).

Related to the bağlama sazi of Turkish folk music and the bouzouki of Greek popular music, the tanbur is distinguished from these by its more refined tone, greater resonance, and a conspicuously larger number of frets. The body of the tanbur is constructed like an ud--made of only very thin, veneer-like strips of wood. Its long neck has more than 24 frets to the octave; as a visual manifestation of the Turkish scales, the tanbur has no equal.

While an instrument such as the ney has basically a single function (melodic), the tanbur has three. In addition to realizing the melody, the tanbur also has a formidable plectrum technique which clearly adds a rhythmic element. Furthermore, the non-melody strings (whether struck or not) add the element of drone(s).

The ney (oblique rim-blown flute) is an indispensable member of the secular classical ensemble in Turkey, but is also spoken of as a "holy" instrument. Historically, the ney has a long history of association with the mystical brotherhoods, especially the Mevlevi sect. The lowest register of this instrument seems to evoke the mystical atmosphere of the dervish orders.

The body of the ney is a simple hollowed-out piece of cane with seven finger-holes; the mouthpiece is merely a rest for the player's lips. Embouchure and finger techniques make possible every desired microtonal inflection, as well as the glissandi characteristic of the ney.

Program notes by Karl Signell