



Counterpoint International

Concert-seminar program

Cronkhite Graduate Center, May 7, 2005

Co-sponsored by:

Harvard Divinity School's Artists' Action Resource Network
The Apogee Foundation's Synergy Program

**Transforming Conflict and Deepening Interfaith Dialogue
through Arts, Music and Ritual**

Part I

9-930am Welcome and registration

930-940am Overview of day's objectives

Jonathan James, Founder-Director of Counterpoint International

940-10am Concert 1

Ethan Philbrick performs

10-12am Plenary session: Can we tell another story?

John Stanfield:

Race as Covenant Breaking

Amir Hussain:

Richard Thompson and the poetry of ordinary Muslim lives

Yehezkel Landau:

Shabbat Spirituality and Peacemaking

12-1230pm Lunch

1230-130pm Concert 2 - a chance to meditate

ZiZALA performs

Part 2

130-3pm Telling the other story: Innovative approaches to building communities of peace

Tamar Miller:

Bringing the shadow peace process into the light

Valarie Kaur:

Sharing our stories: Sikh Americans and September 11

Clara Wainwright:

The Faith Quilts Project

Noam Sender and Mehmet Ali Sanlikol:

Dünya and *The Psalms of Ali Ufki*

3-315pm Break

315-330pm Concert 3 and creative expression

Dünya performs

330-5pm Lebanon: A Case Study

Firas Abi-Nassif:

The Roots of Conflict

Loai Naamani (chair and moderator):

Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

Michel ElAshkar:

A Message of Unity through Theatre and Hymns

Christian Karam:

ZiIZALA and Dialogue through Music

5-515pm Closing Thoughts and Thanks

Christi Caldwell

515-530pm Concert 4

Dünya performs

Speakers

John H. Stanfield, II, a sociologist with senior faculty appointments in African American and African Diaspora Studies, American Studies, Cultural Studies, Philanthropic Studies, and Sociology, is on leave from Indiana University Bloomington this year and is a STM (Masters of Sacred Theology) candidate at the Boston University School of Theology. He is an ordained Baptist and a licensed Pentecostal minister with ecumenical and interfaith interests. He is a newly appointed social issues commentator for an international historically African-American Pentecostal Sunday School Association. As a well published activist scholar, he studies and participates in local, national, and international peace building processes, challenges, and prospects in multiracial institutions, communities, and societies with the emphasis on synthesizing sociological and theological, theoretical and practical principles of personal and structural transformation. He is also interested in the issue of seminary and community collaborations in local peace-building efforts which transform both seminary and community cultures into more open environments. A recent recipient of Who's Who Among American Teachers and a former editorial board member of Teaching Sociology, he has developed models introducing teenagers and young adults in communities and universities to social justice civic engagement. He is completing a book entitled Musings on Race, Seminary Education, and Deracialization. He is an alumnus of the Fulbright Scholar Program (Sierra Leone and Chair, Fulbright Committee on Sociologists) and twice of the Salzburg Seminar in Austria. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and his B.A. magna cum laude from California State University Fresno.

Amir Hussain is Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at California State University, Northridge, where he teaches courses in world religions. His own particular speciality is the study of Islam, focussing on contemporary Muslim societies, specifically those in North America. Although born in Pakistan, Amir emigrated to Canada with his family when he was four. His academic degrees are all from the University of Toronto, and his PhD dissertation was on Muslim communities in Toronto. He has a deep commitment to students, and holds the distinction of being the only male to serve as Dean of Women at University College, University of Toronto. Before coming to Northridge in 1997, Amir taught courses in religious studies at several universities in Canada. He is active in academic groups such as the American Academy of Religion (where he is co-chair of the Religion, Film and Visual Culture group, and serves on the steering committee of the Study of Islam section) and the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, publishing and presenting his work at conferences. Amir is also interested in areas such as religion and music, religion and literature, religion and film and religion and popular culture. He has taught a course on religion and literature focussing on the work of the English poet William Blake, and regularly teaches a course on religion and film.

Valarie Kaur received her Bachelors from Stanford University in International Relations and Religious Studies with honors and distinction in 2003. Blending scholarship with activism at Stanford, she co-led the Living History project, taught with the Philosophy Discovery Institute, co-founded the first course on Sikhism, and organized for the peace movement. Since September 2001, she has documented hate crimes against Sikh Americans and is now developing her work into a documentary film. She is currently a graduate student at Harvard Divinity School. For more information on the film, please visit: www.dwf-film.com

Clara Wainwright is a quilt-maker and public celebrations artist. For the past fifteen years she has worked with more than thirty community groups on collaborative quilts which explore their lives, dreams and challenges. She is founder of First Night and the Great Boston Kite Festival. In 2002 the DeCordova Museum held a retrospective of her work, both private and public. Her current passion is the Faith Quilts Project, a three-year initiative which

brings together quilt artists and faith groups to create collaborative quilts which explore their faith and explain it to the wider world. In April 2006 Faith, The Arts, and Community will celebrate with a grand exhibition of fifty-five quilts at the Cyclorama and then at five smaller sites in the Boston area. At each of the sites, there will be performances and events which look at faith through various art forms. The central purpose of the Faith Quilts Project is to encourage spiritual exploration and tolerance.

Michel ElAshkar is an actor, dramatist, producer, and engineer. Born in Zahle, Lebanon, Michel immigrated to the United States in 1983 and graduated as a Civil Engineer from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. He founded ASHKAR Consulting Group, a civil engineering and land surveying firm in 1989 and became member of the board of Surveyors in the state of Massachusetts in 1996. Hailing from a family of artists, his passion for poetry, writing, and acting culminated in his internationally acclaimed monodrama, "A Child of Life", a theatrical interpretation of 2 acts chronicling many of the highlights of Lebanese-American poet and artist Kahlil Gibran's life. A Child of Life, performed to standing ovations in many world capitals, has received a number of international awards and "Kahlil Gibran Day" proclamations from the mayors of nine U.S. cities since its debut in 1999. In January 2003, Al-Jazeera network ran an exclusive documentary highlighting Michel's artistic contribution as an Arab-American. In 2001, Michel formed ASHKARVISION, a production company with the objective of preserving Lebanese artistic heritage. Its current productions range from instrumental music to old Lebanese folk songs to an array of Christian Maronite and Byzantine Hymns.

Firas Abi-Nassif is a founding engineer at Airvana, Inc., a leading Cellular Infrastructure equipment vendor, and is pursuing his MBA degree at the Harvard Business School. Born in Lebanon at the outset of the Lebanese war, he graduated in 1996 with a Bachelor's degree in Computer and Communications Engineering from the American University of Beirut. He then obtained his Master's degree in Telecommunications Engineering from Northeastern University in 1998. Working at Motorola research between 1997 and 2000, he has patented five international inventions in the field of Data Networks and produced several publications in that field. An advocate of religious and political toleration, Firas has developed an extracurricular career in free-lance journalism and is currently a columnist on Lebanese and Middle East politics for Profile News, a Massachusetts-based newspaper.

Loai Naamani is a founding member of the National Lebanese Intercollegiate Council and is President of the Lebanese Club at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a grassroots organization aimed at promoting Lebanese culture and concerns and fostering a sense of community among the Lebanese in Greater Boston. Recipient of a number of academic achievement and leadership awards, scholarships, and fellowships in Lebanon and the US, Loai has graduated with distinction from the American University of Beirut with a Bachelors degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering (2002) and with a Masters degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2003). With contributions to Lebanese and American newspapers such as the Daily Star, Annahar, and the Boston Globe, Loai was recently invited by the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) to partake in the special TV episode, "*Lebanon's Spring from Washington*", of its internationally acclaimed talk show to discuss the current political developments in Lebanon. He has recently co-founded the International Network of Lebanese Entrepreneurs and Technologists, a global non-profit organization established to facilitate technology and business development through networking, knowledge exchange, and mentoring among Lebanese entrepreneurs and technologists worldwide. He currently pursues his PhD in Information Systems at MIT, where he has been nominated for the presidency of its Graduate Student Council for 2005.

Musicians

Ethan Philbrick, 19, grew up on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts. He started to play music at a young age, beginning with flute and later switching to the cello. He has studied with many excellent teachers, including Paul Katz, Mollie Glazer, Mark Churchill, and Hans Jensen, and has been the recipient of numerous awards, such as first prize in the New England Conservatory, Cape Symphony, and Arlington Symphony Concerto Competitions. He attended the Walnut Hill School for the Arts in Natick, MA and is currently a sophomore at the New England Conservatory, in the Contemporary Improvisation Department. He has used it as an opportunity to explore improvised music and music from different cultures, studying with Dominique Eade and Hankus Netsky, and has been playing in various ensembles, including a Free Improvisation group and The ZiZALA Middle Eastern Ensemble.

The ZiZALA Middle Eastern Ensemble is led by vocalist/arranger Christiane Karam and is a Boston-based World Music band that draws from several musical cultures to re-interpret classical, traditional and folk Arabic Music. The outcome is a powerful and uplifting blend of Eastern and Western influences that range from Lebanese, Egyptian, Turkish, Greek and North African grooves and melodies, to contemporary Jazz harmonies. Instrumentation includes but is not limited to vocals, kanun, clarinet, flute, 'ud, buzuki, violin, bass and percussion.

ZiZALA has performed extensively in the Boston area as well as in New York City, and has headlined at venues such as Ryles Jazz Club, the Berklee Performance Center, Club Passim, The Zeitgeist Gallery and Tagine. It was featured several times on WMBR (88.1 FM), Cambridge.

Founder **Christiane Karam** is an award-winning Singer/Songwriter (First Prize Winner, 2001 USA Songwriting Competition/World Category, Finalist, 2003 John Lennon Songwriting Contest/Electronic Category, and SESAC Award recipient, among others). She has performed with the likes of Bulgarian legend Yanka Rupkina and pianist/composer Ran Blake, and has been featured on VH1. Her teachers include Simon Shaheen, Dominique Eade, and Bobby McFerrin. She is currently attending a Masters Degree Program at the New England Conservatory where she was recently named the 2004-2005 Kimball Stickney Scholar.

- Christiane Karam** (Vocals, Percussion)
- Anastassia Zachariadou** (Kanun, Flutes)
- Theodoulos Vakanas** (Violin, Buzuki)
- Ethan Philbrick** (Cello)
- Giacomo Meregá** (Bass)
- Pedro Ito** (Percussion)

Dünya is a Boston based non-profit organization whose mission is to present a contemporary view of a wide range of Turkish traditions, alone and in interaction with other world traditions, through performance, publication and other educational activities. *Dünya* has produced five interfaith concerts of sacred music in 2004 and 2005. *The Psalms of Ali Ufki* concerts celebrate the similarities between the three monotheistic faiths and open the possibility of building bridges of understanding and deepening the interfaith dialogue through sharing our music and traditions. As a result of the success of the concerts and the on going need for interfaith dialogue, *Dünya* will be taking *The Psalms of Ali Ufki* to schools, universities and religious groups in the New England area. This community project will offer a combination of performance and open discussion of interfaith issues.

Ali Ufki was born Wojciech Bobowski as a Polish Christian and converted to Islam after his capture by the Ottoman Turks at the age of 30. He became renowned as a musician and translator in the imperial court. The Ali Ufki collection of Turkish psalms based on the Genevan Psalter provides the starting point for *Dünya's Psalms of Ali Ufki* concert series at the intersection of Judaism, Greek Orthodoxy, Turkish Sufism, and Protestant Christianity. The lasting impact of Ali Ufki's Psalms is the ecumenical spirit which they embody. The cosmopolitan and tolerant environment which Ali Ufki lived in Istanbul in the 17th century resonates today as we revive an old tradition of interfaith collaboration in Boston.

- Mehmet Ali Sanlikol** (Voice and Oud)
- Noam Sender** (Voice and Percussion)

Mehmet Ali Sanlikol is the President of *Dünya* and a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music with a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in composition. He is an internationally acclaimed jazz pianist and is currently teaching at Tufts University.

Noam Sender is the co-producer of *The Psalms of Ali Ufki* concert series. He is a member of *Dünya's* advisory board and the board of directors of Temple Beth Zion in Brookline. Noam is a singer and a percussionist performing with a variety of ensembles in the Boston area.

Organizations

The **Artist's Action Resource Network** is a network of artists, scholars, and activists at Harvard Divinity School who make the connection between creativity, broadly defined, and their faith/work/calling/ministry. The group includes dancers, painters, poets, writers, teachers, musicians, and filmmakers. The common thread is the commitment to exploring the transformative power of the arts in both individual and community life.

Counterpoint International is a non-profit incorporated both in Boston and the UK. Its mission is to create opportunities for interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue through the arts, particularly music. Counterpoint's principal activities are threefold: this series of 'concert-seminars' at Harvard University, which infuse academic discussion with music in order to access a deeper level of dialogue on issues of conflict resolution; a series of musical collaborative tours to Lebanon that will promote discussion within Lebanese educational establishments; and a grassroots dialogue between different faith-based urban communities in the UK.

Future Counterpoint activities:

Concert Seminar in Boston, Fall 2005

Orchestra tour to Beirut, November 2005

Ongoing grassroots dialogue work in Bristol, UK and Boston

To subscribe to our newsletter or to contribute to online discussions, visit
www.counterpointinternational.org