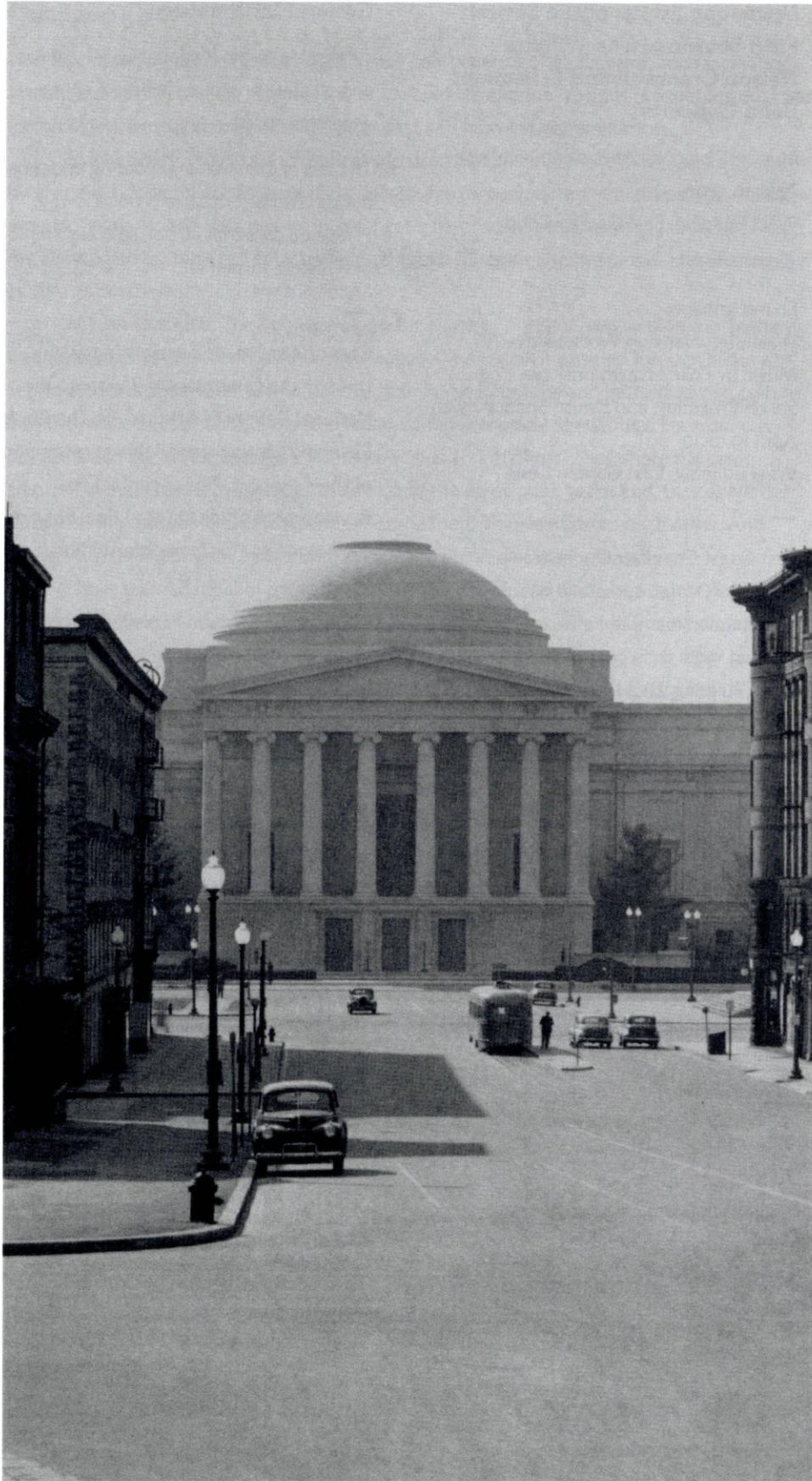


75TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

APRIL 15, 2017 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



PROGRAM

3:00 • East Building Auditorium

Merima Ključo, composer and accordion
Seth Knopp, piano
Bart Woodstrup, artist

The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book
For Tamara 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
Derviš Korkut
Siege of Sarajevo
La Bendision de Madre

The program is approximately one hour in length without an intermission.

The Musicians

Merima Ključo is from Sarajevo, Bosnia, and imbues a dizzying variety of music with her accordion playing. Whether performing in recital with ensembles such as MusikFabrik or the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble, participating in Vermont's Yellow Barn music projects in 2010 and 2011, or appearing as guest soloist with such orchestras 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 also given new life and meaning.

Ključo'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 Theatre Company and renowned Bosnian theater director Haris Pašović invited Ključo as musical director to compose, arrange, and perform a musical poem, *Sarajevska Crvena Linija* (Sarajevo Red Line). 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, each chair representing a life lost in the siege. On that day, thousands of people from all walks of life congregated to witness and remember.

Seth Knopp, from Baltimore, is artistic director of Yellow Barn, where he was also musician-in-residence from 1983 to 2013. He is founder and co-artistic director of Yellow Barn's Young Artist Program and serves as artistic director of Soundings: New Music at the Nasher, a concert series at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas. Knopp also is a founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning Peabody Trio, the ensemble-in-residence at the Peabody Institute, where he serves as a member of the piano and the chamber music faculties. As a member of the Knopp-Melançon Duo, he was a winner of the United States Information Agency's Artistic Ambassador Competition, which resulted in tours throughout Europe, the Far East, the Middle East, and Japan. Knopp has recorded on the CRI, Analekta, New World Records, and Artek labels.

Bart Woodstrup is from Dekalb, Illinois, and, as an artist, 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, Woodstrup 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 United States 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. In 2012, Woodstrup took part in the Crumb Madrigals Project Artist Residency at Yellow Barn.

Program Notes

Composed in 2014, *The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book* traces the dramatic story of one of Jewish culture's most treasured manuscripts. Its twelve movements tell the story of the *Haggadah's* journey from its birth in fourteenth-century Spain through five centuries of near-destruction and survival at the hands of many peoples and cultures, from the Alhambra Decree, or 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 and Herzegovina. Using the musical traditions of Spain, Italy, Austria, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ključo illustrates and illuminates the manuscript's travels from medieval Spain to twentieth-century Bosnia, where it was hidden and rescued during World War II, to its restoration by the National Museum in Sarajevo after the 1992–1995 war. Inspired by the historical novel by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Geraldine Brooks, *The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book* creatively interprets this miraculous artifact as a universal symbol of exile, return, and coexistence.

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 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 fourteenth-century Spanish Catalonia, when 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 Isabella. It ordered:

Jews and Jewesses of our kingdoms to depart and never to return... 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,” who have lived in Rome for over two thousand 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 are 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 are 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 it, Korkut hid it underneath his coat. 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. The siege lasted almost four years. It was one of the most catastrophic and tragic events of Yugoslavia's violent break-up and left an estimated 200,000 people dead and 2.7 million displaced as refugees — the largest displacement in Europe since the Second World War. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina were witnesses to almost unimaginable violations of human rights 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 had not 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.

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 experienced. I was forced to leave my country under the strangest and heaviest circumstances.

In its journey, the *Haggadah* suffered transformations that 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 become richer by traveling 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 curiously, 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 only a few decades.

One of the important aspects of the *Sarajevo Haggadah* is its illustrations. In the historical novel *The People of the Book*, 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 so that they blend with the musical composition to make a unified aural-visual experience.

Composer notes by Merima Ključo

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Fifth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Musical Dialogues: An Exploration of Hope

April 16, 3:00

West Building, East Garden Court

Sound Impact

"Washingtonians on Wednesdays"

Music by Polina Nazaykinskaya,
Sergei Prokofiev, and Dmitri Shostakovich

April 19, 12:10

West Building, East Garden Court

East Coast Chamber Orchestra

Music by Caplet, Lutostawski, Suk,
and Theofanidis

April 23, 3:30

West Building, East Garden Court

West Garden Trio

"Washingtonians on Wednesdays"

Music by Kenji Bunch, Charles Ives,
and Paul Schoenfield

April 26, 12:10

West Building, East Garden Court

Matt Haimovitz and Christopher O'Riley

April 30, 3:30

West Building, East Garden Court

Tonality of Culture

Multidisciplinary Estonian concert

Presented as part of the

European Month of Culture

May 3, 12:10

East Building Auditorium

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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