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Lydian String Quartet
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Office of the Arts
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Office of the Provost

HOME WITHIN
A LIVE AUDIOVISUAL PERFORMANCE FROM SYRIA
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2015 | 8 P.M.

Preconcert Talk, 7 P.M.
Art, Beauty, and War: A Short History
with James Thompson

Slosberg Music Center
Brandeis University

Featuring
Kinan Azmeh
Composer, clarinet
Kevork Mourad
Live illustrations, visuals
Khalil Younes
Filmmaker, visual artist
Lydian String Quartet
Guest artists

World Music Concerts and Intercultural Residency Series
Fall 2015
ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The mission of MusicUnitesUS is to further the understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures through music. We believe that music is a common medium that can help to unite diverse cultures in our own neighborhoods and transcend boundaries in the global community.

During the past ten years, under the direction of Professor of the Practice Judith Eissenberg, MusicUnitesUS programs have highlighted musical traditions from India, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Brazil, Argentina, China, Turkey, Peru, Guinea, South Africa, and Senegal, amongst others.

MusicUnitesUS is a campus-wide program that is housed in the Brandeis University Department of Music, and has three components: the Intercultural Residency Series, bringing artistic expression to the university classroom; the World Music Series; and the Education Program, in partnership with the Waltham Public Schools.

Please visit www.musicunitesus.info/ for more information.

SUPPORT MusicUnitesUS:

MusicUnitesUS is a program of Brandeis University that depends on your support. Please consider being a donor so that we can continue to bring artists from around the world to this stage, and into conversations about issues for which we are all stakeholders. Contact director Judith Eissenberg at eissenbe@brandeis.edu or 781.736.3315 if you are interested in helping.

Special thanks: Barbara Cardarelli and Derek Vandegrift of the Waltham Public Schools, Ingrid Schorr, Yu-Hui Chang, Mark Kagan, Cheryl Nalbach, James Praznik, Matt Burton, Eli Jacobson, Jeremy Rapaport-Stein, Deborah (and Cookie) Rosenstein, and the faculty and staff of the Department of Music, home of MusicUnitesUS.

The Robert Koff Scholarship in Music was created in 2014 as a tribute to the late musician, scholar and beloved Brandeis University professor of music. The scholarship is awarded to outstanding Brandeis students who are active in the music community at the University, with a preference for students who perform or study string instruments.

Koff touched hundreds of lives by sharing his musical gifts with both musicians and non-musicians. He had a wide and lasting influence on many generations of Brandeis students.

One of the founding members of the famed Juilliard String Quartet, Koff played in the quartet from 1946 until he joined the faculty at Brandeis as a professor and director of performance activities in 1958. Koff served as chair of the Department of Music from 1969-76.

Koff was the driving force in the creation of a resident string quartet at Brandeis, the Lydian String Quartet, which began in 1980. He coached and nurtured the quartet during its beginning years, and steered them successfully through their first few international competitions.

Koff retired from Brandeis in 1983 after 25 years on the faculty, yet his connection to the faculty, students and alumni remained strong. Professor Koff continued to teach, mentor and guide musicians in informal settings until just before his passing in 2005.

The Brandeis University Department of Music and Division of Institutional Advancement are honored to steward Professor Koff’s legacy in the form of the Robert Koff Scholarship in Music.

For more information on the scholarship or to make a gift, please contact Jillian Hahn Kohl in the Office of Institutional Advancement (781-736-4014 or jkohl@brandeis.edu). You may also make a gift to the scholarship online at giving.brandeis.edu (in the section labeled “Enter the name of another fund,” under Additional Giving Options section, type in “Koff Scholarship”).
FROM SYRIA: HOME WITHIN
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2015, 8 P.M.
featuring
KINAN AZMEH, composer, clarinet
KEVORK MOURAD, live illustrations, visuals
KHALIL YOUNES, filmmaker, visual artist
LYDIAN STRING QUARTET, guest artists
PRECONCERT TALK, 7 P.M.
“Art, Beauty, and War: A Short History”
JAMES THOMPSON, Professor of Applied and Social Theatre at the University of Manchester and Director of the In Place of War project that supports arts in war and conflict zones

PROGRAM
“Don’t RipEat after me” for String Quartet, Electronics, and Video (world premiere)
Music by Kinan Azmeh
Video by Khalil Younes
Featuring the Lydian String Quartet

“Home Within” for Clarinet, Electronics, Live Painting, and Video
Music by Kinan Azmeh
Visuals by Kevork Mourad

What is the role of the arts in response to violence? The beauty of a melody opens the heart and the line of a drawing provides new perspective. With the live painting/music collaborative work “Home Within” as its centerpiece, this evening’s performance is an intimate, passionate, and deeply personal artistic response to violent conflict.

~ Please join us for a post-concert reception and discussion. ~

The world has failed Syria’s four million refugees and some of the world’s wealthiest countries have turned their backs on this humanitarian disaster. The need for food relief is great and growing. Acclaimed chefs and cookbook authors the world over have come together to help food relief efforts to alleviate the suffering of Syrian refugees. Each has contributed a recipe to this beautifully illustrated cookbook of delicious soups from around the world. Learn more about the project by visiting www.soupforsyria.com.

MusicUnitesUS and Brandeis University are pleased to share with you the new website www.soupforsyria.com, Interlink Publishing’s humanitarian cookbook project to help food relief efforts for Syrian refugees. Profits from your purchase of the beautiful SOUP FOR SYRIA cookbook—with more than 80 recipes from the world’s most famous chefs—will be donated to the refugee agency UNHCR. More importantly, we would like you to GET INVOLVED and inspire others to do the same. The website gives you many ideas of what you can do to help. Please share with family, friends and co-workers and ask them circulate it. Your involvement will make a difference.
PROGRAM NOTES

“Don’t RipEat after me” for String Quartet, Electronics, and Video (world premiere)
Music by Kinan Azmeh
Video by Khalil Younes
Featuring the Lydian String Quartet

“I do remember clearly how powerful of an experience hearing for the first time Steve Reich’s “Different Trains” during my first year in the US back in 2000 (performed by none other than the Lydian String Quartet), and how powerful seemingly-random words become when they become part of artistic expression.

This piece follows a similar premise as it uses sounds, spoken word and images of the Syria Khalil and I grew up in. Digging into the collective memory that shaped our generation provided us with incredible raw material that has been artistically untouched for decades. And may have also provided us with few answers to what Syria is experiencing today.”

- Kinan Azmeh

“Home Within” for Clarinet, Electronics, Live Painting, and Video
Music by Kinan Azmeh
Visuals by Kevork Mourad

A 60-minute audio-visual performance, “Home Within” is the newest project of Syrian composer and clarinetist, Kinan Azmeh, and Syrian-Armenian visual artist, Kevork Mourad. In this work, art and music develop in counterpoint to each other, creating an impressionistic reflection on the Syrian revolution and its aftermath. Rather than following a narrative, the artists document specific moments in Syria’s recent history and reach into their emotional content in a semi-abstract way. The cornerstone of the project was the single sound-image piece, “a sad morning, every morning,” released in March 2012.

The piece is in several movements:
- a sad morning, every morning
- 15 clouds
- how many would it take
- sketch
- dream
- walls and towers
- and we are all optimistic

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

James Thompson is currently Professor of Applied and Social Theatre and Associate Dean for External Relations in the Faculty of Humanities. James is Executive Director of the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (www.hcri.ac.uk) and also directs the In Place of War project - a research programme funded by AHRC and the Leverhulme Trust on performance and war (www.inplaceofwar.net). He was the co-founder of the Theatre in Prisons and Probation (TIPP) Centre in 1992 and Director until 1999. Between 1996-7 James was a Harkness Fellow based at the LBJ School of Public Affairs in the University of Texas and then a Leverhulme Research Fellow in the Drama Department between 1999 and 2000. He joined the Department full time in 2000 and established the Centre for Applied Theatre Research in 2001. He has run applied theatre programmes and researched theatre projects in the UK, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the US.

Please join Dr. James Thompson for other conversations during his residence at Brandeis:

November 1, 4 p.m. | Rapaporte Treasure Hall
Presentation of “In Place of War: Digging Up Stories in Ondaadtjé’s Sri Lanka” by Dr. Thompson, followed by Q&A and reception. Dr. James Thompson, an acclaimed leader in the global peace building and the arts field, will discuss ten years of theatre practice and research in the conflict-affected areas of Sri Lanka. He will explore how performance and the arts in these settings can deliberately and accidentally dig up issues from the past and question notions of truth in places where those stories are violently contested. As in Anil’s Ghost, digging up human histories, as well as digging up human remains, challenges the present as much as putting the past to rest.

November 2, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. | Spingold Theater 206
Open class and workshop in Applied Theater and Oral Communication with Dr. Thompson
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Hailed as “intensely soulful,” “a virtuoso” by The New York Times and as “spellbinding” by The New Yorker, Kinan Azmeh is one of Syria’s rising stars. With his utterly distinctive, “incredibly rich sound” (as the CBC referred to it), he is equally at home in many different musical genres, and in the open, fertile spaces between them. His work seamlessly intertwines Western with Eastern styles, classical training with improvisational finesse.

Born in Damascus, Kinan was the first Arab to win the Premier Prize at the 1997 Nicolai Rubinstein International Competition in Moscow. He is a graduate of New York’s Juilliard School as a student of Charles Neidich and the Damascus High Institute of Music where he studied with Shukry Sahwki, Nicolay Viovanof and Anatoly Moratof. He also holds a degree from Damascus University’s School of Electrical Engineering. In 2013, Kinan earned his Doctorate Degree in Music from the City University of New York.

Kinan has appeared worldwide as a soloist, composer and improviser. Notable appearances include: Opera Bastille, Paris; Tchaikovsky Grand Hall, Moscow; Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the UN’s General Assembly, New York; The Royal Albert Hall, London; Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires; der Philharmonie; Berlin; the Library of Congress, The Kennedy Center, Washington DC; the Mozarteum, Salzburg and the Damascus Opera House for its opening concert, Syria.

He has appeared as soloist with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, the NDR big-band, the Kiev Camerata, the Knights Orchestra, the Izmir State Opera Orchestra, the Corasara Orchestra, the Osnabruck Symphony, the Morgenland Festival Orchestra, The Qatar Philharmonic, The New Juilliard Ensemble and the Syrian Symphony Orchestra, among others. He has shared the stage with Yo-Yo Ma, Marcel Khalife, Aynur, Daniel Barenboim, Jivan Gasparian, Zakir Hussein, Francois Rabbath, Simon Shaheen, Solhi-al-Wadi, Calefax Reed Quintet, and members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Kinan’s compositions include solo, orchestral, and chamber works, often in collaboration with film, live illustration, and electronics. His discography includes three albums with his ensemble, Hewar, several soundtracks for film and dance, a duo album with pianist Dinuk Wijeratne and a recent release with his New York Arabic/
Jazz Quartet. He serves as artistic director of the Damascus Festival Chamber Music Ensemble, with whom he released an album of new contemporary Syrian chamber music, written especially for the ensemble by various composers. He is also a frequent guest faculty member at the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music and is on the advisory board of the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra. In addition, he is a member of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble, with whom he performed in February 2015, in collaboration with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Alan Gilbert.

www.kinanazmeh.com

Kevork Mourad was born in 1970 in Syria. He received his MFA from the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts in Armenia, and he now lives and works in New York. Six of his pieces are in permanent residency at the Gyumri Museum in Armenia, and several more at the Armenian Library and Museum of America in Watertown, Massachusetts. As part of group shows, his works were exhibited at the NYU Small Works Gallery in 2005 and 2007, and his digital piece, The Map of Future Movements, toured as part of a group exhibition in Jerusalem and Ramallah, and was featured in the 2010 Liverpool Biennial.

He has had solo exhibitions at Gallery Z in Providence, RI and at JK Gallery in Los Angeles. He is represented in the Middle East by Rafia Gallery in Damascus, Syria, where he exhibited in 2009. His solo show was also exhibited at the Courtyard Gallery in Dubai in 2010. Five of his pieces are in the permanent collection on the 70th floor of the Bourj Khalife in Dubai. He has had work auctioned twice at Christie’s Dubai.

With his technique of spontaneous painting, he has shared with many world-class musicians. Among them are Kinan Azmeh, Ezequiel Viñao, Tambuco, Brooklyn Rider, Mari Kimura, Ken Ueno, Liubo Borissov, Eve Beglarian, Rami Khalife, Maya Trio, SYOTOS, Song Fusion, and Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, with whom he is a member as a visual artist. He has performed at the Brooklyn Museum, the Chelsea Museum, The Bronx Museum, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Chess Festival of Mexico City, The Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art in Yerevan, Le Festival du Monde Arabe in Montreal, the Stillwater Festival, the Nara Museum in Japan, The Art Institute of Chicago, the Rubin Museum of Art, Harvard University, The American Museum of Natural History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Central Park’s Summerstage with the Silk Road Ensemble and Bobby McFerrin.

As a teaching artist with the Silk Road Project, he has worked with public school students throughout the five boroughs of New York. In 2010 and 2011, with actress/singer Anais Tekerian of Zulal, he co-produced and created two plays, Tangled Yarn and Waterlogged, which premiered at the New York International Fringe Festival and toured San Francisco and the Berkshires. His most recent show was in the Lincoln Center Atrium in NYC, with composer Ezequiel Viñao.

When Kevork lived in California, he was dubbed, “The Fastest Draw in the West!”

www.kevorkmourad.com

Khalil Younes is a visual artist and a writer recognized for challenging social norms and the desensitization of society. Employing the use of a variety of media—ranging from time-based media, to illustration and writing—he has in his crosshairs the essence of the human experience as a target. With a human society oversaturated with sensorial and emotional stimuli; the rate of socioemotional development is rapidly changing, with the inverse effect of dulling responses, and causing various levels of social desensitization. Through his art, Khalil diligently toils on re-designing social and emotional stimuli to motivate personal awareness and self resensitization.

Born in Damascus, Syria in 1983, he studied experimental film and video at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design of Boston in 2008 and received his BFA in cinematography from Columbia College of Chicago in 2010. Khalil’s art pieces are showcased in both private and public art collections in the US and Europe, and his illustrations have been featured in many renowned magazines and newspapers such as the Le Monde and Natural History Magazine. Two of his pieces were also acquired by the British National Museum in London. His video piece “Syria 2011” is permanently on display at the FORUM for new Arab art.

His first exhibition was in Damascus Syria, Ashtar Gallery in 2006. Khalil has since participated in many group shows, including Syria Art for Freedom Gdansk, Germany 2011; #Withoutwords London 2013; Syria’s Art of Resistance Rundetarn, Copenhagen 2013; Culture in Defiance Amsterdam, Holland; Institut des Cultures de l’Islam Paris, France; 2012. Khalil is also a member of the FORUM for new Arab art in Berlin.