



Music with a Message!

Tarik & Julia Banzi: Al-Andalus

"Aural gold!"

Program Notes

Our programming strives to represent equally three palatable manifestations' of the Andalusian legacy: Andalusí', Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) and Flamenco musics. The Banzi's coined the term 'Contemporary Andalusian' (c. 1987) to describe their unique, informed approach to andalusian music that melds the past with the present to create historically informed and esthetically pleasing renditions of traditional musics as well as new compositions which embrace rich treasures of the past and bring them into the present.

Andalusi music. the Andalusian music of North Africa (sometimes referred to as Arabo-Andalusian) is a music of diaspora connected in a myriad of ways to the past. The classical Andalusian repertoire descended from the courtly music of Islamic Spain (711-1492 AD). This tradition is considered by many scholars to be one of the longest continuous traditions of art music in the world. The Andalusian musical traditions are rich and highly complex social constructs where musicians and audience members throughout the Arab world often argue for the authentic qualities of their own Andalusian tradition in historical terms. Paradoxically, nothing indeed could be more Moroccan, Algerian or Syrian, than good Andalusian music.

Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) As historians look back before the first millennium at the Jewish populations of Iberia, we see Jews living in convergence with both Muslims and Christians. For almost four hundred years the Jews lived in al-Andalus amid the moderate Islamic rule based in Cordoba while it was not completely serene or without persecution for the Jewish people, it was nevertheless a situation of relative pluralism. The medieval Sephardim like the Arabs were expelled from Spain, but took with them the culture and character they had acquired over the centuries of their residence there. They continued to speak Spanish in environments where Spanish was not the general language of communication. To their medieval Spanish vocabulary, they added numerous words from Hebrew and from the languages of the lands in which they settled. The result was a Jewish variant of old Spanish, Judeo-Spanish - called Ladino in the printed form. Judeo-Spanish music, sung in Ladino is also a music of diaspora, uniquely preserved within vibrant Judeo-Spanish communities throughout the world where it merged and adapted with the local musics while still retaining its unique character.

Flamenco, the Andalusian music of Spain is known as flamenco. It is generally believed *that flamenco is a Gitano-Andaluz* art form combining influences from Gypsy (Indian), Arabic, Jewish, Western European and Latin American, as well as later infusions of Brazilian, Jazz and Salsa traditions. What is known today as flamenco dates mainly from the 18th century when this cultural expression emerged out of earlier Andalusian folk music, combined with the influences of Arab culture and Islamic Spain. These are commonly referred to as the "Moorish" roots of Flamenco. The music culture of flamenco is found in three primary expressions: *cante* (song), *baile* (dance), and *guitarra* (guitar).

Featuring Al-Andalus 2005 touring ensemble

Tarik Banzi (oud, ney, percussion)

Julia Banzi (flamenco guitar, viola, percussion)

Nourdinne Chekara (vocals, kamanja, percussion)

Virtudes Sanchez (vocals)

Ana Montes and/or Zahra Banzi (dance)

Al-Andalus: Contemporary Andalusian Music

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Tangier, Morocco

Al-Andalus Sample Program (2005-6)

1. *Oud solo*: The oud is the parent of the renaissance lute and guitar. The oud's unique possibilities as a concert instrument gleam in this improvised solo by artistic director Tarik. Banzi.

2,3,4. *Nawba excerpts*: The current repertory of Moroccan Andalusian music consists of eleven *nawbat* (song cycles) of vocal and instrumental suites each based on a specific principal mode and a varying number of secondary modes. To perform a complete *nawba* would take approximately five to seven hours and to perform the entire of repertoire of Andalusian *nawbat* would take over forty-nine hours. A complete *nawba* is rarely (if ever) performed. However, each *nawba* is divided into five main movements, or *mizan*. A performance is normally limited to playing a succession of extracts from several *mawazin* though a complete *mizan* may be performed on special occasions. As in the Andalusian tradition, within this program we will perform sections of the Nawba, together with vocal and instrumental improvisations. The poetic texts come from the 1786 collection on Andalusian songs compiled by the scholar from Tetuan, Morocco, *Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Haik*. Now simply referred to as *al-Haik*, it has become one of the most important works on Andalusian music. It is an invaluable source in demonstrating continuity with the past and documenting the unbroken chain of ear witness accounts.

5. *A La Una Yo Naci*: A Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) love song from Sephardic Jews of Al-Andalus. The term "Sephardic" referred originally to descendants of Jews expelled from the Iberian peninsula during the Spanish Inquisitions, the biblical name "Sefarad" being interpreted as "Spain." Ladino is a nearly extinct Romance language, descended from medieval Spanish, spoken by Sephardic Jews especially in N. Africa, the Balkans, Turkey, and the Near East.

<i>A la una yo naci</i>	<i>At one I was born,</i>
<i>A las dos, me engrandaci</i>	<i>at two I grew up</i>
<i>A las tres tenia amante</i>	<i>At three I fell in love,</i>
<i>A las cuatro me casi</i>	<i>at four I married.</i>
<i>Alma, vida y corozon</i>	<i>Soul, life and heart</i>

6. *Cantiga de Santa Maria #170* (codice b12-E1 fol 162 r) The *Cantigas of Santa Maria* were made for the thirteenth-century scholar-king, *Alfonso el Sabio* (the wise, or learned) of Castile and Leon who lived in Spain from 1252 to 1284 a.d. The intention of the artists of the *Cantigas* was to demonstrate a detailed picture of instrumental music at the court of a great Spanish monarch at the same time, a desire to depict the songs in a gay and joyful nature. Bound in four magnificent manuscripts and preserved in Spanish and Italian libraries, the *Cantigas* are over four hundred songs, beautifully illustrated with miniatures that cover virtually every aspect of medieval life, including 44 depicting music. Some of the finest pictures of medieval minstrels and their instruments are found in this collection and the *Cantigas* are regarded as perhaps the most outstanding example of the depiction of performance of secular music of the thirteenth century.

The *Cantigas* are as unique as they are beautiful. Particularly fascinating is that they provide important evidence, both musical and pictorial about the multicultural past of Christian Spain as well as providing a glimpse of the many influences and much neglected contributions of Jewish & Arabic civilization on Medieval Europe. The *Cantigas* reflect "side by side, both Christian and Moslem tradition...in some of the pictures Moslem and Jewish musicians compete with Christian Spaniards. Lute and rebec still appear in their Arabic shape alongside instruments of occidental origin." Besides providing invaluable information about the instrumental music of the time in the court of Alfonso X, these miniatures also provide us with a union of ecclesiastic art and popular as well as a window into the Mozarabe Andaluza, Jews & Moors of the times as well as the interaction between them.

<i>Esta e de loor.</i>	<i>This is to give praise (thanks)</i>
<i>Lo-ar de-veamos a que sem-pre faz ben,</i>	<i>Give praise we should, that everything turns out well,</i>
<i>et en que to-da me-su-ra jaz.</i>	<i>& in that everything has its reason why.</i>

7. *Granadina*: Granada, with its Alhambra palace was the jewel of the Arab empire in Al-Andalus. Here Flamenco, art form of the Spanish Gypsies was born and emerged a Moorish inspired song form in flamenco known as *Granadinas*. This is a piece composed by Tarik & Julia that merges Andalusian, Ladino & Flamenco to create something new and beautiful.

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15 min. INTERMISSION
Part II

1. *Lamma Bada*: The muashshah is an early Arabic classical form that emerged in Al-Andalus and later spread to the opulent courts of Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and other urban centers between the 9th & 13th centuries. The rhythm is a slow 10/4 called Samaii Thakil.

2. *Ya Leilu Tul*: This traditional piece is a muashshah based on a 4/4 rhythm called *wahda*. The muashshah is an early Arabic classical form that emerged in al-Andalus and later spread to the opulent courts of Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and other urban centers between the 9th & 13th centuries. An example of Eastern Andalusian music.

Oh night be long or not, I wont sleep tonight!

3. *Barakah*: The fabric of time is explored in this original piece for percussion, inspired by the Hadra or Sufi meditation session. A solo on drums including the darbuka (precursor to the kettle drum) exemplifying the immense range of sounds available on this clay drum.

8. *Suspiro*: A piece showcasing the ney. Neys (reed flutes) have been discovered in Egyptian tombs and Mesopotamian excavations. and as such is one of the most ancient & well preserved instruments. The sound of the ney conveys its antiquity. Original composition accompanied by a pre-Islamic poetry recitation in classical arabic.

*I. We have come from the giant dunes
From which the pharaohs were born
We weren't frightened of their tombs*

*II. We have come from the giant dunes
Where the green oases are more
beautiful than the gardens of paradise*

4. *Song of the Water*: Water is our first music even before we are born. Throughout the Arab world water has always been cherished. The peoples of Al-Andalus were well aware of the beauty & music of water, and utilized it wherever possible throughout their homes and palaces in the form of water clocks, fountains, pools and even handrails cascading with water. Original composition.

*Water touches the past & prepares the future.
It can assume forms of an exquisite perfection in a snowflake,
or strip the living to a single shining bone cast up by the sea
anthropologist Loren Eiseley).*

7. *Labyrinth*: Islamic art is frequently a play of enlacing mosaics and intricate calligraphy. Rich fabrics were celebrated for their texture, colors and woven patterns, which included calligraphy, abstracted plants and vine scrolls. the typical use of a very formal balance. The principles of balance and symmetry are strictly observed. In order to achieve symmetry the artist will repeat the same exact elements on both halves of a piece of art in reversed order, so that both halves mirror one another. Islamic designs are created with rather humble aspirations; to enrich an environment or to beautify an object. They seek to enhance rather than to dominate. Islamic artists are not trying to reveal their own personality or to create art which tells a story of its own. In surveying many Islamic art pieces, one is struck with the labyrinth of patterns. We seek to tell a similar story with this musical composition.

6. *Jinete*: Set to the poetry of one of Spains poets, Garcia Lorca, this piece is both sung and danced. Lorca was very inspired and modeled much of his poetry on translated poets of Al-Andalus, the imagery is unmistakable

*Cordoba, far away and alone.
Black pony, big moon, and the olives in my saddlebag.
Although I know the roads, I'll never reach Cordoba.
Through the plain, through the wind...death is looking at me from the towers of Cordoba.
Cordoba, far away and alone.....*