
PROVENANCE: MAYA BEISER with special guests Jamey Haddad and Bassam Saba

Maya Beiser, cello
Bassam Saba, Oud
Jamey Haddad, percussion
Shahrokh Yadegari, live electronics

Music by:
Simon Shaheen Kayhan Kalhor
Tamar Muskal Hamza El Din
Raz Mesinai Djivan Gasparyan
Douglas Cuomo Martin Codax
Abdelli

Conceived and Produced by Maya Beiser

In a world troubled by religious strife and division, the period between the eighth and fifteenth centuries in the Iberian Peninsula offers a hopeful historical reminder: Muslims, Christians, and Jews once lived together in Spain, creating a centuries-long flowering of commerce, culture, art, and architecture. They forged a Golden Age for each faith and distanced Spain from a Europe mired in the Dark Ages.

Cellist Maya Beiser's new Project, "Provenance", is inspired by this impossibly panoramic sweep of human history and achievement, and by the glory of a multireligious, multicultural, civilization that forever changed the West.

Maya grew up on an Israeli Kibbutz at the foothills of the Galilee Mountains. Her Kibbutz was a progressive Jewish community living in harmony with the neighboring Muslim and Christian Arab villages. The local Middle Eastern music was the ever present experience of childhood. Whether played at her neighbors' celebrations and holidays or emanating from the minarets at dawn as the Muezzin called the faithful for morning prayers, these sounds were as integral to her auditory landscape as the Bach and Schubert she played as a child.

For "Provenance" Maya Beiser has commissioned young composers from Israel, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Iran and the United States to create music inspired by the Golden Age in Medieval Spain. Also included are arrangements of masterpieces by Hamza el Din, Djivan Gasparyan and the 9th century Galician troubadour Martin Codax. Joining her on stage will be the Lebanese-American master Oud player Bassam Saba, and hand drummer virtuoso Jamey Haddad. The different pieces will be united by Iranian-American Sound designer and computer specialist Shahrokh Yadegari, who will create a cohesive and shared sonic space, in real time, within which the musicians will perform.

"Provenance" will offer a contemporary interpretation of the shared harmonious source, emanating from the Iberian Golden Age. Maya is not engaged in an archeological dig in which the music of the 8th century is stood again on its feet. Instead she seeks another, deeper approach: to reproduce an environment in which varied and seemingly culturally dissimilar traditions can once again occupy the same shared space. "Provenance" outlines the origins of an ideal in which cultural differences are not simply tolerated but explicitly sought for the energy they release with each encounter. Like the Golden Age of the Iberian Peninsula itself, "Provenance" goes a step further and embraces co-existence not as a luxury but a necessity without which art cannot be made and culture cannot exist.

"Provenance" is 75 non-stop minutes of continuous thread where live music and original text in Ladino, Arabic, Hebrew and Latin are woven together into an all-encompassing musical tapestry.

Provenance will be played without break or intermission.

Sound Installation and design – Sharokh Yagedari
Sound Design – Dave Cook
Lighting Design – Stephen Arnold
Artistic Adviser – Robert Woodruff

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