

A Night of Infinite Resignation

April 9, 2017

Program

نيال مائيسود

Composer/Co-director: Nebal Maysaud

Co-director: Naomi Oster

Part I – On Fire

Processional: Introit

With this Fire, I shall burn down the rewards of paradise, so that you shall no longer pray for hope of reward, but simply for the love of God.

Electronic Battleship

Maddy Brotherton, Violin
Joan Shalit, Violin
Nat Sattler, Viola
Henry McEwen, Cello
Sean Goldman, Percussion

Prayer for the Fire Worshiper

Anmol Gupta as David
Yonah Barany as Hasan al-Basri
Luis Gonzalez, Guitar
Lorna Stephens as holy soldier
Madeliene Moran as holy soldier

The Arrogance of Time, Mvt. 1

Ethan Valentin, piano

Part II – On Water

*and with this water, I shall douse the blaze of hell, so that you
shall no longer pray to God from fear of punishment.*

“Song for a Small Guest”, from *Songs of Love and Sin*

Jennifer Kwon Dobbs, lyrics

Nolan Ramirez, Abdullah Kurdi
Elijah Kuhaupt, piano

-Moment of Silence-

Prayer

كاسي و خمري

Rabi'a al-Adawiyya, lyrics

Keira Elaine Jett as Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya
Madeleine Moran as traveler
Lorna Stephens as traveler
Sam Stone as holy soldier
Nolan Ramirez as Abdullah Kurdi
Anmol Gupta as David
Yonah Barany as Hasan al-Basri
Alex Quackenbush as holy soldier
Brian Mironer, percussion
Kelci Page, percussion

Text and Translations

Introit

*Puer natus est nobis et filius datus est nobis:
cuius imperium super humerium eius:
et vocabitur nomen eius magni consilii Angelus.
Cantate Domino canticum novum quia mirabilia fecit.*

*(A child is born to us and a Song is given to us:
Whose government is upon His shoulder:
and His Name shall be called, the Angel of Great Counsel
Sing ye to the Lord a new song for he has done wonderful things.)*

Prayer for the Fire Worshiper

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen*

*(Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and in the hour of our death. Amen.)*

Song for a Small Guest

For Alan Kurdî

*Seaweed followed the law. It released you
to waves bussing your small body*

*down, down dark currents, silver
minnow tunnel. Your red shirt swallowed*

*the Aegean, billowed and swelled,
but your shoes stayed on. By them the sea*

*knew your refuge dream, restored you to shore
so your father Abdullah could find you,*

*a guest of the sea. Without guests
all houses would be a grave, the poet wrote*

*making a worm from mist, a bird from sand.
What prayer transforms this empty*

*castle guards watch, ignorant of the gift
to shelter each other? Who will help*

*close, open, close your velcro laces
for the journey your father dares*

for your sake? You, a gift loved with milk
cake and honey. You, names altered

to keep you safe—not Mohammed, Jesus.
Not Muslim, Christian. Hush

don't bother now as white tourists gather
multiplying your image on their little screens

to console each other. You are not their orphan
of beach foam, Alan flag bearer

watching from the lap of God.

Jennifer Kwon Dobbs

كأسي وخنمري

كأسي وخنمري والنديمُ ثلاثة
وأنا المشوقةُ في المحبة: رابعة
كأس المسرة والنعم يُديرها
ساقى المدام على المدى متتابة
فإذا نظرتُ فلا أرى إلا له
وإذا حضرتُ فلا أرى إلا معه

يا عاذلي! إني أحبُّ جماله
تالله ما أذني لعذلك سامعة
كم بتُّ من حرقى وفرط تعلقي
أجري عيوننا من عيني الدامعة
لا خبرتي تزقا ولا وُصلي له
يبقى ولا عيني القرية هاجعة

Kεʔsi wa Xेमri

*Kεʔsi wa Xेमri w'el nadimu θelæθatun,
w'ʕanel ma'ʃuqetufi 'l maḥabati: Rabiʔa.
Kεʔsu 'l masarati w'el nʕimi judirha,
saqil mudæmi ʕlæl medæ mutætæbiʕ.
Fεʔiða na'ð'artu felæ ʔʊræ ʔila lahu,
wεʔiða hæð'artu felæ ʔʊræ ʔila mʔa.*

*jaʕðili! ʔimi ʔuḥubu dʒε'mælahu!
talahi, maʔʊðni liʕðlika sæmiʕ!
kembtumm hīraqi, wa fart'i tʕ'ʔaluqi,
ʔʊdzri ʕjuna min ʕjunil dæmiʕ?
laxabrati tarqa wela was'ʕlilahu
jebqa wela ʕjnil qariḥa hædzisʕ*

*(My cup, my wine, and my partner make three,
And I, who long for the beloved am: the fourth.
The cup of pleasure and bliss is passed around,
By the bearer of wine, again and again.
If I look, I am not seen, except by him.
If I am present, I am not seen, except with him.*

*Oh, you who mock me! I love their beauty!
By Allah, my ears do not hear your voice!
How many nights, burning from passion,
Have fountains flowed from my eyes?
My tears do not dry, nor does my union with him
Endure, and my eyes will never rest peacefully.)*

-Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya

Biographies

Imam Hasan al-Basri

Hasan, revered for his austerity and support for "renunciation" (zuhd), preached against worldliness and materialism during the early days of the Umayyad Caliphate, with his passionate sermons casting a "deep impression on his contemporaries." His close relationships with several of the most prominent companions of the prophet Muhammad only strengthened his standing as a teacher and scholar of the Islamic sciences. The particular disciplines in which he is said to have excelled included exegesis (tafsīr) of the Quran, whence his "name is invariably encountered in" classical and medieval commentaries on the scripture, as well as theology and mysticism.

(from Wikipedia)

Hazrat Rabi'a al-Adawiyya al-Qaysiyya

Said to have been born between 714 and 718 CE (95 and 98 Hijri) in Basra, Iraq of the Qays tribe. She was the fourth daughter of her family and therefore named Rābi'a, meaning "fourth". Although not born into slavery, her family was poor yet respected in the community. According to her anecdotes, she was sold into slavery, and when she prayed, a light flew over her head, and her master offered to give her everything he had and to be her servant. Instead, she left and became an ascetic. She is often noted as having been the single most famous and influential Sufi woman of Islamic history, Rābi'a was renowned for her extreme virtue and piety.

(from Wikipedia, with edits by Nebal)

Program Notes

In 2013, a study was published about mice. Researchers tortured mice as they were fed strawberries and studied their children. Not only did the original mice fear the smell of strawberries but their children and their children's children did as well. Thus, we have confirmed the epigenetics of pain and that is where this story starts. Nebal has crafted this series of works to study radical trans-temporal queer pain.

Nebal asks his audience to answer questions that reach the core of what it means to be human; Where does pain come from? How are we to heal if we are historically and actively marginalized?

When we meet Hasan and David, we are encapsulated by the way two men can suffer as they say goodbye. This moment, hundreds of years ago, mirrors the pain that Abdullah feels as he honors his lost son, Alan. Both moments echo the dichotomy of public versus private. Hasan and David's secret relationship is hidden from their public lives; Abdullah, struggling with the appropriation of his son's death on a Greek shoreline, takes a moment to grieve privately. These painful moments are tied together through Rabi'a whose soul in death, in Nebal's words, shattered into a million pieces and lies within every queer body. I invite the audience to find the difference between suffering and love themselves and to take with them the interconnectedness of the world that Nebal has exemplified before them today.

-Naomi Oster

I would like to thank Asha Srinivasan for all her wonderful work this term to make this project happen. I also, of course, cannot thank my performers enough; they took on this project with such passion. I am honored to have worked with them. And of course, most special thanks to Naomi. Without her, this production would not have been possible. Thank you also to Kenneth Bozeman, for his work with Nolan on *Song for a Small Guest* and Matthew Michelic for his help on *Electronic Battleship*. Finally, thank you to Karen Carr, Dirk Vorenkamp, and Connie Kassor, whose teachings on philosophy, Buddhism, and abrahamic faith permeate this entire recital.

-Nebal Maysaud

Nebal Maysaud is a senior composition major in Asha Srinivasan's studio.