

NAME: Varvara Maldonado

RECITAL DATE: Wed. December 2nd

RECITAL PROGRAM NOTES:

“EAST AND WEST”

All compositions written and arranged by Varvara Maldonado.

Varvara Maldonado - piano

Mark Peterson - bass

Tony Lewis – drums

1) *Oriental Gates*

The melody of this piece is based on Oriental colors, with the melody/harmonies borrowing the interval of a 4th from the Turkman musical tradition. The overall harmony and form are based on African American blues. The title and introduction come from the music of the Silk Road, the ancient route connecting Europe with the East where horns announced important events such as the coming of the Emperor. The end result is a fusion of Asian, Middle-Asian, and Western musical elements.

2) *Girl's Dance*

This piece is based on a common Turkman folk dance with 7 beats to a measure. This is a sound I actually heard growing up in Armenia. It reminds me of Turkman girls, with long hair and decorations on their heads, dancing as they harvested cotton.

The song form is AAB and is based on a particular rhythm from the Orient in which the 7 beats are divided into a specific pattern of “123,12,12.” It is similar to music found in Greece, as well as Turkish and Bulgarian music in this regard. The harmonies are also close to the more Oriental style, with a more European (dominant/subdominant, etc.) song form built upon an AAB structure.

3) *Turkman Walk*

This is a great example of mixing American swing with Oriental melodies. The intro is more European as far as the chord configurations, but the melody (even in a swing feel) is more Turkman-influenced. My solo improvisations seek to combine jazzy blue-note phrasings with non-diatonic Turkman scales.

4) *Nostalgia*

This ballad musically mixes two sides of the world: European and Middle Asia. The first part is a modal harmony - similar to the famous Miles Davis tune “So What” - starting on the E tonality and going to F. But this is also common in Asian traditions where the second step is flattened harmonically. The second part of the AAB form sounds more Western, but they two sections blend together easily. That's the point; today people have to be friendly! So it's fun to mix my modally-based solo technique with regular pentatonic, diatonic, and Asian melodies and scales.

5) *Destan*

This song means “Epoch” - a story about what happened in the past, but with very tremendous meaning. The song is about bravery and imagines an army of people on horses going to conquer something! The main melody is my own but rendered in a Turkman style. Centering the piece around the single tonality of D provides a great deal of freedom for my soloing. The whole piece is in 11/8 time except a couple of bars in the melody.

6) *War and Peace*

With a nod toward Tolstoy and my early life experiences in Armenia, this piece reflects on humanity's collective struggles to survive together. The music unfolds with a calm, modal-inflected piano introduction and eventually turns toward chaos and dissonance.