

Next Concert – Members Evening and AGM

Date and location to be confirmed

With the uncertainty about forming a committee for next season, we have not yet arranged the members evening. To be announced soon. We'll send round an email. Please make sure we have your up to date email address.

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Further information about Music in Dollar and up-coming events can be found on our website:

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Music in Dollar



Kosmos Ensemble

Saturday 10th March 2018, 7:30pm
Gibson Hall, Dollar Academy FK14 7DU



Hannah Middleton plays harp for a pre-concert supporting performance, from 7:15pm.

Kosmos Ensemble

Harriet MacKenzie – violin, **Meg Hamilton** – viola, **Miloš Milivojević** – accordion

Twice winners of 'Selected Artists' by the Making Music organisation, the internationally acclaimed Kosmos Ensemble is re-defining the relationship between classical and world music. United by a shared passion for improvisation, music from around the globe as well as the rigours of classical training each member brings individual flavour to the group. The musicians are soloists in their own right: Harriet is an international concerto soloist and chamber musician with a particular interest in contemporary music; Meg is a unique viola player specialising in world and folk music styles including Celtic, Romanian, Greek and Middle-Eastern music; Milos is an international competition winner on the classical accordion with a passion for tango and Balkan music. .. As described by Richard Morrison, chief music critic of The Times they have “telepathic rapport, dazzling virtuosity, serious scholarship, intellectual curiosity and impeccable musicianship. I defy you not to be mesmerised.”

They have each travelled extensively, performing with and learning from musicians from all over the world, as well as within the broad multiculturalism of London's music scene. They have collectively studied music from North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Russia, Hungary, Serbia, Romanian Jewish and Gypsy music, Greek Rembetika, Island (Nissiotika) music, Argentine tango, Brazilian samba, flamenco, Celtic and jazz traditions as well as contemporary classical music. The members of Kosmos combine all their knowledge with a respect for their own Western classical music training, performing freely with panache, innovation and creativity, incorporating improvisation into their own unique arrangements and compositions.

Programme

Harriet, Meg and Milos have crafted a programme unique to Kosmos, inspired by music from all around the globe. Wild Gypsy fiddling, emotive Jewish and Greek music glide seamlessly into hot-blooded tango, alongside interpretations of Japanese, Polish and Sephardic songs, new arrangements by and for the ensemble, and with references to classical composers including Bach, Brahms and Sarasate. The following is a brief background to some of the musical traditions that inspired tonight's programme:

Greece bridges the West and the Orient and its music spans millennia of history. Greek traditional music has origins traced to Greek antiquity, both in its folk and Byzantine origin manifestations. Byzantine music also included a rich liturgical chanting tradition with strong influences in later music – the inflections, expression and modal nature of much of the music are connected to Byzantine chant. There is a huge variety of Greek music. Every island and region has its own specific style, tradition, instrumentation and folk songs. Kosmos is particularly interested in the influence of music brought by Asia Minor Greek refugees from Turkey around the time of a traumatic population exchange in 1922. This music, in which the fiddle played an important role, fused with the Rembetika tradition of mainland Greece and significantly influenced it. Its themes included love, the pain of being torn from your country, death and, being mainly the music of abject people in urban centres, prison and drugs. This branch became the urban blues of Pireaus and Thessaloniki's impoverished subculture, snubbed by the middle classes and suppressed by the authorities. Later the Rembetika, making much more use of the bouzouki (Greek lute), as championed by musicians like Markos Vamvakaris, evolved into a genre of music which sounds more Western and less modal.

The stunning plurality of musical styles in modern **Turkey** includes Ottoman Art music, folk, Arabesque, Anatolian Rock and Turkish pop, as well as folk traditions played by Greeks, Armenians, Kurds, and Alevites. Ottoman Art music in particular has its roots in the Byzantine and Persian traditions and, partly due to the size of the Ottoman empire, has had a profound influence on music in the Middle East and North Africa creating a striking overlapping repertoire. The traditional music is based on a modal system of makams (similar in concept to Indian ragas) which, are explored through improvisation as an introduction (taksim) or during a song or piece.

Gypsy (Roma) people are believed originally to have come from Rajasthan in India, and travelled to many corners of the world including Spain where they are famous for flamenco music and dance, France where they are associated with manouche (“Gypsy- jazz”), and in the Balkans and Russia, where they are also known and celebrated for their musical talents, traditionally performing music in restaurants, taverns and at weddings. Composers such as Brahms, Sarasate, Dvorak, Bartok, Liszt, Ravel and Enescu were profoundly inspired by Gypsy melodies and virtuosity. Likewise, Kosmos draws on traditional Gypsy music especially that of Europe and Russia, finding parallels with Western classical music and recomposing it for a twenty first century ensemble.

The **Jewish** diaspora has resulted in a huge wealth of Jewish music. There are two main strands of traditional Jewish music in Europe and the Balkans, and both are of interest to Kosmos.

1. **Klezmer**. Music of the Ashkenazi Jews of nineteenth century Eastern Europe. Until the holocaust, klezmer was often heard played by professional Jewish musicians at weddings and celebrations in Eastern Europe. Stylistically, klezmer borrows from the Hassidic nigun (an emotive table song without words), and is played in Jewish prayer modes (shtaygerim) based on the cantorial nusach. Features distinguishing klezmer from other Eastern European and Balkan folk styles include an emphasis on emotional content, with a quintessential downward glissando effect and the unique use of the 'krecht' - a stopped note, giving a wailing, sobbing sound.

2. **Sephardic**. Born out of medieval Spain, and performed at royal courts in cities such as Toledo and Fez, Sephardic Jews spoke and sang in Judeo-Spanish (Ladino). Following their expulsion from Spain in 1492, the original Spanish became infused with other languages including Arabic, Turkish, Greek, Slavic, Portuguese, French and Italian. This geographical spread of the community is reflected in the musical variety of Judeo-Spanish folk songs carried down to the present day. Musicians assimilated North African high-pitched, extended ululations, Balkan rhythms such as the 9/8 meter, and the Ottoman makams. This mix is a fundamental inspiration for Kosmos.

A sensuous, rhythmic and passionate dance music from **Argentina**, tango - originally a dance for two men - has come to epitomize the glamour and elegance of high society, with women in sleek glittering evening gowns and men in tuxedos. However, it originated in Argentine society's brothels. The dance became a highly theatrical representation of the relationship between the prostitute and her pimp, accounting for its daring combination of sleaze and elegance. Kosmos has experimented with incorporating melodies from Jewish and Greek Island music

Japan boasts a rich tapestry of traditional genres and distinct styles from traditional Buddhist chanting (shōmyō) and orchestral court music (gagaku) to Enka, a vocal genre popular in the 1950s (derived from music of the late 19th century) evoking romanticized and idealized Japanese culture: Enka singers, predominantly women, usually perform in a kimono, making use of the pentatonic scale, vocal Melismas specific to the genre and often, traditional folk songs. Japanese folk songs (min'yō) include work songs, religious songs (such as Shintoist music), songs used for weddings, funerals, and festivals (matsuri, especially Obon), and children's songs (warabe uta).