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Bagh-e Eram garden (Fars/Shiraz)

*The Quest for Peace in the Middle East through Sacred Music, Poetry
and the Ancient Gardens of Persia*

Concluding 2 programs of 2018 marking the début of Palladium Musicum in Newport, RI

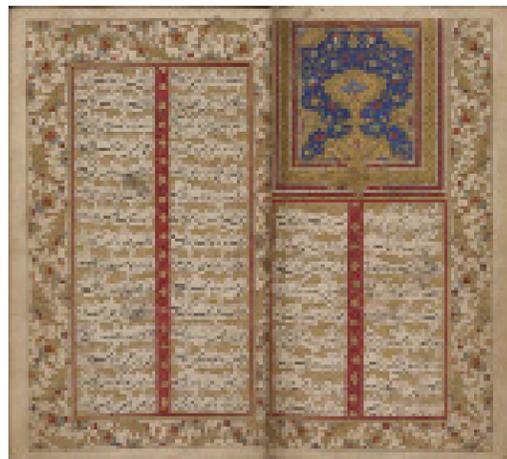
Hafez and Persian Poetry in the Classical Era (800-1500)

WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
REDWOOD LIBRARY AND ATHENAEUM, 50 BELLEVUE AVENUE, NEWPORT

Opera Concert In the Gardens of Ancient Persia

SATURDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018, 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM
NEWPORT ART MUSEUM, 76 BELLEVUE AVENUE, NEWPORT

PALLADIUM MUSICUM, INC., a non-profit organization devoted to classical music, culture and the arts, is pleased to announce its Newport début with two programs: A lecture on Persian poetry in the Classical Era and the poet, Hafez; and an opera concert performed by rising young opera stars which marks the world premiere of a commissioned work, "*Hafez Songs*" by composer, **Robert Sirota**, based on the poems of Hafez and performed in an ancient Persian garden. Both programs will include a reception. Tickets are priced at \$65 for each program or a combined price of \$110 for both programs. For information or to purchase tickets, please call or text 401-440-3974. Credit cards are accepted.



The Divan of Hafez, manuscript 1685, Library of Congress

15 couplets, similar to Shakespeare's Sonnet. His poetry is characterized by love of humanity, contempt for hypocrisy and mediocrity, and an ability to universalize everyday experience and relate it to the mystic's unending search for union with God.

These subjects will be discussed by our lecturer, Mohsen Ashtiany, Research Scholar and Associate Editor of the *Encyclopedia Iranica* at the Center for Iranian Studies, Columbia University. Publication of an in-depth examination of Persian Poetry from the Classical Period will shortly be published as a scholarly volume, co-edited by Mohsen Ashtiany. Mr. Ashtiany is a graduate of St. Andrews and Oxford University, where he has taught Persian literature and history. He has held Visiting Fellowships at Harvard and Princeton.

Persian literature is the jewel in the crown of Persian culture, profoundly influencing the literature of Ottoman Turkey, Muslim India and Turkic Central Asia -- and in the West, writers such as Goethe, Emerson, and Matthew Arnold. Persian poetry and its development over centuries have been integral to the Iranian cultural experience. The Classical Period in Persian poetry (800-1500) under the rule of the Timurids (1370-1500) was considered a period of great flowering in the arts, literature, and poetry including the poetic genres of the panegyric qaside, quatrains and ghazal. During this period, the provincial city of Shiraz in the southern province of Fars became an important cultural center, nurturing writers, poets, and painters.

Born in Shiraz, Hafez (c.1324-1389) is universally recognized as the greatest lyric poet of Persia. As a court poet, he enjoyed the favor and patronage of several rulers of Shiraz. Hafez brought to perfection the ghazal, a lyric poem of 6 to



A Lovers' Picnic. From The Divan of Hafez, manuscript, Tabriz, Iran, 1530

Our final program -- featuring the world premiere of *"Hafez Songs"* -- truly unites the themes of our 2017-2018 Season, *"The Quest for Peace in the Middle East through Sacred Music, Poetry and the Ancient Gardens of Persia."* The poems of Hafez -- particularly his lyrical poems, the ghazals -- by their nature are ideally suited to musical expression. An appropriate setting for an opera concert, the gardens of Persia were sacred spaces wherein musical events were frequently performed and entertainments of all varieties were staged -- to the delight of their owner and invited guests. As expressions of spirituality, romance, power and prestige, these gardens were central to Persia's great heritage.

And thus, the magnificent Persian garden, Bagh-e Eram ("Garden of Heaven"), located in Shiraz, is the perfect setting which has been "recreated" for our opera concert. With its traditional Persian *chahar bagh* garden design, Bagh-e Eram is laid out on a longitudinal axis featuring a large reflecting pool and four waterways. The main building of the garden is a relatively complete example of pavilions built in the mid-Qajars period (1787-1925) and is considered a masterpiece of art and industry of the period. Thirty rooms on two floors of the pavilion were decorated with tiles on which were written poems by Hafez. Bagh-e Eram is one of nine gardens in Iran proposed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

"Hafez Songs" is a song cycle based on the poetry of Hafez, commissioned by Palladium Musicum, Inc., underwritten by a number of Patrons, and composed by **Robert Sirota**. Four Hafez poems -- ghazals -- have been selected by Mr. Sirota. The work has been composed for soprano and baritone accompanied by traditional Western instruments and the oud, an ancient short-necked lute-type stringed instrument. **Maeve Höglund**, soprano, will be a featured soloist performing *"Hafez Songs"*.

The concert also will include familiar selections from the repertoire of traditional operas performed by rising young opera stars. They are established young performers who have exhibited exceptional vocal and artistic abilities receiving training in our renowned young artist development opera programs such as those offered by the Metropolitan Opera and the Washington National Opera.

The selection of vocal artists and the artistic development of the concert have been undertaken by **Dona D. Vaughn**, Artistic Director of Opera Programs at the Manhattan School of Music and Artistic Director, Opera Maine, a summer festival in Portland, Maine. From 1998 to 2009 she was Stage Director/Acting Coach for The Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Her directing credits include New York City Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Wolf Trap, Ensemble Studio Theater, Lincoln Center Playwrights' Festival, New York Repertory Company, Kennedy Center, Heritage Theater (Calgary, Canada), and DiVivreVoix (Vivonne, France) and many colleges and universities across the country. Dona D. Vaughn is reunited with Palladium Musicum in the artistic development of this opera concert.



A frequent collaborator with Palladium Musicum, **Robert Sirota** is finding new forms of expression in his exploration of Eastern music for our 2017-2018 Season. Over four decades, as a composer he has developed a distinctive voice, clearly discernible in all of his work -- whether symphonic, choral, stage, or chamber music. His works have been performed by orchestras across the US and Europe and at festivals including Tanglewood, Aspen, Bowdoin International Music Festival and Mizzou International Composers Festival. In April 2018, his composition *"Immigrant Songs"* was premiered at The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine. He has received grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Music Center.

Soprano **Maeve Höglund** marks her second appearance with Palladium Musicum in the premiere of Robert Sirota's *"Hafez Songs"*. The *New York Times* praised her as "a striking soprano," and one who "stands out among singers." She makes her Opera Philadelphia debut in the 2017-2018 season as Lola in the world premiere of David Hertzberg's opera *The Wake of the World*. Her engagements in the 2016-2017 season included performing Musetta in *La Boheme* with Charleston Opera, and Margaret Hughes in Carlisle Floyd's *Prince of Players* with Little Opera Theatre of New York. Maeve Höglund received her Bachelor of Music Degree in voice from the New England Conservatory in Boston and Master's Degree from Manhattan School of Music in New York City.

A native of Atlanta, Cuban-American mezzo-soprano **Eliza Bonet** joined Washington National Opera Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program in the 2017-2018 season, presenting her role debut as Bradamante in Handel's *Alcina*. Additional recent appearances include Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Opera Williamsburg, Annina in *La traviata* with Opera Maine, and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with Shreveport Opera. She has been a member of the Merola Program at San Francisco Opera, a Young Artist with Florida Grand Opera, and a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2012. Her awards include an Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2013, as well as being named a finalist for the Opera Birmingham Competition the same year. She completed her graduate degree from Florida State University in 2011.

Jorell Williams is an American operatic baritone with a wide variety of experience from standard repertoires to premiere pieces. This season, Mr. Williams make his company début as Le Genie Oroès in the American premiere of Rameau's *Sympathie* (or *Acante et Céphise*) with Victory Hall Opera. In concert, he will appear as soloist with the Juneau Symphony Orchestra, Harlem Chamber Players, and Bradford Chorale, as well as début with the Five Boroughs Music Festival at National Sawdust.

A former resident artist of the American Opera Projects Composers and the Voice Series from 2011-2014, Mr. Williams has created leading roles in several world premieres, including Michael Torke's *Senna* with the Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center Festival. He is a recipient of the 2016 Marc and Eva Stern Fellowship at Songfest and awards from Lucia Albanese Puccini Foundation, The American Prize and Serge Koussevitzky Foundation. He holds a Masters degree from the Manhattan School of Music and a Bachelors degree from SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music.

Nate Raskin this year joined the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artists Development Program as pianist/ coach. He has previously served on the faculty of the Merit School of Music in Chicago and the music staffs of North Part University and the Castleton Festival. In 2017, he performed in Marilyn Horne's *The Song Continues*, a series of master classes in Carnegie Hall, as well as in concert in Alice Tully Hall. Mr. Raskin holds a Masters degree in collaborative piano from the Juilliard School, as well as degrees in piano and German from Northwestern University. He has furthered his studies in Vienna and as a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival.

Originally from Columbus, Ohio, classical guitarist **Jordan Dodson** has been described as "one of the top young guitarists of his generation" by Performance Today. A winner of Astral's 2013 National Auditions, he is an active soloist and chamber musician based in New York and Philadelphia. In 2013, he also was a Young Artist in Residence on American Public Media's Performance Today. Mr. Dodson's recent performance and teaching schedule has taken him across the US and abroad to venues such as (Le) Poisson Rouge (New York City), the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts (Philadelphia), and the Museo Nacional de Colombia (Bogotá). An advocate for contemporary music, Mr. Dodson has commissioned and premiered dozens of pieces internationally, including works by Lewis Nielson and Robert Sirota. He performs in several New York City chamber ensembles including Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players and Contemporaneous. He holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.

Flutist **Martha Cargo** is noted for her ground breaking collaborations spanning from site-specific dance to semi-structured improvisations inspired by giant metal sculptures. Hailed as "excellent" by the *New York Times* and praised for her "milky" tone by I CARE IF YOU LISTEN, Ms. Cargo trained at Oberlin, SUNY Purchase, in Paris, and at Manhattan School of Music before embarking on her freelance career. She works actively with Glass Farm, Ghost Ensemble, and numerous other projects throughout New York City and recently toured with Glass Farm founder-pianist Yvonne Troxler to Switzerland. In early 2016, she began the flute/ cello duo commission project *Pieces of Eight* with cellist, Ben Larsen.

Cellist **Benjamin Larsen** has forged a reputation as an avid chamber musician in the New York City area. His knack for adventurous programming comes through in his work as Artistic Director of the series, *Concerts on the Slope*, and in the projects that he spearheads, working with some of today's most notable composers, including Robert Sirota, Reena Esmail, Tania Leon and Ke-Chia Chen. In 2017 in Newburgh, New York, Mr. Larsen and flutist Martha Cargo performed eight new works for flute and cello from their commissioned project, *Pieces of Eight*, which included Robert Sirota's *Broken Pieces*. Mr. Larsen started this project when he realized there was a lack of available repertoire for flute and cello. A graduate of Manhattan School of Music, he was the recipient of their Hans and Klara Bauer Scholarship, and the 2011 Pablo Casals Award.

Palladium Musicum, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is devoted to celebrating classical music internationally as an expression of culture, the arts and the sacred, experienced in an intimate setting. www.palladiummusicum.org