



“Ushaq” (Love, Efflorescent)
December 11, 2019, 7:30pm
La Nacional - Spanish Benevolent Society

Samuel Torjman Thomas, PhD *Founder & Artistic Director, Vocals, Oud*

Vocalists:

Laura Lassy Townsend, Fatiha Makloufi, Mehdy Fassi Fihri, Eli Bildirici, Manny Levy

Musicians:

Jeremy Brown (violin); Megumi Saruhashi (violin); Zafer Tawil (qanun); Alon Nechustan (melodica); Adam Maalouf (cello); Dror Shahaf (percussion/guitar); Jeremy Smith (percussion);

1. Tushia Hijaz Msarqi

2. ‘Et Dodim (Maya)

3. Nuba ‘Ushaq Selections

Bughya/Tushia

Ahin Ya Sultani / Torat Ya ‘Atani

4. Ana Qad Kana Li (Zidane)

5. Ya’alah, Ya’alah (Hijaz Kabir)

6. Hija Mia Mi Querido

7. La Komida La Mañana

8. Khaliuni M’ah (Sahli)

9. Nora Be Amram / Ana Dini Din Allah (Zarka)



Notes on the Program

Nuba 'Ushaq is one of the brightest of the Andalusian song suites. Based on the 'tab (melodic mode) 'Ushaq, which has a major pentatonic flavor, this nuba is associated with love. The melodies and *sana'i* (songtexts) are meant to evoke an intense love aesthetic.

Tonight we present two *sana'i* on the same melody - *Ahin Ya Sultani* in Arabic and *Torat Ya 'Atani* in Hebrew. In *Ahin Ya Sultani*, the Andalusian poet beseeches the "master" to "give me the fever." What kind of fever? A love that burns you up, inside and out. A love that cannot be contained. A love efflorescent! In *Torat Ya 'Atani*, the composer practices *tarkib* – the extremely challenging versification technique of grafting phonetics from Arabic into Hebrew – to express that the "Divine's teaching quenches my (burning) thirst." Here we have a juxtaposition of a positivist outlook on obsessive love and the remedy in spiritual terms.

The New York Andalus Ensemble draws upon the illustrious musical traditions of *al-Andalus* (the southern part of modern-day Spain and Portugal) and the *Maghreb* (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), performing in Arabic, Hebrew, Ladino, and Spanish. As inheritors of the cultural efflorescence fostered during the Golden Age of al-Andalus, we are reinvigorating the humanistic values of our ancestors as expressed in *'adab al-Arabiyya* (Arab high culture) -- encompassing a shared Muslim, Jewish, and Christian cultural landscape of music, poetry, art, philosophy, theology, and fashion. By highlighting the place of different ethnic and religious groups evident then and in our society today, we hope to build upon a legacy of cooperation, integrity, and commonality for our future.

Please visit us at: **www.NewYorkAndalusEnsemble.com** for more information about the ensemble, our mission, and joining our email list. Please also consider supporting the ensemble operations, guests, and programming with your *tax-deductible donations*, made payable to the Foundation for Iberian Music on behalf of the NY Andalus Ensemble.

We would like to thank our sponsors and friends: Foundation for Iberian Music, La Nacional (Spanish Benevolent Society), CUNY-Institute for Sephardic Studies, Middle Eastern–Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC), American Sephardi Federation, Algerian American Association of NY, Brooklyn Music School, and JAMs (Jewish Awareness through Music).

Founder and Artistic Director

Dr. Samuel Torjman Thomas has been active as an artist-scholar for two decades, integrating musical performance and research that centers on North African, Middle Eastern, and jazz traditions. He teaches music, interdisciplinary studies, and Sephardic Studies at the City University of New York (Hunter College, John Jay College, and Brooklyn College). Dr. Torjman Thomas lectures on Muslim-Jewish intercultural exchange in music, philosophy, theology, and poetics, American popular music, jazz history and improvisation, and diaspora studies. He is also the Director of Curriculum and Institutional Programming at the Brooklyn Music School. In 2012, Dr. Torjman Thomas founded the **New York Andalus Ensemble** with the mission of encouraging community members from different backgrounds -- as performers and audience members -- to come together around music to foster new experiences and relationships. Dr. Torjman Thomas is also bandleader of ASEFA, a Pan-Mediterranean chamber group performing Judeo-Islamic musics, and the critically-acclaimed Sephardi-jazz fusion ensemble ASEFA-Jazz.