



LYRCD 7392)

TURKISH SUFI MUSIC

Folk Lute of Anatolia

Ali Ekber Cicek, voice and baglama

THE INSTRUMENT

The folk lute called saz or baglama can be considered Turkey's national instrument. Saz literally means, "instrument," while the term baglama derives from the Turkish baglemek, "to tie" referring to the instrument's tied frets. In Alev-Baktasi culture, the instrument has assumed an especially powerful significance as a material representation of the Imam Ali: the resonator represents his body, the neck his sword Zulfikar, and the frets the twelve Alid imams of Shi'a Islam. Today, Alevi minstrels continued to draw poetic inspiration from the baglama that is indispensable to their compositional process.

Its pear shape, long neck, and six to twenty-six frets characterize the baglama. Built in a variety of sizes, with strings generally arranged in three sets of double courses, it can be tuned in many different ways depending on regional preference. The instrument was traditionally strummed and plucked with the fingertips or a cherry-bark plectrum, though plastic has become the norm today.

THE ARTIST

Ali Ekber Cicek is a distinguished radio and recording artist who throughout his career has remained committed to preserving his Alevi-Bektasi cultural heritage. A native of the region of Erzincan in eastern Anatolia, Cicek mastered two lutes at an early age: a large baglama with five strings (arranged in double-single-double courses) and a small three-stringed cura baglama. Both instruments had twelve frets and were tuned la-re-mi, the

typical Alevi tuning known as baglama düzeni. The cura was played using the Central Asian fingertip style, the larger baglama with a plectrum.

Cicek's reputation spread rapidly through local performances, culminating in an invitation to appear on Ankara radio at age 13. After joining Istanbul Radio in 1964, both as a solo artist and ensemble musician, he assimilated many of the different regional styles of Turkey. Cicek then explored the vast technical, tumbrel, and harmonic potential of his instrument by reworking his personal repertoire. Eventually, he evolved a uniquely innovative and virtuosic style while paying respect to traditional idioms. His subtle artistry and magnetism have captivated audiences in Europe, the United States, and Australia.

The sections on this album demonstrate Cicek's capacity to move with ease between different levels of musical expression. The delicate resonance of the tree-stringed cura (Side B, Bands 1-3) contrasts significantly with the full-bodied sonorities and unique plucking and strumming patterns on the larger, 24-fret baglama, with its eight strings arranged in triple-double-triple courses, tuned in the popular bozuk pattern (la-re-sol). Free rhythm improvisations (acis) precede a number of the pieces.

Cicek has raised the status of folk music with his brilliant composition Haydar (Track 9), inspired by 20-century Bektasi poetry and traditional Alevi melodies from the Malatya area. In the instrumental prelude, the artist creates a multi-dimensional effect with complex rhythmic patterns and innovative plectrum strokes. Haydar exemplifies Cicek's efforts to communicate spiritual values through music. In the words of the artist: "As fellow companions in this journey called life, we must reconcile our differences of belief, custom, and philosophy, by remembering that we are unified by one God."

ANNOTATED TRACKS

1. Hey Erenler Akil Fikir Eyleyin (Kul Hüseyin, 17th c.) - 4:17

True men of God; join in celebrating the Believer's faith, the coming together of the New Testament of Jesus, and the Koran of Mohammed.

Meter: 7/8 (3+2+2)

2. Yol Icinden, Yol Ararsan (Pir Sultan Abdal, 16th c.) - 5:59

If you seek the origins of the path, its philosophy, strength, and illuminating light, look to Mohammed and Ali, united as one.

Meter: 4/4

3. Ismini Sevdigim, Saqdetli Dostum (Kul Veli, 19th c.) 5:59

As I burn and become ashed from this all-consuming love,
I can only blame the friend, who revels in causing my insanity.

Meter: 7/8 (3+2+2)

4. Böyle İkrar İlen, Böyle Yolunan (Traditional, from the region of Erzincan) - 4:56

Despite your empty promises and artful tactics, I don't need you, aloof and unattainable friend! Approaching total ruin, I resist by abandoning the struggle and exclaiming: "let's

go straight home, heart!”
Meter: 10/8 (3+3+2+2)

5. Dered Derman Arariken (Traditional) 3:18

In the pursuit of a solution to my problem, I realized that the answer was within the problem.

Meter: 10/8 (3+3+2+2)

6. Yandi Yürek, Yar Elinden

(Nesimi, 17th c.; learned from Sadik Doganay, Tokat) - 5:57

Separation from the Beloved caused my heart to burst into flames. The wound, I soon discovered, could e cured by none other than myself.

Meter: 7/8 (3+2+2)

7. Güül Yüzlu Sevdigim, Nemden Icinden (Pir Mehmed, 19th c.) - 5:57

Show yourself to me, my Beloved with the face of a rose.

Meter: 5/8 (2+3)

8. Ilahi Dostum Bagina (Traditional) - 4:21

Go to the garden, my divine Beloved. The nightingale wants to see you, to burn and turn into ashes in your presence.

Meter: 7/8 (2+2+3)

9. Haydar: On Dort Bin Yil Gezdim, Pervanelikte (Asik Sidki, 20th c.) - 7:39

I traveled around for 14,000 years in the guise of a moth, and found my name in a state of ecstasy. At the gathering of the Forty, I joined the inner circle.

Meters: 9/8 (2+2+2+3), 9/8 (2+3+2+2), 10/8 (2+3+2+3)



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