

East of the River

SAHEL
West meets West

Nina Stern and Daphna Mor, winds
Kane Mathis, kora
John Hadfield, percussion



Known for their brilliance in connecting diverse musical cultures, celebrating unique qualities and common threads, **East of the River** shines in a new program featuring traditional Mandinka kora music woven together with instrumental music of 14th century western Europe.

The Kora -a 21-string harp - is one of the most iconic instruments of the Mandinka people of Sub-Saharan West Africa. The kora continues to be played by the bards of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, and Mali, modern day countries that comprise the land mass of the former Mandinka Empire which had its height in the 12th century.

The first written account of Mandé music was by the 14th century Moroccan explorer and scholar, Ibn Battuta, who visited the court of Mali in 1355. He describes women singers, balafons and plucked string instruments. The kora was specifically mentioned for the first time by the Scottish explorer Mungo Park in his book “Travels in the Interior District of Africa, published in 1799.

Evocative and transporting, **SAHEL** escorts the listener to another time and place via the dazzling, dreamlike qualities of this extraordinary music, swirling with the lively sounds of recorders, percussion, and kora, played expertly by North America’s leading interpreters of this mesmerizing repertoire.

Program

La Manfredina	Anonymous Italian, 14 th century
La Quarte Estampie Royale	Anonymous French, 14 th century ms. “Chansonnier du Roi” Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
N’Sumbu Jarabi	Kane Mathis Traditional Mandinka arr. by Kane Mathis
Mansa Musa	John Hadfield
English Estampie	Anonymous English, 14 th century
Serifu Sidi Sori	Kane Mathis Traditional Mandinka arr. by Kane Mathis

East of the River was founded by internationally renowned recorder players Nina Stern and Daphna Mor. The project explores gems of the European classical repertory together with haunting and virtuosic melodies of traditions to the East, arranged and interpreted by musicians whose backgrounds include classical, jazz and world music. Together they create the unique blend that is East of the River.

Stern and Mor each have impressive careers as soloists and chamber music players and have appeared as a duo with groups as varied as The New York Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke's and world music ensemble Pharoah's Daughter and in venues including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and the Music Before 1800 concert series. In East of the River they collaborate with acclaimed kanun virtuoso Tamer Pinarbasi, Balkan violin sensation Jesse Kotansky, Yo Yo Ma's "Silk Road Ensemble" percussionist Shane Shanahan, and Oud and Kora player Kane Mathis percussionist John Hadfield and others.

The group has performed at venues including Bargemusic, Joe's Pub, and Le Poisson Rouge, on concert series such as Early Music Now (Milwaukee), San Francisco Early Music Festival, The Academy of Early Music (Ann Arbor), and The Five Boroughs Music Festival and on many university campuses. Festival appearances include Connecticut Early Music, Madison Early Music, and Indianapolis Early Music. East of the River was invited to create a special solstice concert for the prestigious PEAK Performances at Montclair State University and has been invited for three consecutive years to perform for WQXR/WNYC's 'Live at the Greene Space'.

Both highly regarded for their educational initiatives, Stern and Mor have made outreach to the community and musical education a centerpiece of the East of the River mission. When traveling to perform, the group is eager to reach out to the local community by engaging in workshops and performing in schools, community centers, and cultural organizations.

BIOGRAPHIES

Nina Stern (recorders and chalumeau) has carved a unique and astonishingly diverse career for herself as a world-class classical clarinetist and recorder player. She performs widely as a soloist and as a principal player with the finest orchestras including The New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia Baroque, Apollo's Fire, Opera Lafayette, The American Classical Orchestra, and New York City Opera. She has recorded for Erato, Harmonia Mundi, Sony Classics, Newport Classics, Wildboar, Telarc, and Smithsonian labels. Nina Stern's latest projects include performances and recordings of traditional music of Eastern Europe, Armenia, and The Middle

East, as a soloist, and with her ensembles Rose of the Compass and East of the River (Daphna Mor, co-director.) Recently, Rose of the Compass has collaborated annually with the conductor Kent Tritle and the Choir of St. John the Divine in creating programs for the "Great Music in a Great Space" concert series at the Cathedral. That collaboration resulted in the recent release of the album "The Four Quarters of Jerusalem" on the Pro Organo label. Also in 2015, Stern

released a solo album "Amaryllis", with percussionist Glen Velez, for MSR Classics. Ms. Stern was appointed to the faculty of Juilliard's Historical Performance program in 2012 and has served

on the faculties of the Mannes College of Music, the Civica Scuola di Musica (Milan), and Oberlin Conservatory. The founder and Artistic Director of S'Cool Sounds, an award winning music education project in New York City public school classrooms, she has traveled throughout the U.S., in Europe, and in East Africa to introduce her innovative instrumental program to school children and their teachers. (www.ninastern.com)

Daphna Mor (recorders, voice, ney) has performed throughout Europe and the United States as both a soloist and ensemble player. Mor's "astonishing virtuosity" (*Chicago Tribune*) has been heard in solo recitals in the United States and Europe. She has performed as a soloist with the New York Collegium, the New York Early Music Ensemble and Little Orchestra Society, and as a member with the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Apollo's Fire, Piffaro, The Newberry consort, and many more. Mor was awarded First Prize in the Settimane Musicali di Lugano Solo Competition and twice at the Boston Conservatory Concerto Competition, and has appeared in a duo with Joyce DiDonato on the singer's promotional tour for the album *In War and Peace*. Devoted to

new music, *Mor has recorded on John Zorn's Tzadik label, and has performed the world premiere of David Bruce's Tears, Puffes, Jumps, and Galliard with the Metropolis Ensemble. In 2016 she was commissioned to co-composed and performs live WAVES- a dance piece for Carolyn Dorfman Dance for recorders, Cello, and a Beat boxer. Also active in the world music community, Mor has performed in festivals and on stages worldwide, including New York's Summer Stage and Munich's Gasteig. She can also be heard on Sting's album If On A Winter's Night for Deutsche Grammophon. Mor serves as the Music Director of Beineinu, a New York initiative dedicated to the modern cultivation of Jewish culture, and is a performer and teacher of liturgical music of the Jewish diaspora. Daphna is co director, together with Nina Stern of the ensemble East of the River. She leads programs for the Education Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

www.daphnamor.com

As a percussionist, **John Hadfield's** dedication to music has taken him from his native Missouri to concert halls and clubs across the world. His ability to cross genres has allowed him to appear with a broad range of ensembles and artists, including: Yo-Yo Ma, The Silk Road Ensemble, The Saturday Night Live Band on NBC, and Kinan Azmeh's City Band. He has collaborated on more than 80 recordings as a guest artist, including the GRAMMY award winner Yo-Yo Ma and Friends, Songs of Joy and Peace (SONY BMG 2008). He has also released two records of his own compositions: The Eye of Gordon (2008) and Displaced (2010). In his work, he seeks to combine a variety of musical styles, including, but not limited to, jazz, classical western music, Carnatic music, and electronic music, to develop compositions that integrate improvisation and structure. John Hadfield's work has received significant critical acclaim. Time Out New York has noted: "John Hadfield's percussion is so impeccable" and Modern Drummer featured Hadfield in 2016. In a review of John's record Displaced, Downtown Music Gallery founder Bruce Lee Gallanter has stated that "[w]hat makes this special is that Mr. Hadfield knows how to use percussion in a more organic way that rarely deals with any sort of (logical or overused) beats, yet the music remains consistently fascinating throughout." John Hadfield currently serves on the Jazz faculty of New York University, where he teaches drum set and the World Percussion Ensemble. www.jhadfield.com

Kane Mathis (Kora) Performing on Turkish Oud and the 21-string Mandinka Harp, Kane Mathis renders compelling interpretations of these traditional music. Years of study with generous masters have given Kane a rare opportunity to share these traditions with other cultures. Kane's Oud study began with Mutlu Torun of the I.T.U. conservatory in Istanbul and continued with 5 and a half years of courses with Oud virtuoso Münir Nurttin Beken. As a Kora player Kane began taking trips to The Gambia, West Africa in 1997 and has continued rigorous study of the Mandinka Kora. Over the past ten years his performances have earned him recognition by the Gambian president, The Gambian minister of culture, and both national television and radio of The Gambia. His Teachers are Malamini Jobarteh and Moriba Kouyate of The Gambia. The Jobarteh family remain one of The Gambia's most important musical legacies. Tata Din din Jobarteh, Pa Bobo Jobarteh, and Siffai Jobarteh are the families current most visible exponents touring the world. Since completing his study Kane has been sought after as a soloist and accompanist internationally on both instruments. As a composer Kane is generating new works for both instruments as well as experimental work for electronic fixed media and for film . Kane is currently based in Brooklyn, New York.