

Brandeis University Intercultural Residency Series

2005-2006

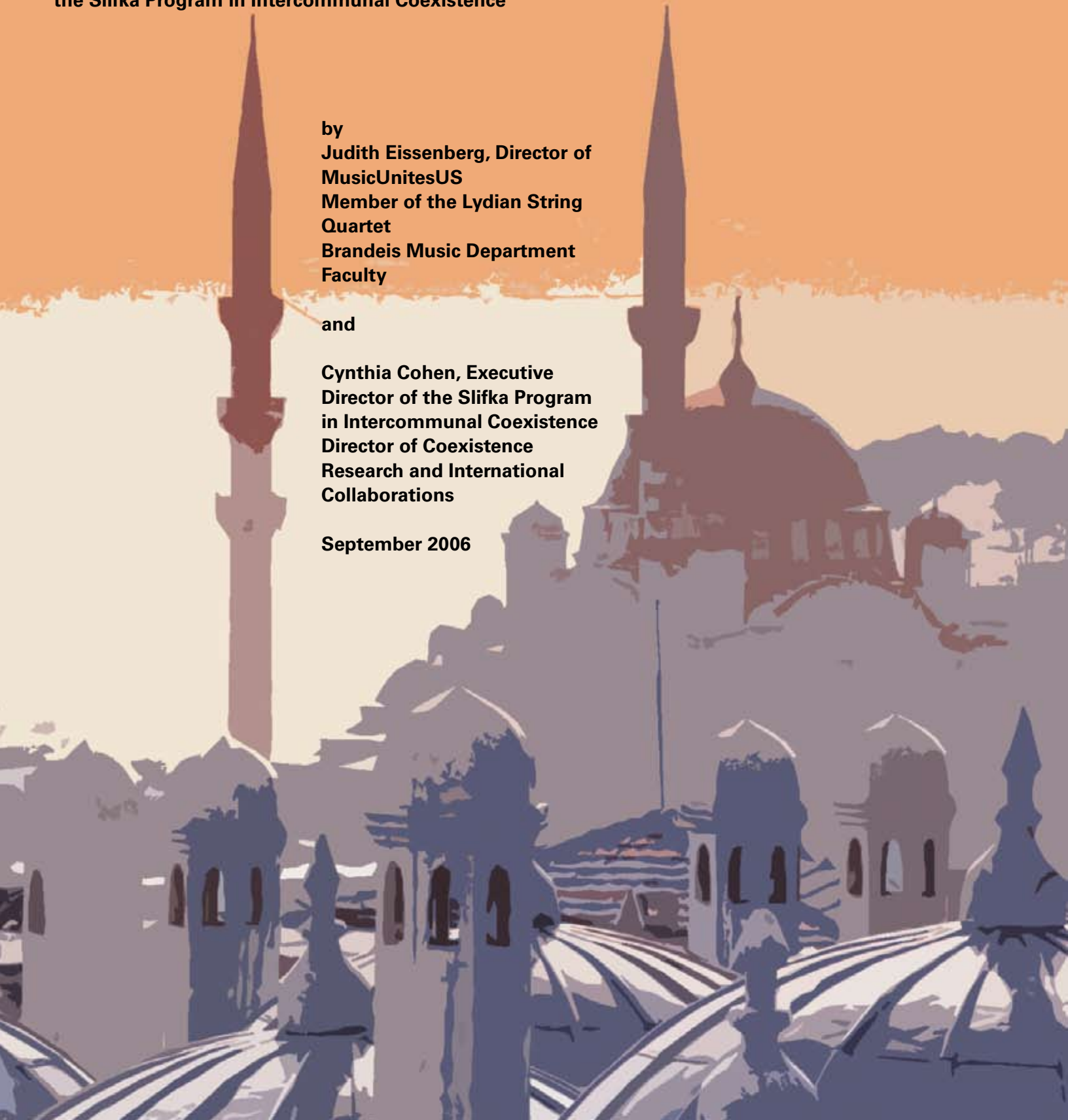
A program of MusicUnitesUS in partnership with
the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence

by
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MusicUnitesUS
Member of the Lydian String
Quartet
Brandeis Music Department
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and

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Research and International
Collaborations**

September 2006





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Assessment Report

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Intercultural Residency Series 2005-06 Brandeis University

A program of MusicUnitesUS
in partnership with the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence

■ Introduction

In the 2005-06 academic year, Brandeis University launched the Intercultural Residency Series (ICRS). It is a bold and expansive initiative that aims to engage members of the Brandeis community in learning about and experiencing diverse cultures through interacting with artists and witnessing artistic expression at the highest levels of excellence.

In its inaugural year, the series featured the Yuval Ron Ensemble and Sol y Canto. The Yuval Ron Ensemble is a group of world-class musicians of Armenian, Jewish-Israeli, Palestinian-Israeli and American background. They perform original compositions that incorporate elements of early liturgical music from the Jewish religion, the Armenian Christian church and the Sufi tradition of Islam. The ensemble celebrates the commonalities among peoples who often perceive each other as enemies; it emphasizes the unity of humanity. Sol y Canto performs the music of Latin America; in this instance, it focused in particular on the music of the nueva canción tradition. This musical tradition comprised a form of resistance to the extreme human rights

abuses that characterized the political landscape of several Latin American countries in the 1970s and 1980s. More than music about struggle, the nueva canción tradition exemplifies how music itself is sometimes a form of resistance.

The 2005-06 series was co-chaired by Judith Eissenberg, Founder and Director of MusicUnitesUS, a member of the Lydian String Quartet and of the faculty in the Brandeis Department of Music; and Dr. Cynthia Cohen, Executive Director of the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence and Director of Coexistence Research and International Collaborations. As co-chairs, we realized that the first year of the ICRS should be thoroughly documented and assessed, so that we could learn as much as possible about the strengths and limitations of our first effort. We applied to the Theodore and Jane Norman New Research/Scholarship Fund for resources to document and assess the residencies, and to share our learning and our findings with the Brandeis community and ICRS supporters.



**Sol y Canto performs
for students in the
Waltham Public
Schools as part
of the 2005-06
Brandeis Intercultural
Residency Series.**

Purpose of report

This report is the outcome of that documentation and assessment process. We have attempted to be as candid as possible, so that both the accomplishments and the shortfalls of our first effort can inform subsequent residencies. We hope that this report will also be helpful to the members of the ensembles who participated in the ICRS, and to those on other campuses and in other communities who are planning similar programs. The evaluation report includes:

- A description of the evaluation process
- An assessment of the 2005-06 Intercultural Residency Series
- Reflections
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

Hard copies of the full documentation with all appendices can be found in the office of the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence.

The Intercultural Residency Series includes an Education Outreach Program for public school students and teachers in Waltham called MusicUnitesUS (MUUS). MUUS links the arts to the ongoing social studies curriculum. Teachers are provided with lesson plans written by MUUS that connect to education programs that the ICRS artists prepare. Grade levels are chosen (according to curriculum schedule) to attend performances on the Brandeis campus. For the purposes of this document, we include only evaluation of events that were intended for members of the Brandeis community, with many open to the public. Separate documentation and evaluation of the MUUS Education Outreach Program, in partnership with the Waltham Public Schools, may be found in the Brandeis Music Department by contacting Director Judith Eissenberg.

■ Description of evaluation process

At the outset of the residency series, our theoretical and philosophical questions were:

- To what extent does music represent a medium for communication across barriers of language and cultural difference?
- How can engaging with music—as composers, performers, audience members, critics and producers—strengthen the sensibilities that are required for robust coexistence and peace?
- How can we hold conflict and dissonance in our communities with the same sense of balance, beauty and vitality that artists value in their work?
- How can experiences of music contribute to the understanding of other cultures and to the reciprocal re-humanization among people or groups that have become alienated from each other by virtue of violence or long-standing dynamics of oppression?
- How can music contribute to other aspects of peacebuilding and coexistence work, such as supporting people to mourn losses, empathize with others' suffering, address injustices, confront painful history and imagine a new future?
- How can we preserve the ideal of great art while we explore the usefulness of cultural work in strengthening communities and facilitating communication across differences?

Before the academic year began, we identified a set of goals for the series that we were interested in exploring in light of the residency activities. We articulated our goals in this way:

- Members of the Brandeis community will be engaged in artistic and cultural experiences of the highest quality.
- Members of the Brandeis community will learn about the world's cultures and develop deeper appreciation of their expressive forms. We aim to counteract stereotypes, deepen people's understanding of both similarities and differences, and stimulate a sense of wonder.
- New relationships and collaborations (across differences in religion, culture, political convictions and university status) will develop through the residencies. For most participants, residencies will put people in proximity to others; for those involved in leadership roles, we hope that new relationships will form.
- Students will provide leadership to aspects of the residencies.

- Students and others involved in fields related to coexistence will develop an appreciation for the potential contribution of the arts and cultural work to peacebuilding efforts.
- For people already engaged in dialogue, the residency will provide opportunities and open possibilities for deeper engagement.

In order to gather data to help us assess our progress towards our goals and to answer these questions, we created a multifaceted documentation process, including the following elements:

- Observation/field notes by research assistants and co-chairs
- Focus groups (student, faculty/staff/administrator)
- Classes' written reports and in-class discussions (Peace, Conflict, and Coexistence Studies, Coexistence and Conflict) and the ongoing "Arts Unlocks the Ethical Imagination" conversation group, composed of individuals already committed to thinking about arts and social transformation
- Pre- and post-session surveys distributed to faculty members hosting open class sessions as part of the residency
- Videotape of events, interviews and transcripts of those tapes, provided by Progressive Pictures (www.progressivepictures.com), documentary filmmakers creating a film on the Yuval Ron Ensemble
- Written reflections on the residency from leaders of residency ensembles

The co-chairs wrote a detailed summary of each event and a thorough review of logistics. These can be found attached to the body of the full report. We assessed the extent to which we met our goals, the factors that contributed to our successes and the obstacles that we encountered that were limiting factors. We synthesized our learning and our recommendations; they are outlined in this evaluation and described in more detail in the full documentation report in the Slifka Program office. We engaged in and documented stimulating conversations about the theoretical and philosophical questions that animate our own commitment to this work; we imagine extending, deepening and expanding these conversations and crafting our thoughts in reflective and creative works as the residency series evolves.

■ Assessment of the 2005-06 Intercultural Residency Series

We believe that the inaugural year of the Intercultural Residency Series can be considered a strong success. It met a number of our original goals and it animated portions of our community, engaging public school children, members of the Brandeis community and people from surrounding towns with artists and expressive forms of diverse cultures. There were, as would be anticipated in the first year of such a complex program, several shortfalls and missed possibilities. We acknowledge these as opportunities for learning and as challenges to strengthen the program in subsequent years.



**Rosi Amador of
Sol y Canto**

■ Overview of events

Taken together, the two residencies included 38 “events,” including:

- performances (10)
- facilitated conversations (12)
- workshops, open classes and lecture/demonstrations (9)
- participatory events (3)
- film screenings (3)
- art exhibition (1)

These events attracted approximately 2,500 individuals, some of whom attended multiple sessions.

Included in this figure are over 800 students and their teachers in the Waltham Public Schools; Brandeis students, faculty, staff members, administrators and alumni; and members of the Brandeis community and the general public. Thousands of others were aware of the residency, through websites, on- and off-campus publications and on-campus publicity.

Participating university departments and programs:

The following departments and programs were involved in various ways, including planning, open classes, panel discussions, etc.

- Anthropology
- Coexistence and Conflict
- Latin American and Latino Studies
- Music Department
- Near Eastern and Judaic Studies
- Peace, Conflict and Coexistence Studies
- Religious Studies
- Romance and Comparative Literature
- Sociology
- Women’s and Gender Studies

Off-campus partnerships:

- Waltham Public Schools

Sponsorship:

The Intercultural Residency Series received support in funding, leading events and publicity from the following sponsors:

- Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group
- Blitt Women and Peace Fund
- Catholic Student Organization
- CDQ Charitable Trust
- Christian Fellowship
- Crown Center for Middle East Studies
- Education Program
- Ellie and Friends

- Hillel at Brandeis
- Holiday Inn Newton
- International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life
- Justice Brandeis Scholars
- Kraft-Hiatt Fund
- Latin American Studies Program
- Lydian String Quartet
- Jay A. Mandel ‘80 and his life partner Jeffrey M. Scheckner
- Master of Arts Program in Cultural Production
- Music Department
- Muslim Students Organization
- Theodore and Jane Norman Fund for Faculty Research and Creative Projects
- Office of the Arts
- Office of the Chaplaincy
- Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences
- Poses Foundation
- Progressive Pictures
- Religious Studies
- Romance and Comparative Literature
- Rose Art Museum
- Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence
- Theater Arts
- The Waltham Community Foundation
- Women’s Studies Research Center

Assessment of progress toward residency goals:

In the rest of this section, we present our assessment in terms of each of the six goals outlined above, illustrated with a small sampling of quotations from participants. Unless

otherwise noted, all quotes are from Brandeis students who attended performances or participated in some way in the organization of the Intercultural Residency Series.



**Brian Amador,
Sol y Canto
musician and
songwriter**

“

The concert was a musical affirmation of such a full deep range of human emotion.”

■ Goal 1

Members of the Brandeis community will be engaged in artistic and cultural experiences of the highest quality.

This goal was achieved to a significant degree. In the opinion of audience members, the quality of the musical performances ranged from high to virtuosic/world class.

The co-chairs ranked nearly all of the lectures/presentations as very good or excellent. The pre-concert lectures, very well attended, were engaging and effective in orienting those who attended to the new instruments and sounds that they were about to encounter in the concerts. Yuval Ron Ensemble artist Najwa Gibran’s presentation and visiting lecturer and Chilean poet Marjorie Agosin’s gallery talk and poetry reading, both in the Women’s Studies Resource Center, were outstanding examples of artistic virtuosity combined with compelling presentations and engaged conversation. Sol y Canto’s initial presentation in an open session of the music department’s Introduction to World Music class meshed beautifully with the curriculum of the course.

“

I heard you sing right next to me on the floor. He had us sing the single line, the drone... That was incredible because that setting was so intimate, we could really hear the vibration of the instrument as we were chanting.”

Attendance and participation were generally strong in terms of numbers, diversity and depth of experience. Both World Music concerts sold out completely, and many events drew 50 people or more. The audience participation was striking, especially for the World Music concerts; both concerts engaged the audience in singing, dancing and spontaneous enthusiastic response. By incorporating the residencies into classes in several departments, we reached a broad cross-section of the Brandeis community, including many students and faculty members who might not have chosen to attend events on their own time. Comments by participants indicated that some of the smaller sessions – such as the session where students and faculty of the Brandeis music department improvised with members of the Yuval Ron Ensemble, and the Spirituality in Poem and Song event organized by student religious leaders – touched them in particularly deep ways.

Nevertheless, there were several missed opportunities. The first evening of the Yuval Ron Ensemble featured a storyteller (visiting artist Noa Baum) and a brief performance by the faculty ensemble, the Lydian String Quartet. Both events were exceptional performances, but the audiences were small. The Saturday afternoon mini-conference that focused on themes of religion, culture, arts and education also consisted of very strong performances, lectures/demonstrations and discussion; it too warranted a larger audience. Both of these events were “high risk” events in terms of attendance; there was no guaranteed audience, as in open sessions of scheduled courses. Our recommendations for reaching appropriately large and diverse audiences are addressed later in this report.

“

When we had the three different prayers, I think it was my first experience as a Muslim to have this glimpse of Sufism and chanting Allah next to Rabbi Lehmann.”

■ Goal 2

Members of the Brandeis community will learn about the world’s cultures and develop deeper appreciation of their expressive forms. We aim to counteract stereotypes, deepen people’s understanding of cultural similarities and differences, and stimulate a sense of wonder.

Nearly all of the residency sessions provided opportunities for appreciation of several of the world’s cultures and for nuanced understanding of similarities and difference. It is interesting to compare the approaches of the two ensembles to questions of similarity and difference. The

“

Afterwards, I talked to each one of (the Yuval Ron Ensemble members). Each one had an incredible story. Each one took a long journey to get where they were.”

Yuval Ron Ensemble aims to exemplify, through their music and their presence together on stage, the shared spiritual resources of peoples who perceive each other not only as different, but as antagonistic. Sol y Canto, by contrast, aims to illustrate the varied roots of Latin American musical traditions as well as the distinct styles of different

national expressions that too often are lumped together as one culture. At the same time, its music embodies a universal longing for justice and for freedom from poverty and oppression.

“

I heard a human breath.”

Members of the Brandeis community took advantage of opportunities to engage with our guests in both formal and informal settings. They also witnessed, some for the first time, students from our own Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group dancing together and enjoying each other’s company. The improvisation session provided an experience of learning about the aesthetics of another culture through music, without words.

We believe that we made substantial progress toward the goals of learning about cultures, counteracting stereotypes and exploring commonalities and differences, based on comments such as the following:

“It is the hardest thing in the world to admit we are cousins. There is a possessiveness in being unique. Do we make our vision of the enemy from parts of ourselves we don’t like? It is ironic to be so close and yet so full of conflict.”

“

Music was not familiar but it felt familiar. It was ancient; it felt very basic to life, something very human.”

■ Goal 3

New relationships and collaborations (across differences in religion, culture, political convictions and university status) will develop through the residencies. For most participants, residencies will put people in proximity to others; for those involved in leadership roles, we hope that new relationships will form.

We noted three different levels of contact across differences in religion, culture, political convictions and university status: proximity, interchange and collaboration.

1. In the concerts and most of the other events, people from all segments of the Brandeis community found themselves in pleasurable proximity with others different from themselves. We know that this proximity allowed for some meaningful exchanges; for instance, during a break in the concert, a member of the faculty/administrator focus group overheard a Jewish woman and a Muslim woman exchanging information and thoughts about fasting traditions in their respective religions.

On the same day as one of our residency events, the Crown Center for Middle East Studies held a conference that dealt with political issues in the Middle East. One attendee of this conference remarked on the impact of following the conference with the residency:

"I really liked it. The conference was about Palestine and the road ahead: Israel and Palestine, about countries, regimes, governments, all institutions. At times, I was thinking, 'This is so clinical, dehumanized.' It was not talk about day-to-day people, what they do. The juxtaposition of walking out of the conference into the Atrium, a lot of audience participation... that was the human side. I really felt as if I became immersed in what we talked about - here is the experience, experience the life of the mind, this was it."



Yuval Ron, musician and composer

2. Both residencies also provided opportunities for meaningful interchanges – both in conversations and artistic processes such as improvising and dancing. The focus and conversation groups we organized before and after the Yuval Ron Ensemble residency facilitated conversations among members of the campus community who reported rarely, if ever, reflecting on issues together. The student focus groups brought together students of different interests (not only Muslim, Christian and Jewish students, but also politically-inclined students with those who are oriented toward spirituality). Members of the arts and academic faculties talked together about the significance of the arts on campus and, more broadly, the role of the arts in society and the kind of knowledge afforded by engagement with the arts.

“

There was a kind of knowledge about the ways cultures operate together over a much larger place of space and time.”

3. Several ongoing collaborations were also initiated through ICRS, mostly involving the artists themselves. For instance, the Lydian String Quartet, Brandeis University's resident ensemble, has commissioned the Yuval Ron Ensemble to compose a new piece for the quartet. Brian Amador of Sol y Canto undertook new research in the nueva canción movement specifically in preparation for this residency, and he collaborated with Professor Michael McGrade, faculty member in the Music Department, on the ensemble's class presentation. The Sol y Canto residency led to a collaboration between the Lydian String Quartet and the ensemble, with new arrangements of songs, a public performance in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and an ongoing relationship. As a result of this relationship, and in keeping with the Lydian String Quartet's mission of diverse programming, the quartet created a five-year project ("Around the World in a String Quartet") beginning in the spring of 2007. Collaborations were developed between faculty and students from Brandeis and other universities, and Brandeis student clubs with artists.

This kind of collaboration extended beyond the physical boundaries of the Brandeis campus. For example, storyteller Noa Baum collaborated with Imad Abu-Khishek, visiting Brandeis from Al-Quds University, to plan for performances in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Across campus, the new ICRS planning committee, launched in the spring of 2006, represents a collaboration among members of the faculty and administration (with students joining in the fall of 2006) who will cooperate across disciplines to plan and shape residencies in upcoming years.

The residencies bring the arts and academic inquiry into relationship in a mutually supportive way, illustrating how each can inform and enrich the other. In addition, the opportunities offered by ICRS support the Brandeis Music Department's expanding curricular goals.

Interest in the residency series also generated new relationships off-campus: speaking opportunities with the National Docents Association, Chamber Music America, Massachusetts Cultural Council and Brandeis's own faculty-in-the-field program.

As the ICRS matures and develops structures for planning and assessment, we imagine its ability to facilitate new relationships and collaborations will grow.

“

Music has the power to inspire even if lyrics are not understood. The combination of Lydian String Quartet with Sol y Canto suggests the many combinations of different cultures working together peacefully, with fantastic results.”

■ Goal 4

Students will provide leadership to aspects of the residencies.

Our efforts to involve Brandeis students in planning aspects of the residencies began in the spring of 2005, when we consulted with student leaders of campus Jewish, Muslim and Christian religious organizations. We were not able to provide the sustained support that this group needed to jointly plan an event, and as it turned out, just one student played a significant part in planning one event during the Yuval Ron Ensemble residency, by conferring with Yuval Ron on the session's format and title. Our efforts to enlist the Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group to host a post-concert conversation or other event were not successful; however, individual members of this group did participate in many reflective conversations.

Nevertheless, students did play a number of critical roles in these two residencies. Two sociology Ph.D. students worked as paid research assistants for the Yuval Ron Ensemble residency, documenting sessions, preparing and analyzing survey data, and writing up a preliminary research memo to the co-chairs. The 13 students in COEX 250: The Arts of Building Peace conducted a creative outreach campaign for the Sol y Canto residency, including staging a mock concert at a busy campus crosswalk and distributing fliers to Hispanic businesses and agencies in Waltham. In the Atrium and the World Music Concerts, students initiated participatory dancing and in this way took the lead in animating audiences.

The pre- and post-residency focus groups provided opportunities for students to engage in thinking about the possibilities and challenges inherent in the residency series from the perspective of the whole community's needs. Our intention was to invite students into the kinds of conversation needed by those in leadership roles, thus facilitating the development of their capacities for leadership. By engaging students as stakeholders, we were inviting them to take the lead in recruiting others to participate in the residency and to help shape the residency through their contributions and conversations.

Several of the students who were involved in these ways in the 2005-06 residencies signed up to join the planning committee in 2006-07. We welcome their input in the shaping of events, conducting outreach and participating in the assessment. Also during the 2006-07 academic year we hope to engage students in selecting the residency groups for 2007-08; we imagine that this might be key in enlisting their strong leadership in overall residency design.



Students from the Brandeis Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group dance with Yuval Ron Ensemble during the Atrium concert.

“

It's inevitable, as much as the ensemble tries, that the audience automatically assumes that we have some political message.”

- [A residency artist]

■ Goal 5

Students and others involved in fields related to coexistence will develop an appreciation for the potential contribution of the arts and cultural work to peacebuilding efforts.

The 2005-06 ICRS accomplished this goal only in part. We were excited by the prospect of linking with a politically-oriented conference on the Middle East that was taking place the same day as an ICRC event. We were unable to make the most of this connection, in part because of scheduling changes and in part because the basis for this collaboration was not sufficiently articulated or embraced by everyone involved.

Another opportunity was missed when Yuval Ron spoke at a Peace, Conflict and Coexistence Studies class. In contradiction to our goal of bringing the arts into relationship with political discourse, we neglected to ensure that music would be incorporated into that session.

In the politically charged context that surrounds the cultural interface at the core of the Yuval Ron Ensemble residency, while the musical performances evoked the highest praise, the lectures and verbal presentations elicited mixed reactions. The ensemble's theme of "oneness" and "commonalities" was challenged by politically engaged members of the community, who wanted, as a counterpoint, acknowledgement of difference and inequity as well.

“

Yuval spoke most of the time. It was his group. But it was also a multi-ethnic group, and the other voices were not heard.”

“

Yuval never mentioned the word 'Palestinian,' and he introduced the debke as an Israeli dance!”

These challenges led us to understand the larger role we need to play in facilitating public presentations and in arranging in advance for a multiplicity of voices to be heard. Our recommendations below reflect these thoughts as well.

Members of the Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group attended many of the Yuval Ron Ensemble residency events and were interviewed by the filmmakers following the residency. Their comments indicate thoughtful reflection on the transformative power of music and the relationship between art and politics:

“Music is a good model for dialogue, with its distinct lines, groups, identities existing together... making harmony.”

“Music is not political... [but] music can be political. Music doesn't make peace. Music warms people's hearts. People make peace... the people sitting around with maps and charts: even they have hearts, and hearts can be warmed... I wish our governments would open up and share artistic projects.”

“I want to tell my family, 'We're related, we're similar. We're closer than we really seem to be. Peace is possible. We can live together like cousins.' Could our similarities unite us? I could do the same thing at home that the Yuval Ron Ensemble did here. I could call up an Arab to jam. I will.”

“When I listen to music I regain some of my innocence.”

**Renato Thomas,
percussionist
for Sol y Canto**



In contrast to the reconciliation message of the Yuval Ron Ensemble, the Sol y Canto residency illustrated the role of music at a completely different stage of the conflict cycle – when oppressive dynamics are extreme, and a suppressed group needs to find a way to articulate its conditions, to mobilize people to action and to engage with the conflict in ways that inspire hope and lead toward productive, nonviolent engagement. The Sol y Canto concerts and lectures/demonstrations made this link between music and political action powerfully and consistently.

“I learned about... music [as] a catalyst of a transformational political process, of instances where music allowed oppressed or marginalized people to have their voices heard, of the terrible ways in which music can be abused to oppress and torture people.”

“On the one hand, the lyrics dealt with very painful subjects, such as social injustice, violence and interrupted lives. On the other hand, the music... was always so celebratory. As artists, we are still ‘taught’ about what is ‘good’ Art and what is ‘bad’ Art. I had to take a step back and realize that the music they were playing was Art.”

During this residency, in the panel discussion on Music and Poetics as Political Action, students and others involved in the fields of peace studies, conflict resolution, coexistence and others learned about how art contributes to cultural work, political awareness and action, and how art can be used as a tool for both constructive and destructive purposes. This event emphasized the extent to which, in many societies, art is not an add-on but is an embedded part of human experience: expressing, communicating, inspiring, provoking, witnessing and more.

“

I could feel, without understanding the words, the strength of this music in telling the stories of oppression and liberation, in crying out atrocities, and most of all, in the endless love for life that refuses to be oppressed, and that is so evident in this live and sensual music.”

“

The more we can put the human face to blocks of information, the more people will open up.”

■ Goal 6

For people already engaged in dialogue, the residency will provide opportunities and open possibilities for deeper engagement.

The Yuval Ron Ensemble residency did open possibilities for deeper engagement on a variety of different questions and themes, and for many different people on campus. Interestingly, some of these took place in relation to aspects of the residency that were troubling or problematic. There were two deep, challenging and respectful conversations between the conference organizers and the artists. Two dialogue group students and one student religious leader engaged in a very powerful conversation about the interface between spirituality and politics, in the post-residency focus group. The follow-up session in a Peace, Conflict and Coexistence Studies class, where members of the class processed their frustrations with the lecture that they heard, was an opportunity for deeper engagement on issues related to power dynamics and the relationship of art and politics.

Following the Yuval Ron Ensemble residency, an ongoing discussion group called “Art Unlocks the Ethical Imagination,” made up of artists and members of the Brandeis community, met to share responses to the residency. The conversation ran deep and took many unusual and unexpected turns.

“I like the mystery about not knowing the words. The purity of sounds are more powerful to me, instead of exactly what was said. I felt exalted, empowered.”

“It is tragic how our impression of the Arabic, Islamic world is becoming really puritanical.”

“In the improvisation session, it was like I heard someone imagining out loud.”

“With such an intelligent, open, musically excellent, generous concert, I find myself wondering why it doesn’t penetrate the kind of conference that you were talking about. I wonder why those two things tend to remain split.”

“I am feeling like I am an outsider. I listen and try to make sense of it: the sounds, not knowing the language. I kept thinking of the wind blowing through the desert, and the loneliness and sadness that come with that. And the dancer and how she fit in with whole overarching themes. My first reaction was that this is so different from my cultural experiences. As the outsider - the resonance, tone - what it feels like to be an outsider to a culture.”

One of the lessons from this whole set of experiences is about the importance of opportunities to reflect, for people to share reactions, responses, questions, doubts. Because the residencies engage people from across the campus community (and beyond), we should consider structuring more opportunities for reflection and engagement both during and following the residency. Art, personal impact, community and cross-cultural understanding proved to be generative themes for reflection.



Yeghish Manukyan of the Yuval Ron Ensemble, a virtuoso of the Armenian duduk

■ Reflections

In relation to the theoretical and philosophical questions we articulated at the outset of the process, we feel that our exploration has just begun.

“

I heard two contradictory tones that coexisted.”

Conversations that touched on these questions were rich and complex, as revealed in the remarks highlighted in these pages. In addition, new questions and themes emerged before, during and after each residency. These questions will enrich, inform and shape future dialogues and programs:

- What is known, what is understood, when we witness a musical performance? How is this knowledge different from the kind of knowledge that emerges from social science inquiry? How can these two (or more) forms of knowledge interact with each other?
- What is the difference between expression through music and expression in language, when it comes to communicating across cultural and political divides?
- How does music locate us, in time and in place?
- How can we learn from artistic processes about the patience and resourcefulness required for building peace?
- What could we at Brandeis share with the artists who visit our campus from the fields of peacebuilding and coexistence?
- Is art inevitably political? What are the synergies among arts, politics and cultures? When do political agendas compromise art? What is the relationship between art and propaganda?
- What are the tensions among art, religion and education?
- What comprises artistic integrity and cultural identity in the context of cross-cultural exchange and cultural production in a globalized society?

We look forward to engaging with artists from diverse cultures and with members of the Brandeis community in future residencies, as we continue to reflect on these questions.

■ Recommendations

In the spring of 2006, Dean of Arts and Sciences Adam Jaffe called for the formation of an ICRS planning committee. This committee will play a key role in engaging different constituencies within the university community, inviting them to play a role in shaping residencies, take responsibility for aspects of it and conduct outreach. In addition, we recommend the following:

Programmatic recommendations:

- **Create planning processes that are inclusive and diverse:**
 - Invite students to participate in the residency planning committee, in processes of selecting artists, planning events, conducting outreach and evaluation
 - Include staff from Student Life offices – chaplaincy, Residence Life, etc. – on the committee
 - Continue engaged learning opportunities, such as improvisation sessions, dance workshops, studio art classes
 - Continue to reach out to student clubs for co-sponsorships of particular events
 - Continue to engage academic departments or programs as co-sponsors of residencies or residency events; co-sponsorship means that a strong correlation between residency events and ongoing curriculum is more likely and that ICRS will support the core mission of the university, integrating with and supporting the needs and interests of the community
 - Continue active integration with the Music Department classes
 - Education Outreach Program: this links the arts and social studies in the public schools, and lesson plans are now made public on the MUUS website; develop partnerships with other school systems so that visiting artists may expand their education performances during their stay

-
- Partner with graduate programs in Coexistence and Conflict and in Cultural Production to make their resources accessible to residency artists; make visiting artists aware of these resources and the depth of the community's engagement with these issues; consider whether benefits to the artists should be embraced and assessed as one of the goals of ICERS
 - **Form a search committee to establish criteria for choosing groups. Groups under consideration should demonstrate:**
 - high artistic standards
 - relationship of integrity between artists, the musical tradition and the community that gave rise to the tradition – with preference for artists who are not native to the United States, thus bringing diverse international worldviews to campus
 - diversity, with preference for groups and/or repertoire less familiar in the Boston area
 - links to social/political issues and questions of social justice and coexistence
 - experience interacting with diverse audiences, including public school students, university students and adults
 - resonance between the artist's mission and Brandeis University's mission
 - a reasonable budget
 - a workable schedule
 - **Open avenues of communication** between organizers, artists and leaders of particular events. For classes, provide opportunities well in the advance of the residency. Instructors should hear examples of the artists' work and artists should have copies of the syllabus and the class goals. When possible, create opportunities for direct interaction between instructors and artists to help align expectations and clear up any misunderstandings.
 - **Utilize multiple modes of publicity**, particularly for "high risk" events – events that do not have built-in constituencies for both attendance and sponsorship. Develop a core of built-in constituencies for classes and events, minimizing the risk of inappropriately small audiences. Make evident the relationship between each event and the residency as a whole.
 - **Create a documentation plan** that allows for assessment of events and for sharing of highlights with members of the community (and those beyond) who were not able to attend in person. The MUUS website, along with the Slifka Program's virtual resource center *Creative Resources for Coexistence and Reconciliation* and the Cultural Production websites are logical sites to post edited transcripts, summaries of discussions, samples of performances and so forth.
 - **Include an artistic component** (unless there is a compelling reason not to) in all events, including lectures. For some people, these classes or lectures might be their only encounter with the visiting artists, and we want as many people as possible to experience new cultures through the medium of music. Other forms of engagement can supplement the musical or artistic experience, but cannot supplant it.
 - **Create opportunities for all of the creative arts to be engaged in the residencies**, so that there are many entry points to the discussion of the role the arts play in society.
 - **Keep conversations dynamic and inclusive of multiple perspectives**, especially when the audience is large. For example, a small group of audience members could be invited to the front to participate in a public conversation; or questions could be collected on cards and vetted by a facilitator, town-meeting style. Other options include arranging for a panel to respond to and ask questions of presenting artists, or a facilitator with the recognized authority to moderate question-and-answer periods. The artist should always be informed in advance of how the discussion will be facilitated.

• ***Be prepared to supplement the strengths of the artists*** by engaging interlocutors, co-presenters, facilitators, etc. The ICRS demands of its artists a wide range of skills and capacities: performing for audiences ranging in age from children to adults; musical/artistic virtuosity; the ability to make conceptual links between the music and a range of political, cultural, historical, contexts. It is unrealistic to expect that every artist will excel equally in all of these areas.

• ***Address the question of language translation.*** Whenever possible, we should hire a professional interpreter. If this is not possible, look within the Brandeis community (international students, faculty, staff) and reach out to Waltham-area and Boston-area communities that connect to the languages, cultures and history related to the residency. Identify local people who might participate in planning and therefore be willing to take on community outreach as well. Non-professional interpreters need to be reminded to translate into the first person and to refrain from injecting their own opinions or responses to questions. When musicians are singing in a language other than English, the performers could synopsise the lyrics; these synopses could be supplemented by English lyrics in the concert program.

• ***Anticipate and plan for follow-up conversations*** among participants of experiential events, without in any way forcing analytic conversation or imposing it at an aesthetically resonant moment.

• ***Include an analysis of gender issues*** inherent in performance traditions as well as cultural and political context. The ICRS committee should enlist participation from members of the Women's and Gender Studies faculty, who bring this lens to conversations and events.

Logistical recommendations

- Avoid scheduling so many events that they compete with each other.
- Establish and schedule residency events no later than the spring semester of the previous academic year. Earlier and better contact will provide for deeper exploration and a fuller integration of the population and co-sponsorship of residency events.
- Make direct and ongoing contact with the artists (instead of through their management, whenever possible) so that events can be shaped more successfully, with fuller understanding of content.
- Simplify the budgeting process and the process of allocating funds from different sources.
- Create a planning schedule for each residency, including initial meetings and follow-up events, with a clear description of roles, tasks and goals. Clear objectives should be determined for each residency event, along with a method for assessing whether those objectives have been met.
- Create a document that is a general guide to successful event planning.
- Schedule a check-in with artists about technical support requirements.



Virginie Alumyan,
a musician with
the Yuval Ron
Ensemble, plays the
kanoon.

- Create relationships with organizations and institutions in New England that might also be interested in similar residencies; there could be potential for collaboration as well as cost-sharing. In particular, join the network of other universities, colleges and organizations in the region that have an interest in World Music and increase their appreciation of the links among arts, cultural work and peacebuilding.
- Expand the outside funding base to include alumni, local businesses and state and national funding organizations.
- Create a group of off-campus volunteers for fundraising, outreach, publicity, etc.
- Focus groups (pre- and post-residency) were excellent venues for interaction across disciplines, university role and status: these should be continued as part of the processes of planning for and assessing residencies, and enlisting broad participation.
- Continue to schedule pre-concert lectures, which proved to be enlightening and educative introductions to the World Music Concerts and drew large audiences, in some cases welcoming new visitors to The Rose.

“

Sometimes the real music is in the pauses and rests, after the music has ended and there is that echo, the silence.”

- Continue “satellite events,” such as the late-afternoon Atrium concerts, the film series and the exhibition of *arpilleras* that accompanied the Sol y Canto residency: these were effective in reaching larger audiences with diverse interests and deepening people’s understanding of the themes and issues implicit in the music and its cultural, historical and political contexts.

■ Conclusion

As co-chairs of the 2005-06 ICRS, we appreciate the support that this program has received from the Brandeis University community, Progressive Pictures and our other sponsors. The opportunity to extensively document and assess an arts event is a rare one, and we have learned a great deal from this process. We commit ourselves to incorporating as much of this learning as possible in future residencies, and we look forward to continuing the challenging conversations begun here.



**Najwa Gibran,
vocalist in the Yuval
Ron Ensemble**