GEORGE MGRDICHIAN & THE OUD
The oud (rhymes with good) is an instrument of Near Eastern origin, popular in North Africa, Armenia, and Turkey. It is a pear-shaped grandfather lute (al 'oud) that dates, depending on which authority you adhere to, from the 3rd century B.C. to the 7th century A.D. George Mgrdichian's instrument, the eleven strings of which are plucked with the shank of a feather from the wing of a (Turkish) eagle, has less tonal edginess and more mellowness than the modern lute and a freer, more flexible sound than the classical guitar. As Robert Shelton has said in the New York Times, "...Mr. Mgrdichian plays in evocative, doleful minor modes sprinkled with eighth and quarter tones that make the Western scale seem almost limited. Subtle, sonorous sounds in deliberate tempos meld into whirling dance figurations that display his fiery technique."

George Mgrdichian "one of the world's finest oud players", according to Mr. Shelton, has succeeded in raising the oud to concert level; in his hands, the oud, one of the world's oldest instruments, is one of the most beguiling.

Cover photo: Leonard Heicklen

For complete "Music of the World" catalog write to:
MONITOR RECORDS
10 Fiske Place, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550
NOW SOUNDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST
Featuring the OUD of George Mgrdichian
Assisted by Menachem Dworman, guitar
Moulay Ali Hafid, dumbeg / Lou Mavrogian, bass

1. Nehavend Longa (Turkish) 2:44
(Nehavend is equivalent to D minor; Longa means fast-presto)
A longa is a composition used as the finale of a musical form known as a fossil. The fossil is one of the oldest forms of Turkish music known, dating back to the 16th century. It usually opens with a prelude, then a choral section followed by individual vocal and instrumental improvisations as well as composed pieces. One mode, such as nehavend, is used for all sections from beginning to end.

2. Sultan Yega (Turkish) 5:45
This selection is said to be a favorite piece of a Sultan back in early times, especially because of the opening of the piece in the low register (yega) which he was supposedly fond of. However, the piece itself is evocative of a Sultan passing through his town in slow measured pace - then suddenly the party begins and the music catches the spirit of revelry.

3. Yesterday 1:35
Composed by John Lennon and Paul McCartney of the Beatles; chosen by George because this song has become a "classic" and he felt the soulful mood of the song fits the soulful mood of the instrument.

4. Laz Bar (Turkish) 2:25
(Black Sea Fisherman's Dance)
This dance (Bar) dates back to the Pontus Empire (88 B.C.), and was used as a tribal dance by the Laz People, who inhabited the areas of Rize, Trabzon, Giresun, Ordu, and Samsun. They can all be found in North East Turkey, bordering the Black Sea. As the fishermen dance they try to imitate the movements of the fish.

5. Chat Araban (Turkish) 4:55
(On the Shores of Araban)
A piece composed to describe the shoreline of one of the Eastern Mediterranean areas.

6. Aley Giva (Israeli) 2:00
(The Hill)
A shepherd in the Galilee section of Israel plays the flute to his flock.

7. Çaderemen Ustune (Rampi) (Turkish) 4:07
(Top of the Tent)
A song that comes from a section in Istanbul known as Sulukule, or Gypsy quarters. It is used popularly as a dance melody by female dancers.

8. Israeli Medley 3:20
A. Erev Shel Shoshanim
(Evening of the Roses)
An evening with you is like an evening with roses.
B. Cholot Mid Bar
(Sands of the Desert)
The desert sands bring warmth to the road
The evening wind passes over the hills
On the road to the mountain there is a couple walking
They are whispering to each other songs of love.

9. Marinella (Greek) 3:45
(Gypsy Girl)
This song tells of a Greek gypsy girl, Marinella - sinuous as a snake, tall as a willow, and with eyes like almonds. In the finale of this song, if you detect a familiar melody, it is the Chorale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In his musicological research, George discovered that it is believed (not without controversy) that Beethoven took this melody from an old Turkish march.

10. Take 5 2:00
(Five simply refers to the meter the piece is written in)
This lively piece was written by Paul Desmond, alto saxophonist, of the Dave Brubeck Quartet. This meter is rarely used in music of the Middle East; however, George felt the improvisatory nature of the piece lent itself beautifully to the Oud.

11. Shenez Longa (Turkish) 2:30
The description of Nehavend Longa, the first selection on this recording, applies to this piece as well. Shenez is the equivalent of A minor.

12. Sev Khavar (Armenian) 2:35
(Black Gloom)
The darkness of night is with me always
I know not the meaning of a bright day
My sorrows are so that even God above trembles
The graves are restless and the wind murmurs of sadness
Go now and tell of your sadness so that God above might hear you.
NOW SOUNDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST
Featuring the OUD of George Mgrdichian

1. NEHAVEND LONGA (Turkish) 2:44
2. SULTAN YEGA (Turkish) 5:45
3. YESTERDAY (Lennon-McCartney) 1:35
4. LAZ BAR (Turkish) 2:25
5. CHAT ARABAN (Turkish) 4:55
6. ALEY GIVA (Israeli) 2:00
7. ÇADEREMEN USTUNE (Turkish) 4:07
8. ISRAELI MEDLEY 3:20
   a) Erev Shel Shoshanim
   b) Cholot Mid Bar
9. MARINELLA (Greek) 3:45
10. TAKE 5 (Paul Desmond) 2:00
11. SHENEZ LONGA (Turkish) 2:30
12. SEV KHAVAR (Armenian) 2:35

GEORGE MGRDICHIAN, Oud
Menachem Dworman, guitar/Moulay Ali Hafid, dumbeg
Lou Mavrogian, bass
NOW SOUNDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

1. NEHAVEND LONGA (Turkish) 2:44
2. SULTAN YEGA (Turkish) 5:45
3. YESTERDAY (Lennon-McCartney) 1:35
4. LAZ BAR (Turkish) 2:25
5. CHAT ARABAN (Turkish) 4:55
6. ALEY GIVA (Israeli) 2:00
7. ČADEREMEN USTUNE (Turkish) 4:07
   (Rampi)
8. ISRAELI MEDLEY 3:20
   a) Erev Shel Shoshanim
   b) Cholot Mid Bar
9. MARINELLA (Greek) 3:45
10. TAKE 5 (Paul Desmond) 2:00
11. SHENEZ LONGA (Turkish) 2:30
12. SEV KHAVAR (Armenian) 2:35

GEORGE MGRDICHIAN, Oud
Menachem Dworman, guitar
Moulay Ali Hafid, dumbeq
Lou Mavrogian, bass

© 1996 Monitor International Corp.