

FASIL

Aisha left the camp to seek the necklace the prophet had given to her. She found it in the sand where she had walked before and hurried back.

But she found nothing where the camp had once been. The caravan had set off without her.

Light as she was the bearers of her litter had not realized her absence, now nothing and no one held promise of life anymore.



MARC SINAN
FASIL

Music by Julia Hülsmann
Libretto by Marc Schiffer

Song cycle for guitar, singer, viola, piano, double bass and drums
and free improvisations on recitations from the Koran
based on an idea by Marc Sinan and Marc Schiffer

Stereo, Audiophile highlight of the month

I believe that the sense of liberty felt by a young bird as it attempts to fly for the very first time on the edge of a cliff should have a sound – a sound that everyone would love. Just like Fasil.

Eray Aytimur, Radikal

Turkish-German guitarist Sinan turns the idea of a fasıl – a traditional Turkish suite dedicated to the Prophet Mohamed's wife Aisha – into the most fragile, elliptical jazz. Yelena Kuljic's singing has an odd, stark sensuality, while Julia Hülsmann's wonderfully fluent piano holds this featherlight confection of Eastern and Western elements together.

Mark Hudson, Daily Telegraph

The album is inspired by Marc Sinan's Armenian-Turkish-German heritage and comes to life with Julia Hülsmann's beautiful flowing motifs. It interprets suras from the Koran and Islamic mysticism, Christian humanism and Joseph Roth's artistic ethics, while combining the guitar playing technique of the Eliot Fisk pupil with the improvisatory talent of the Berlin-based rhythm section. It melds the ethereally indulgent and soulfully burgeoning vocals of Yelena Kuljic with subtle viola undertones from Lena Thies – all this against the backdrop of a neo-romantic pilgrimage to sound. ... It offers an ambitious take on intellectual and improvised music of migrants.

Ralph Dombrowski, Jazzthing

The composer doesn't even attempt to approach her subject with ostensible orientalism, instead opting to deliver introverted ,Western' music attesting to a large reservoir of inner calm that gives free reign to Marc Sinan's classical guitar, Lena Thies's viola, the haunting voice of Yelena Kuljic and, last but not least, Hülsmann's own piano trio which is at the heart of this ensemble. ... A remarkable interpretation of oriental structural principles by musicians from the worlds of jazz and classic.

Berthold Klostermann, Fono Forum

Fasil is an exceptional production in many ways: Classical guitar school meets jazz, composition meets improvisation, Muslim tradition meets Western thinking, history meets contemporary, lyrics meet music. ... Sinan is driven by the desire to build a bridge between passacaglias from Biber, Couperin and Bach and Islamic music. ... To accompany the texts – in which Schiffer interweaves passages from the Koran and Hadith, as well as ancient Persian poetry – Julia Hülsmann composed wonderful, hauntingly beautiful music.

Ulf Drechsel, rbb Kulturradio

The story of Aisha and her devout love evolves gradually, illustrated with lyrical snapshots. Here (almost) everything rhymes. Vast harmonious waves sweep the willing audience to an ornamental feast of oriental improvisations ... warm and dark, replete with promise, vulnerability and mystical depth.

Martin Wilkening, Berliner Zeitung

Fasil is the début album from the German-Turkish guitarist Marc Sinan with the renowned ECM label. This collaboration with the composer and pianist Julia Hülsmann recounts the story of Aisha – the Prophet Mohammed's big love and youngest wife. Fasil speaks of love, life's sorrows and happiness, and charts Aisha's transformation from a youthful beauty to the confidante of Mohammed and her ultimate role as a political leader.

Combined with instrumental improvisations, Julia Hülsmann's songs – which sound both familiar yet strikingly original – create an auditory experience marked by a profound gentleness and intensity that is untouched by the strictures of genre and culture. The improvisations are inspired by excerpts from Koranic recitations by spiritual singers to which Marc Sinan was exposed during his numerous visits to Turkey. Three years of fruitful collaboration gave birth to melodies that ,combine the heavy fragrance of cumin with the sweetness of apricots'.

Marc Sinan, guitar
Yelena Kuljic, vocals
Julia Hülsmann, piano
Lena Thies, viola
Marc Muellbauer, double bass
Heinrich Köbberling, drums

Idea: Marc Sinan and Marc Schiffer
Texts: Marc Schiffer
Songs and Son Taksim: Julia Hülsmann
All other compositions spontaneous

An ECM Production, released January 2009



„So let me believe / that there is a sun / shining by night /
clear and bright / that all of our suns will unite / I believe.“



The guitarist Marc Sinan, son of a Turkish-Armenian mother and a German father, has over 15 years of experience on the international concert stage.

In addition to solo concerts and chamber music projects with renowned partners such as Eliot Fisk, Jörg Widmann, Julia Hülsmann, the Turkish percussionist Burhan Öcal and the Rodin Quartet, Marc Sinan has established quite a reputation for himself as a soloist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Georgian Chamber Orchestra and others. His European concert tours have seen him take to the stage in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Turkey and Spain, followed by performances in both North and South America. As the assistant to Franz Halasz at the Augsburg School of Music, he taught one of Europe's most successful guitar classes up until 2003.

In 1998 the composer Jörg Widmann dedicated to him the commissioned work „Ent-Schwebung“ for guitar and tape, which Sinan recorded along with pieces by Robert Beaser and Toru Takemitsu with support from the Siemens Company. Since Sinan's tour „From Istanbul to Buenos Aires“ in 2002 with the percussionist Burhan Öcal, he has collaborated with musicians from various genres. For his „Livin' Swing“ project – which emerged from his work with the pianist and arranger Marc Schmolling – Sinan appeared as a soloist with Big Band backing.

February 2009 saw the release of his CD FASIL under the ECM label. His project „A Trip to Anatolia“ – a musical installation featuring 22 musicians from the Dresdner Sinfoniker and traditional Turkish musicians, as well as video documentation – will premiere at the Festspielhaus Hellerau in Dresden in October 2010.

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