

MUSICAL ROOTS

featuring

CONSTANTINOPOLE



Photo: Michel Pinault

Didem Basar, kanun

Kiya Tabassian, setar

Pierre-Yves Martel, viola de gamba

Meet Constantinople

Constantinople features Kiya Tabassian, setar, Pierre-Yves Martel, viola da gamba and Didem Başar, kanun.

Constantinople is a musical ensemble that chose the journey—geographical certainly, but also historical, cultural, and inner—as its cornerstone. It draws inspiration from all sources and aims for distant horizons. Inspired by the ancient city illuminating the East and West, Constantinople was founded in 1998 in Montreal by its artistic director, Kiya Tabassian.

Since its founding, the ensemble promotes the creation of new works incorporating musical elements of diverse musical traditions around the world, drawing from medieval manuscripts to a contemporary aesthetic, passing by Mediterranean Europe to Eastern traditions and New World Baroque. Over the course of the decade, Constantinople has created nearly 40 works and traveled to more than 140 cities in 30 countries.

Visit www.constantinople.ca to read up on all things Constantinople!

Where was Constantinople?



The city of Constantinople no longer exists but is now where modern Istanbul is.

Istanbul is the place where the ancient city of Byzantium was located, and the place where Constantine decided to build a new capital for Rome. He named it after himself, **Constantinople**.

A city that bridged the East and the West.



RESEARCH



Pick a country in the Eastern Hemisphere. Research an instrument native to that country and answer the questions below.

Country and their culture/group: _____

Name of instrument: _____

Short physical description of the instrument: _____

Listen to a recording of your chosen instrument. In 1-2 sentences, describe the sound quality of the instrument and the music it was written for.

What kind of music does Constantinople perform?

Constantinople largely performs music that we classify as **EARLY MUSIC**, as well as **WORLD MUSIC**.

Early Music

- In the history of **WESTERN** art music, early music is largely considered music from Medieval music (500–1400) and Renaissance music (1400–1600), but can also include Baroque music (1600–1750).
- Early music is the revival of "forgotten" musical repertoire and the rediscovery of old **performance practice**
- Performance practice - a historically informed approach to the performance of that music
- Early music fell out of fashion, but in the later 20th century there was a resurgence of interest in the performance of music from the Medieval and Renaissance eras

World Music

- World music is, broadly speaking, the music of the world's cultures, and is associated with **EASTERN** art music.
- Previously, "international music" had limited currency as a catchall term that ranged from tourist souvenir records to field recordings made by ethnomusicologists in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere
- **FACT:** composer Béla Bartók is widely considered the father of ethnomusicology
- Some argued that no musical style could be identified as "world music," the term was coined to bring "foreign" music closer to the mainstream of Western music.

Learn about the instruments used by Constantinople!



Kanun

A string instrument played either solo or as part of an ensemble. A Middle Eastern instrument, it has a long history, possibly descended from the ancient Egyptian harp, and is related to the psaltery, dulcimer, and zither. Played by plucking the strings either with the fingers or with flexible plectra attached to finger rings, it rests on the player's lap or on a table.

Setar

The setar is a stringed instrument popular in northern India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The word is derived from the Persian word *sehtar*, or "three-stringed." Descending from long-necked lutes taken to India from Central Asia, it flourished in the 16th - 17th centuries and arrived at its present form in the 18th century. Today it is the dominant instrument in Hindustani music.

Viola de gamba

A bowed, stringed instrument used mainly in chamber music of the 16th - 18th century. The viol shares with the Renaissance lute the tuning of its six strings and gut frets on its neck. Viols first appeared in Spain in the mid to late 15th century - early ancestors include the Arabic rebab and the medieval European vielle. Viol instruments are held between the legs like a modern cello, hence the Italian name *viola da gamba* (it. "viol for the leg").

LISTENING

Look up recordings of Constantinople from YouTube, listen to the media files from the Debut Atlantic website, or retrieve sound files on iTunes.
Listen actively and answer the following questions.

Describe characteristics of the music (was it loud? soft? fast? slow?).

Describe the mood/character of what you listened to.

Describe the particular sound qualities and timbres the instruments make.

RESEARCH

On a separate sheet of paper, name the instrument from the ensemble Constantinople and research what other instruments it is related to.

1.



2.



3.





WRITING



Pick two different styles of music, research, and listen to examples of both, and describe how the differences affect the sounds of each. Include the different instruments the styles feature, the overall mood and characters of the music, and its role in its time period.

Examples of styles to choose from: early vs. world music, classical vs. jazz, country vs. bluegrass, rock vs. pop, etc!

What are the two styles you chose?

What listening examples did you listen to? List name of piece/song and composer/artist.

Describe the differences.
