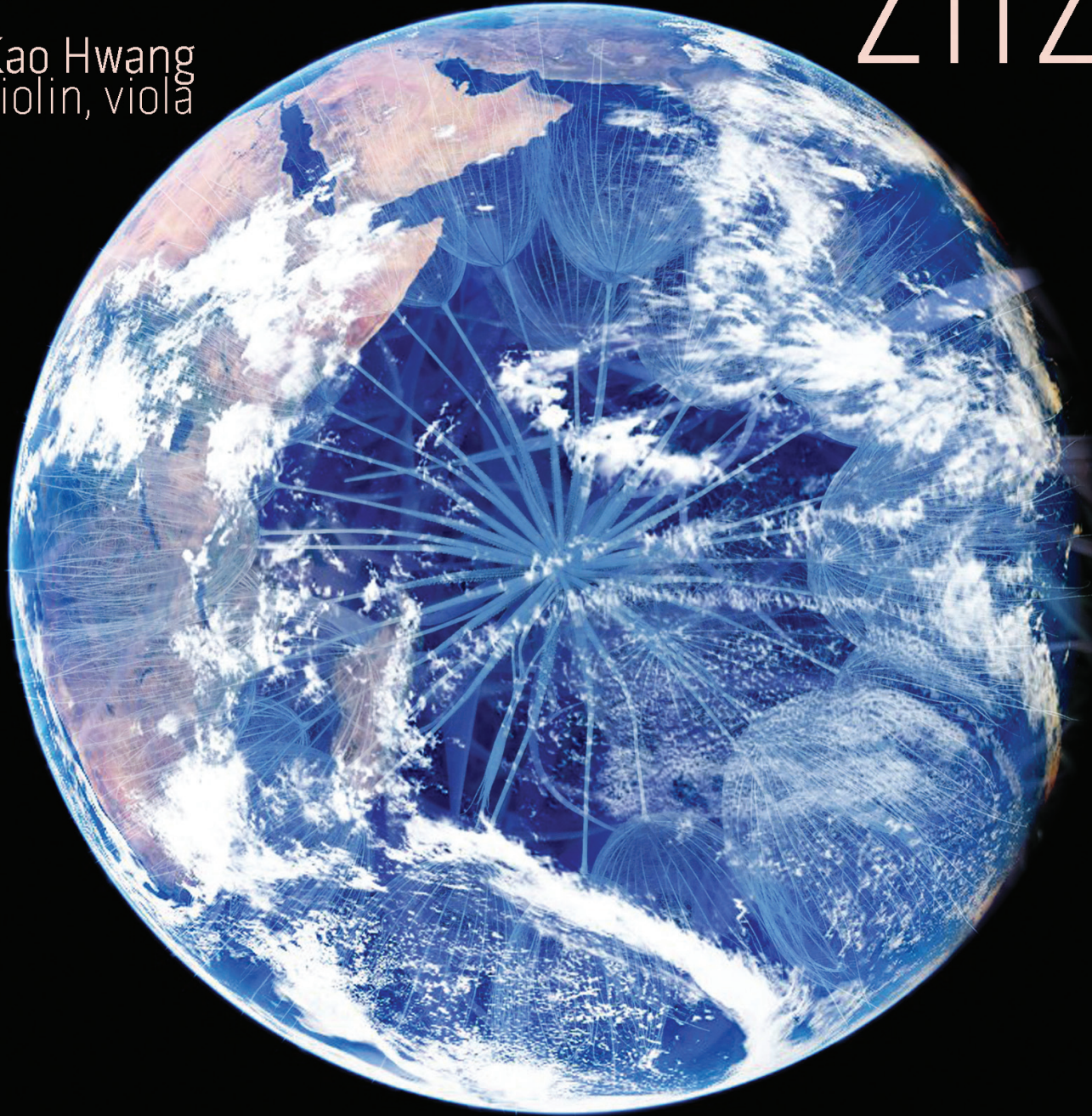


Ayman Fanous  
guitar, bouzouki

Jason Kao Hwang  
violin, viola

# zilzal



## Ayman Fanous

Guitar on tracks 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8  
Bouzouki on tracks 1, 5, and 9

## Jason Kao Hwang

Violin on tracks 2, 3, 5, 7, and 9  
Viola on tracks 1, 4, 6, and 8

1) Nilometer at Roda	8:56
2) DNA: Untranslated	2:25
3) DNA: Messenger, the Message	3:25
4) Zilzal	6:17
5) Mausoleum of Beybars the Crossbowman	9:02
6) DNA: Binding Sights	5:48
7) Lapwing	7:15
8) Darb al-Arbaeen	8:43
9) Tree of the Virgin at Matariya	12:03

— 63:56 —



### Credits

Producer: Ayman Fanous  
Recording Engineer: Sal Mormando  
Mix Engineer: Jason Kao Hwang  
Mastering Engineer: Silas Brown, Legacy Sound  
Recorded on June 6, 2011 at Kaleidoscope Sound,  
Union City, New Jersey.

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Philip Blackburn, director, design  
Chris Campbell, operations manager  
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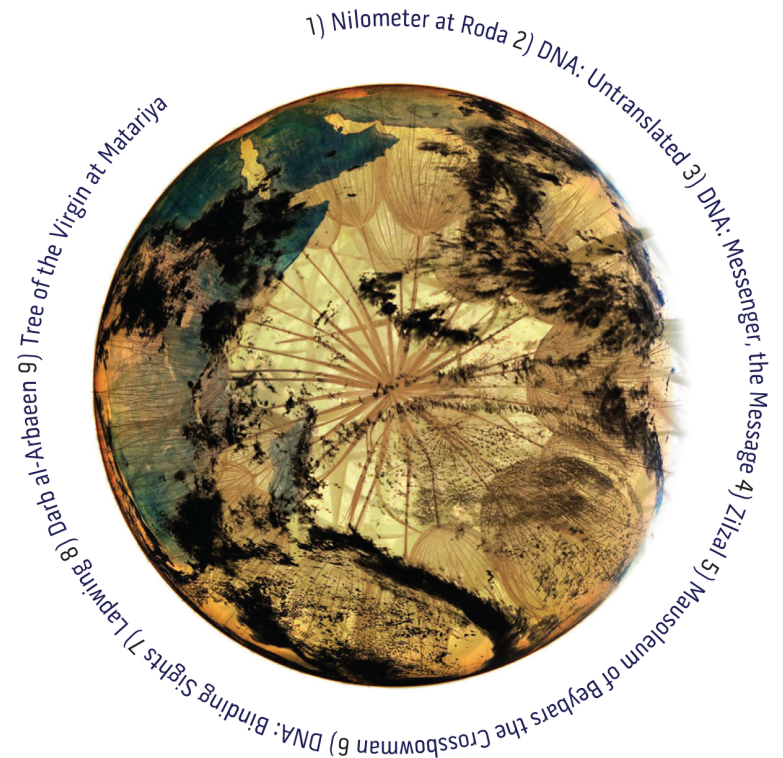
AYMAN FANOUS / JASON KAO HWANG

ZILZAL

innova 869



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I almost fell out of my chair when my dear friend and duo partner, Tomas Ulrich, read out a name from his list of musician contacts. “...Jason Hwang, 201-...” Tomas had the flu and couldn’t make our gig the following night and was helping me find someone to fill in. I had recently moved to New York from Richmond, Virginia, where I had spent long hours listening to Jason’s work at the VCU music library. As a former childhood violin student, the instrument had always been to me a symbol of pathos-in-sound - humanity in all its virtues, vanities, and complexities. Rehearsing together the next day at his home in New Jersey, he had an uncanny ability to navigate the incongruent harmonic tapestry I threw at him, a bird in flight careening and somersaulting to a hidden instinct. Our first performance together yielded strange and beautiful music. With Jason, there are no wasted notes. Everything is a bridge to somewhere. All duos have their chemistries, redundancies and tensions, constructive and destructive interferences, unpredictable alchemies and magics. This duo is one of melody as an unpredictable journey into hidden corners.

The music on this CD is the culmination of an improvisational co-language which has evolved slowly and naturally over 15 years, starting with that auspicious beginning in New York. How do the sons of Chinese

and Egyptian immigrants, growing up in dreary suburbs, make music relevant to both of them? The connections are many. The Silk Road brought the wonders of Chinese art to the Middle East in the 1200’s. Central Asia was a nexus of Islamic influence from the west and Chinese influence from the east. The same Islamic influence that brought plucked strings to Spain, birthplace of the guitar and flamenco. We were also both drawn to the subtly subversive free-jazz aesthetic – an expression of another, older and more tragic American diaspora. In many ways, this could only be American music. While I was naturally drawn to the guitar from the beginning, the bouzouki, from the first notes I ever plucked from it, was like the bell of hypnotic induction. The sound of it brings on a remembrance of ancestors, migrations, struggles, spiritual revolutions. The three tracks with bouzouki were named after places in Cairo, a city I was born in but have mostly imagined. It’s a place that has been on my mind quite a bit over the last 2 tumultuous years there. The title track *Zilzal* is the Arabic word for ‘earthquake’. The people I owe debts to on this journey are too numerous to count. I’d like to thank my wife, Eva, for creating the conditions and support that have made this music possible, as well as for taking me deeper into flamenco and its culture than I ever thought I’d go.

—Ayman Fanous

Ayman Fanous (guitar, bouzouki) was born in Cairo, Egypt but was raised in the US since age 5. He began classical violin studies at 7 but switched to the guitar at 12. He briefly studied classical guitar at James Madison University. However, he has been mostly self-taught, and has developed a trademark sound incorporating original extended techniques. He also reaches back into his Egyptian ancestry in improvisations on the bouzouki. Fanous has performed in duos with a number of leading jazz and improvisational musicians. These include cellists Tomas Ulrich and Frances-Marie Uitti, bassist William Parker, reed virtuosos Ned Rothenberg, Kinan Azmeh, and Lori Freedman, violinists Jason Hwang, Mark Feldman, and Mat Maneri, and guitarist Joe Morris. He has had a long-standing exploratory duo with harmolodic guitarist Bern Nix since 1995. Fanous’ 2007 release *Labyrinths* (Konnex), with Tomas Ulrich, was described as the “benchmark” for cello-guitar duo recordings in *Signal to Noise* magazine. Fanous has given hundreds of solo recordings, including live broadcasts on radio and television stations in the United States and Spain.



Jason Kao Hwang (composer, violin/viola) has created works ranging from jazz, “new” and world music. He recently released his octet CD, *Burning Bridge* (Innova), commissioned by Chamber Music America/ New Jazz Works, featuring Chinese and Western instruments. In 2011, he released *Symphony of Souls* (Mulatta), performed by his string orchestra Spontaneous River, and *Crossroads Unseen* (Eunonymus), the third CD of his quartet EDGE. The 2012 Downbeats Critics’ Poll voted him “Rising Star for Violin.” In 2011, EDGE toured Poland and the critics’ poll of El Intruso voted him #1 for Violin/Viola. In 2010, the NYC Jazz Record selected *Commitment, The Complete Recordings, 1981-1983*, from a collective quartet that was Mr. Hwang’s first band, as one of the “Reissued Recordings of the Year.” Mr. Hwang’s opera, *The Floating Box, A Story in Chinatown* was named one of the “Top Ten Opera Recordings of 2005” by Opera News. Mr. Hwang has received support from US Artists International, Meet the Composer, the NEA, and others. As violinist, Mr. Hwang has worked with Reggie Workman, Pauline Oliveros, William Parker, Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill and many others.