



CARNEGIE HALL presents

CITI GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS

# ROMANI MUSIC OF TURKEY

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A Program of The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall

## **ACTIVITY 1: FREEDOM AND STRUCTURE IN THE WORLD**



Citi Foundation



**CARNEGIE HALL**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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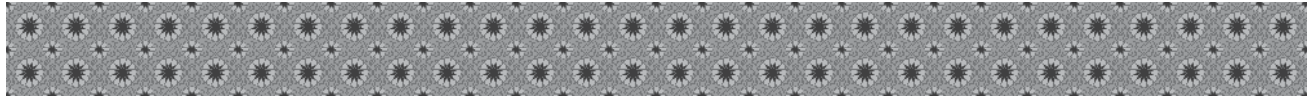
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## ACTIVITY 1: FREEDOM AND STRUCTURE IN THE WORLD

**AIM:** How are freedom and structure a part of my life?

**SUMMARY:** Students explore freedom and structure in their own lives, in the world, and in music.

**MATERIALS:** Meet the Artist Handout from Supporting Materials, Citi Global Encounters CD, Architectural Shelters Handout, Architectural Freedoms and Structures Worksheet

**TIME REQUIRED:** 45 minutes

**NYC AND STATE STANDARDS:** NYS Social Studies: 1.2, 2.3; Blueprint: Music Literacy

### MEET THE ARTIST

Introduce your students to Selim Sesler by presenting the Meet the Artist Handout from Supporting Materials.

#### Tell students:

- “Read Selim Sesler’s biography and quotations about music out loud and summarize what the artist has said on a piece of paper.”

#### Ask students:

“Based on what we know about Selim, what might his music sound like?”

Play Selim Sesler’s “Melodic Sesler” (Track 8).

#### Ask students:

“Now that you have heard the music, were your guesses right?”

Use this transition to move on to a general discussion about freedom and structure.

#### Tell students:

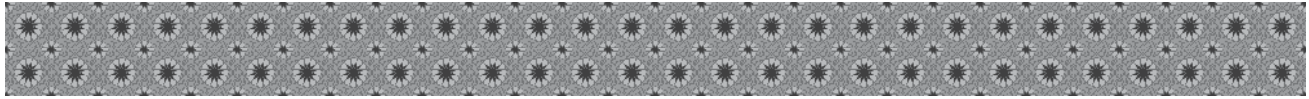
- “Selim Sesler is an expert at working with musical freedom and structure. To get to know his work, we will need to become experts on freedom and structure.”

### FREEDOM AND STRUCTURE IN THE WORLD: ARCHITECTURE

To begin creating a classroom understanding of freedom and structure, lead students through these steps.

#### Tell students:

- “Read the Architectural Shelters Handout, which details three different types of shelters.”
- “Think about how people living in these shelters might have used the same shelter in different ways.”
- “Using the Architectural Freedoms and Structures Worksheet, compare the freedoms that the inhabitants have with the structural elements of these different shelters.”



Have students—first in pairs, and then as a whole class—discuss the following questions:

- “What are some of the architectural structures we see in each image?” (For example: The camping tent uses poles, fasteners, and fabric; the igloo uses ice blocks and has an entrance tunnel; Hagia Sophia has towers and a dome.)
- “What possibilities and freedoms do the structures provide for the people who use them?” (For example: The camping tent is portable and quick to construct; the igloo can be constructed in any icy place, is safe from polar bears, and is easy to warm; Hagia Sophia allows a large group to congregate in its main space.)”

#### FREEDOM AND STRUCTURE IN POEMS

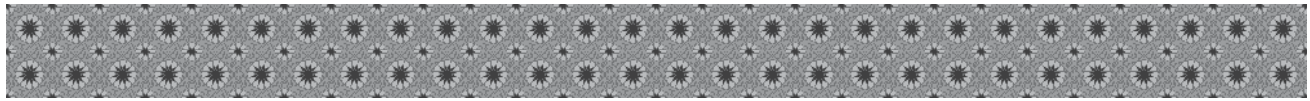
With your class, brainstorm the structural elements in a poem, novel, or television show. Use “Nothing Gold Can Stay” (see the chart below) as an example of a poetic structure.

#### POETIC STRUCTURES

<b>“Nothing Gold Can Stay” By Robert Frost</b>	<b>Structural Elements</b>
Nature’s first green is gold, Her hardest hue to hold. Her early leaf’s a flower; But only so an hour. Then leaf subsides to leaf. So Eden sank to grief, So dawn goes down to day. Nothing gold can stay.	The poem consists of eight lines.  The last word in each of the four couplets (or pairs of lines) rhymes.  Every line (except the last) has six syllables.  The middle two lines of each quatrain starts with a repeated word (“her,” “so”). The poem uses alliteration (“her hardest hue to hold,” “so dawn goes down to day”).



**A square in Istanbul at night**



**Ask students:**

“What freedoms are allowed within the structures of poems, novels, and television shows?”

Create working definitions of the terms “freedom” and “structure.”

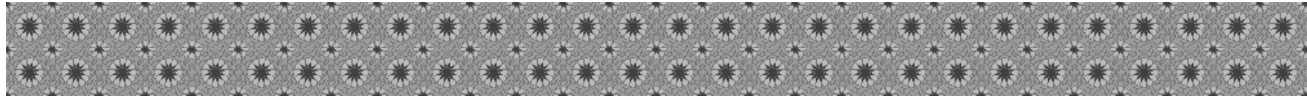
**WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREEDOM AND STRUCTURE?**

Brainstorm with your class to answer the following questions.

**Ask students:**

“Where are the places in our own lives where we can observe a structure making freedom possible?” [For example: our bodies (bones support and frame the body—no bones, no movement); governmental structures; school structures; family structures; musical structures.]

“What relationship do we see between freedom and structure in the areas we have named?” (For example: They support each other; they work against each other; they take turns; they replace each other.)



## ARCHITECTURAL SHELTERS HANDOUT

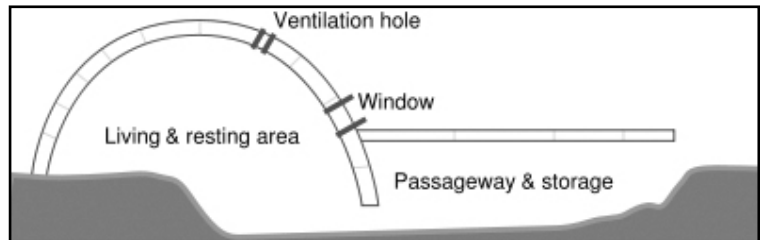
### Camping Tent

Camping tents provide portable shelter with a simple structure made of poles (either interior or exterior), a durable fabric, and several varieties of fasteners including straps, clips, and fabric sleeves. Some tents are tall enough to stand in, while others are only tall enough for sleeping purposes. Most tents are free-standing, but must be secured in high winds.



### Igloo

Igloos are shelters erected from snow blocks in regions where the temperature is extremely cold. Some igloos are built for temporary use, while others are constructed carefully as part of intricate villages. To make an igloo, snow blocks are cut from an icy bank and the remaining hole is used as the lower half of the shelter. The blocks are stacked into a dome and a short tunnel at one end serves to reduce wind and heat. Due to snow's insulating properties, igloos can be very warm.



### Hagia Sophia

Hagia Sophia is a Byzantine cathedral in Istanbul. When it was originally constructed, Hagia Sophia had four wings of equal size that projected from a central, square, domed crossing area. The largest feature of this monumental structure is a central dome spanning 107 feet across. The columns that hold up the dome are made of marble, and the lower parts of the walls are covered with marble slabs. Elaborately carved cornices and capitals also decorate the cathedral.



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## ARCHITECTURAL FREEDOMS AND STRUCTURES WORKSHEET

ARCHITECTURE	FREEDOMS CREATED FOR INHABITANTS	STRUCTURES USED
CAMPING TENT		
IGLOO		
HAGIA SOPHIA		

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## MEET THE ARTIST HANDOUT

# SELIM SESLER



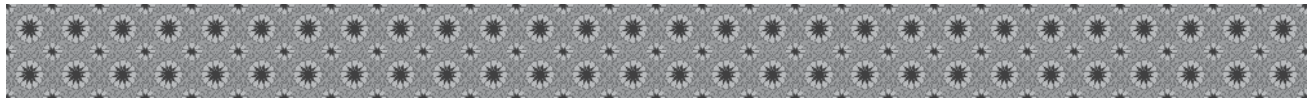
Selim Sesler was born into a family of professional reed horn musicians in 1957 in Kesan, a village located in Edirne, Turkey. During the 1960s, many children from drum and reed-horn musician families began to play Turkish classical ensemble instruments; Sesler learned to play the clarinet.

Already a regular performer at weddings and fairs by age 14, Sesler set out with Romani, or Gypsy, musician friends to play in Istanbul by the mid-1980s. He gained experience and recorded a lot of material by playing at restaurants, performing at the Ferhan Sensoy Theater, and continuing to play at Romani and non-Romani weddings. In 1998, Sesler got the chance to tour Canada with Canadian folk singer Brenna MacCrimmon, which afforded him the opportunity to represent his Turkish Romani and Rumelian (a term used during the Ottoman Empire to refer to a region in the southern Balkans) roots. Drawing from his eclectic musical experiences, Mr. Sesler developed a repertoire and musical style deeply reflective of his region.

Selim Sesler now performs as a solo and collaborative musician. He is known for his master improvisations and repertoire of dance melodies and wedding airs. Aside from being invited to play at many important festivals in countries including Germany, France, and Sweden, Mr. Sesler has performed many special concerts and taught at music workshops across the United States over the past two years.

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### SELIM ON IMPROVISATION

"I play my own compositions, and I also play Balkan styles, Romani style, and traditional authentic music. I also play Turkish classical music. After all, our specialty is that kind of music.

"Improvisation—that is between me and my clarinet. For improvisation, there is no notation. Improvisation is something that comes from the brain, from the soul, from the heart, and goes through the clarinet. There is no set form—it's a form of inspiration."

### SELIM ON MUSICAL STRUCTURE

"There is no such thing as working on a *makam* [a structured group of notes used in Turkish music]. If you want to, move from one *makam* to another ... But it must be pleasing to your ear. Now if you start to move towards a *makam* as if you are falling down on a branch, it will be harsh to your ear—in other words, it will be ugly.

"Within the Turkish classical *makam* system, you have to play without disturbing the ear. This is in all music, and in Romani music. There is music theory. Those who know theory know this. But some who play do not know this. They do not have the ability. If you cook without using salt, then it becomes a tasteless dish. If you add salt, what happens? Does it not add flavor? These things are like that. That is, you play well if you are able to play tastefully, but if you do not, you cannot play. It is that basic."

### SELIM ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ROMANI AND NON-ROMANI MUSIC

"There is not a clear difference between Romani music and Turkish music. But of course Romani music is more *kivrak* [in other words, more agile and lively], more merry. Turkish music is a bit slower, and more heavy. This liveliness is from our soul. Romani style is something that comes from within. This is feeling. The ear is able to listen well. We have this. Romani musicians play warmly; non-Romani musicians play cold.

"There are non-Romani clarinetists, but in their entire lives they cannot play like the Roma, cannot play lively like us. Their feeling is missing, the melodic phrases are missing. I still check it out; I listen, and sometimes they do not do the *koma* [microtones particular to Turkish music] right. They cannot make it lively. Our style is to give feeling to music, to feel it well so that people will say, 'What beautiful melodies; how did he do that?'"

*These quotes are taken from interviews with Selim Sesler and his son Ramazan Sesler in Istanbul, Turkey, conducted by phone by Sonia Seeman, October 6, 2008. Reprinted with permission of Sonia Seeman.*

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