About Journey West

Journey West is a musical program chronicling the migration of melody through an interactive aural and visual lecture and performance.

Our trek tracks melodies and changing instrumentation beginning in the Middle East, traveling through Eastern and Western Europe, and finally arriving in the United States.

The program illustrates the primary factors involved in carrying melodies to distant land: wars, imperialism, nomadic dispersions, mass emigrations due to political oppression, and musical crazes that sweep the globe. The musical performance is presented with changing PowerPoint slides to help illustrate the regional and musical differences encountered on the Journey West. The musicians offer demonstrations on their respective instruments and provide basic theoretical explanations to accompany the technical examples.

The Journey West is designed with multiculturalism in mind; to educate those interested in distant ethnicities and to allow members of ethnicities presented in the program to enjoy music of their homeland or ancestors. Two musicians in the group served as director and string coach for the Cornell Middle Eastern Ensemble in the early 2000's. During this time, students attending Cornell, and members of the Ithaca community from a variety of countries, gathered together to celebrate and perform the music of the Middle East. The group inspired a familial rapport with individuals far from their homeland, both in the ensemble and in audiences. Many of the individuals from this era still keep in touch as close friends. With a foundation of diversity, it is our intention to engage international students and members of the Ithaca Community as our audience comes together to learn, listen, and enjoy.

The Journey West program expands the Cornell Middle Eastern Music Ensemble's goal of fostering unity and understanding between different cultures, including Jewish, Roma, European, American, and the Middle East. With advertising help from many Cornell groups including The Hellenic Society, Hillel Jewish Student Union, Near Eastern Studies, the Persian, Iranian, Turkish Student Organizations and Associations and the international Students and Scholars office, the Journey West program is designed to encourage students and members of the community to make contact with new acquaintances which may spur newfound friendships, discussions, and understanding.