

STRING ALTERNATIVES SERIES

Isma'a

(Listen)

Traditional Arabic Themes
Setting by Leanne Darling

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I.....	8
Violin II.....	8
Viola.....	5
Cello.....	5
String Bass	5

Notes to the Conductor

Isma'a, which means “listen” in Arabic, is a medley of themes from the Arabic musical world, set for string orchestra by Middle-Eastern violist Leanne Darling. This style of music can be heard throughout the Middle East, from Greece to Morocco. The medley is in three sections, beginning with a *taqsim*, or written out improvisation, followed by a *muwashshah*, or song, and ending with a dance piece that was inspired by the Egyptian composer Muhammad Abdel Wahab. Because Arabic music is without harmony, the violas, cellos and basses play the important role of a percussion section. Although this music is only known in America through the art of belly dancing, Arabic music is an ancient tradition dating back to the 8th century. The violin is commonly played, as well as the lute (*oud*), zither (*qanun*), flute (*ney*) and hand percussion (tambourine and goblet drum).