

A few words about ASHKINA...

Music can heal – it can cross the barriers of language and beliefs and can bring hope to where hope is lost. For this reason, I have chosen to title this piece "ASHKINA" - The Turkish word for Love. This word recapitulates the spirit of the composition; that being the desire for an understanding, tolerance, acceptance and peace between all peoples. ASHKINA also incorporates the Hebrew word Shchina, meaning the spirit of God. The similarity between the two words only enhances the fact that we are, on some level, all connected -we are very much the same.

From when it all started, everything was small and pure. The first line (sung in Hebrew) reads: *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1)*

The music for ASHKINA starts in that way as well, with only women-the carriers of life, singing. They sing A Cappella, focusing on a minor second - the smallest interval existing in Western music, and fifth-the purest and most primal one. Like angels, they tell the story of the beginning, then the rest of the choir joins in along with the orchestra, to convey the gradual development of human life.

As this first part continues, a Kleizmer style clarinet solo, in combination with Cantorial singing brings about the Jewish theme. The music segues uninterrupted into the Middle-Eastern section, where the meditative Ney flute takes us to the desert; to listen to the wind and sounds of God. The Oud (Ethnic string instrument) and percussion elevates our spirits in a sweeping rhythmical pattern of 7/8, and the orchestra joins in with the choir as they all merge together in harmony ascending to the climax of the work.

In the final part of the piece, the solo soprano sings one last prayer, accompanied by the choir and orchestra. They all conclude with the word that expresses a Universal desire - Amen. The conclusion brings back the Jewish clarinet and Middle-Eastern Ney flute, in a celebratory collaboration of music and love.

The music in ASHKINA moves freely between Traditional, Western and Middle Eastern musical influences and brings about a fusion of cultures by using Hebrew, English and Turkish languages.