

Only A Book

Theme and Variations for String Orchestra

Commissioned by iPalpiti Artists International 2012

Premiered July 2012 at the SABAN Theatre in Beverly Hills, CA

ONLY A BOOK was inspired by a beautiful poem of the same title, that can be found at Temple of The Arts in BH, CA, prayer book. The poem portrays the powerful tie between the Jewish people and the book of faith.

The pieces consist of six variations dealing with different time periods in the history of the Jewish people. It opens with the Eternal Theme; the theme that would follow the people of the book wherever they go- it is always present, like the book the Jewish people have been carrying with them throughout their history.

The first variation, ***“The Beginning”*** is relatively positive, although full of yearning, and refers to the “Golden Age” of the Jewish people, when they were a respected and integral part of the communities and cultures they resided in. The Pizzicato at the beginning of the variation however, conveys some hesitation, some fear of future persecution.

The second theme, ***“Darkness”*** is related to the darkest periods of the Jewish people, from the inquisition, to the Holocaust to today. It is expressive and dramatic, with an urgent middle section. The variation ends on an exhausted and “sour” note, which connects us to the next segment:

“Mourning”, the third variation, is emotional and moving, with a solo violin at times, lamenting the horrific loss and drama described in the previous variation. With its sparse beginning, the music is poignant, mourning the life of so many, and conveys loneliness and disbelief.

“Rage and Reflection”, introduces a new instrument, the flute, as this fourth variation represents a new emotion: the fury and incredulity that was felt when everything from the recent and terrifying time period sunk in, with a painful understanding. When the anger at the beginning of the variation, strong but short, subsides -- it brings us to a meditative state; an inner reflection, acceptance and realization of what the next step should entail.

The fifth variation, ***“Rebirth”***, expresses the time after the rage and reflection subsided, when slowly there is a determination and movement, hesitant but growing stronger, to go to where the Jewish people are welcomed, where home is. From the Diaspora they come, drifting like water in many rivers going towards one big ocean.

“New Beginning” is the sixth and last variation. It represents the quest of the Jewish people for joy and happiness. This elation is getting stronger and faster, building excitement and hope for a better future.

...And throughout all these ever-existing blessings, heartaches, sadness and happiness, the one thing that always made it possible to carry on, to move forward and to thrive, was this book, the Book of Life. It is ONLY A BOOK, but because of this book, we live.

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