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AVNER DORMAN: SIKLÒN

ASTROLATRY | URIAH | AFTER BRAHMS | ELLEF SYMPHONY

AVNER DORMAN b. 1975

SIKLÒN

ASTROLATRY

URIAH

AFTER BRAHMS

ELLEF SYMPHONY

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

Gil Rose, conductor

[1] **SIKLÒN** (2015) 8:36

ASTROLATRY (2011)

[2] I. Celestial Revelations 6:58

[3] II. The Worship of the Stars 6:54

**URIAH: THE MAN THE KING
WANTED DEAD** (2009)

[4] I. Andantino indignato 1:22

[5] II. Lento, dawn in the desert 2:48

[6] III. Presto barbaro 6:10

[7] IV. The Song of the Angels 1:23

[8] V. Epilogue 1:20

AFTER BRAHMS

THREE INTERMEZZI FOR ORCHESTRA (2015)

[9] I. Allegro con molto appassionato 2:06

[10] II. Delicatamente con molta espressione 5:03

[11] III. Adagio espressivo 4:14

ELLEF SYMPHONY (2000)

[12] I. Fear 2:36

[13] II. Slaughter 7:24

[14] III. Elegy 3:53

[15] IV. ... (silence) 5:17

TOTAL 66:14



By Avner Dorman

Listening to this album is obviously a very special experience for me—gratifying to hear such wonderful renditions of my music, and a great opportunity for me to reflect on almost twenty years of writing orchestral works. I started composing *Ellef Symphony* in 1999, when I was 24 years old and still a student at the Tel Aviv Academy of Music. This was my first large piece for a symphonic ensemble, and I remember trying many different approaches with varying degrees of success. Once I found the main rhythmic motif, I could develop the harmonic and orchestral writing for the piece, and *Ellef* came together. Since the piece was written for a festival celebrating the new millennium, I wanted to reflect on the 1,000 years prior. Three poems served as the inspiration for each movement, and a poem “yet to be written” spoke for the coming millennium. My goal was to express emotions directly and convey a message that listeners could connect with on a personal level.

Looking back, I can see how these choices laid the foundation for *Uriah* (2009) and *Astrolatry* (2011), both in content and form. Each of these works refers to some extra-musical source, and all are multi-sectional. Each portion of the work focuses on specific emotions, texture, and expression, all of which contribute to the piece as a whole. During the decade between *Ellef* and *Astrolatry*, I wrote two percussion concertos and several other concertos for unusual instruments, all of which impacted how I ultimately would use percussion in these orchestral pieces. Even though *Ellef* calls for five percussionists and timpani, and features them extensively, the percussion section features in a more varied and personal way in the

later works. *Astrolatry* particularly features the colors that the percussion section adds to the sonic palette of both soft and loud music.

As my writing developed in the years following *Ellef Symphony*, I also worked to better integrate each section of the piece into the form as a whole. In *Uriah*, the five sections not only express specific aspects of the piece, but are linked through the arch form. In *Astrolatry* the two main sections are related thematically, harmonically, and formally, and the end of the piece ties them together into one whole. *Ellef* already has some of these features, and I continued to refine them in later works.

In the years between *Astrolatry* and the latest works on this album, *Siklòn* and *After Brahms*, which both premiered in 2016, I was interested (some might say obsessed) with codifying and refining my compositional processes. I looked for ways to understand the rhythms, harmonies, and melodies that I was creating and developed clear systems to be able to create them and incorporate them into my work. Rhythmically and metrically, both *Siklòn* and *After Brahms* are designed quite mathematically—not in a cold or detached manner, but instead in a way that reflects my personal taste and natural rhythmic tendencies. These mathematical processes are fairly easy to identify when looking at the score, cycles of meters and rhythmic patterns that follow specific rules. Still, many of these patterns echo those of the earlier works on this album, now following a more refined set of principles. The same is true when I consider the development of harmony, melody, counterpoint, and orchestration between earlier and later works. I have found that having clear processes frees me up to create more intuitively while preserving my musical language and identity, all of which contribute to the large-scale formal coherence.

Both of these later pieces also draw from extra-musical sources, but these are truly abstractions. The experience of a hurricane in *Siklòn* and my memory of Brahms's piano music

in *After Brahms* do not create works that are truly programmatic works, but rather works inspired by people, events, collective memory, and personal memory.

For me, *Ellef Symphony* sounds very much like the work of a young composer—with a specific natural flow and charm that a young composer's work can have. *Uriah* and *Astrolatry* are more exploratory, more self-contained, and always looking to find more powerful forms of expression. And while *Siklòn* and *After Brahms* have more of the ease and flow of *Ellef*, they are grounded by musical processes that generate a very clear language of their own. Having the opportunity to hear this retrospective of sorts, performed by an ensemble of this caliber, is something truly special.

SIKLÒN, scored for full orchestra, was premiered on March 17, 2016, conducted by Giancarlo Guerrero, at the Adrienne Arsht Center, Miami, FL.

ASTROLATRY, scored for full orchestra, received its premiere on March 25, 2011, Justin Brown, conductor, at UAB's Alys Stephens Center—Jemison Concert Hall in Birmingham, AL.

URIAH is scored for full orchestra. It was premiered on January 26, 2011, conducted by David Robertson, at Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, CA.

AFTER BRAHMS, scored for double winds, alto sax, tenor sax, brass, percussion, and strings, received its premiere on April 15, 2016, conducted by Scott Terrell, at the Singletary Center for the Arts in Lexington, KY.

ELLEF SYMPHONY is scored for full orchestra and was premiered by the Young Israel Philharmonic, Ze'ev Dorman, conductor, at the Young-Euro-Classic Festival on August 13, 2000, at the Schauspielhaus in Berlin, Germany.

By Clifton Ingram

UTOPIAN ELEGY THROUGH SONIC SLAUGHTER: THE CULTURAL COUNTERPOINT AND POSITIVE POLYPHONY OF ISRAELI COMPOSER AVNER DORMAN

Composer Avner Dorman is not shy about his roots, growing deep to access a musical network that links together a variety of diverse cultural and historical influences. Drawing upon these forces, both musical and extra-musical, his work is informed with both technical

freshness and emotional relatability. Born in Tel Aviv in 1975, Dorman has since moved to the United States, where he is currently an associate professor at Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College. Whether composing music about the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) or the American Civil War—both of which he has done in recent years—Dorman considers both Israel and the U.S. as home.

Through his music, this sense of home becomes less a reference point and more a feeling, an endless urge for a hopeful future despite the harsh realities of the past and today. For Dorman, Israel is “a counterpoint, or polyphony, of culture,” one that is made all the more complex with its balancing and blending of influences. Israel’s geography also affords a unique cultural dialogue and inclusion at the crossroads between East and West.

Originally studying music and physics at Tel Aviv University—notably, under the instruction of Georgian-Israeli composer Josef Bardanashvili—Dorman went on to study with American composer John Corigliano, earning a degree in music composition from the Juilliard School as a C.V. Starr Doctoral fellow. Dorman’s music has been met with much acclaim, having been awarded numerous honors. Notably, at the age of 25, he became the youngest recipient of Israel’s prestigious Prime Minister’s Award for 2000’s *Ellef Symphony*. In 2002, the performance of Dorman’s song cycle, entitled *Boaz*, received the Israeli Cultural Ministry Prize for best performance of Israeli music. Premiered by Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in November 2003, *Variations Without a Theme* won the 2004 Best Composition of the Year award from the Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers in Israel (ACUM), leading to a new commission from Mehta, PercaDu, and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, which would become the critically acclaimed *Spices, Perfumes, Toxins!* Recently, in 2018, Dorman received the Azrieli Prize for Jewish Music for his violin concerto, *Nigunim*, originally written as a violin sonata for violinist Gil Shaham and pianist Orli Shaham.

Dorman's compositional style combines both Western modernist and polystylist practices with elements of Middle Eastern folk music. The effect is akin to a playful Mahlerian symphonic recipe, whose mix of both concert and folk traditions has been given a postmodern facelift, laminated like a musical dough via the micropolyphony techniques of György Ligeti. Like a master baker, Dorman does all this by layering, folding, and synthesizing contemporary symphonic structures with Arabic scales and rhythms, affects and effects. In his handling of arranging these diverse elements for the orchestra, Dorman's technical abilities are immediately apparent. However, the ultimate strength of Dorman's narrative talents is what gives his music its lasting appeal. While the composer readily tackles difficult and challenging stories concerned with the negative forces of brutality and injustice, his music avoids desensitizing the ear to this musical violence. Instead, it aims to illustrate to the audience the tragedy of destruction, offering in its wake the opportunity for positivity instead of despair. In all earnesty, there could not be a more relevant underpinning theme for both contemporary music and our world during such trying times.

* * *

Taking its title from the Haitian Creole word for hurricane, Dorman's *Siklòn* [1] is a symphonic poem in homage to the city of Miami, whose tropical monsoon climate and vibrant cosmopolitan culture provided a mimetic mélange for Dorman, reminding him of his own native city in Israel. About the genesis of the piece, Dorman recalls:

The first time I visited Miami was only earlier this year [2015], but from the moment I arrived, I was captivated. So many aspects of the city spoke to me—the warm nights, the hot sun, the cosmopolitan culture, the diverse population—and I was reminded of my home city of Tel Aviv. As I had the opportunity to tour different neighborhoods in Miami and meet artists, musicians, and other members of the community, I was struck by the energy of the people. The mingling of different cultures, foods, politics,

and arts concocts a whirlwind of energy that is unique to the city of Miami. *Siklòn* ... refers both to the violent nature of Miami's hurricanes, as well as the frenzy of energy that comes from a place driven by hot weather, sometimes clashing ideas, and the effervescence of youth.

True to its eponymous cyclone, *Siklòn* begins with a clashing whirlwind of musical ideas. Bright and fierce, the ear immediately latches onto the percussive qualities of Dorman's writing for the orchestra, whose diverse voices are pinned together by a clamorous clanging of metal brake drums. But there is more than bombast to *Siklòn*'s musical language. For example, its hot, tempestuous nature is cooled in brief moments by the warm, wooden grooviness of marimba rattlings. These two elements—hot and cool—are glued together further by impish stabs of vibraphone, a perfect intermediary instrument for this imagined Miami setting due to its jazzy urbanity.

The music quickly builds in density, verging on cacophony as a swirling of snapped and scratched strings meets with spritely winds and brass to provide an overall sense of musical suspension. The effect is as if gale-force winds will not allow the instruments to rest into any one set pattern, resulting in a churning of forces that compete for the foreground only to be dashed away and replaced from moment to moment. Dorman's skill at orchestration here is dizzying but always well-balanced, allowing each instrumental section their own turn in the spotlight making for maximum sonic diversity and entertainment value.

However, like the eye of a hurricane, a disquieting hush descends suddenly and replaces Dorman's bustling textures at about the midpoint of *Siklòn*'s one-movement structure. But regardless of this quelling of outright musical violence, there is still a richly dynamic and hyperactive simmer audible in the distance, nervously eating away at the edges of this new-found calm. Soon enough, the full energy of the storm returns, yet its former rage has changed into something else. The eye of the storm has released a minimalistic



GUERCINO, DAVID SENOS JURIAH TO NEW, CA. 1750, OIL ON CANVAS

fanfare of brass that transforms the more dissonant tone of the first half into a more focused consonance. The constant emphasis on upwards motion is maintained, true, but the chaos of the earlier squall has turned into something more promisingly constructive. It is as if warm rays of sun are at last breaking through parting clouds to lift the gazes of a battered Miami populace to provide them with hope for the future. Dorman describes this metamorphosis as “a joyful energy,” and at the conclusion of the piece it is easy to imagine the city of Miami picking up the pieces and rebuilding in the devastating wake of this musical hurricane. Here, Dorman once again forges a journey reflecting his positive perception of humankind, who—albeit capable of great destruction and susceptible to despair—are ultimately undefeated, made remarkably resilient to these negative forces precisely because they are so “passionate and bursting with creativity.”

* * *

The cosmic one-two punch of Dorman’s *Astrolatry* comes in two movements, played back-to-back without pause. Programmatically speaking, the first movement concerns itself with a (mostly) hushed sense of awe, invoking primitive peoples worshiping the astral grandeur of the night sky. Smatterings of dance-like violence disrupt this stellar quietude, foreshadowing a heavier-hitting second movement, which ultimately proves a far more earthly affair with a “steady beat [that] builds up the ecstasy of the ritual” of Dorman’s imagined prehistoric stargazers. Here, the opposite happens: a molten music of Stravinsky-esque bluster becomes the norm, only cooling briefly for short respites of celestial calm.

The first movement [2], entitled “Celestial Revelations,” is the more elusive of the two. A slow *Lento* tempo provides a mysterious majesty to invoke how at night “one by one, stars begin to reveal themselves, and as the pupils of the eye widen, more and more stars and constellations appear, and we notice colors, interactions, and motion,” explains Dorman. Like the movement of stars across a darkened sky, development here happens slowly.

Fragile flickerings adorn an expansive negative space as individual voices trill and turn, instruments combining to form constellation-like phrases. These celestial-like figures are first given to instruments capable of more “stratospheric” registers, including percussion (crotales, glockenspiel, piano, and harp), winds (dueling piccolos and Eb clarinet), and strings (violins, as well as violas and cellos playing ghostly harmonics). Meanwhile, far below, contrabasses hold an ethereal note achieved via artificial harmonic, supported by a gently rolled marimba to provide an insubstantial foundation to the stellar twinkling. When the music is occasionally pulled into a sudden downward freefall by faster tempi, it flirts with a dashing dance-like fury but subsides quickly to regain its former breathless composure. Fittingly for such nocturnal music, lullabies emerge from time to time. Notably, an expressive klezmer-esque clarinet solo sits atop empyreal violins playing sliding artificial harmonics. But this calm cannot last forever, and gravity eventually brings the heavenly happenings crashing to earth.

The second movement [3], “The Worship of the Stars,” is a much more chthonic affair, full of ground-stomping and pounding. The airy harmonics of the contrabasses are replaced by the thrum of wooden bows against strings of *col legno battuto* playing, joined by violas doing the same, as well as plucked piano strings, struck claves, and thumping bass drum. Dorman marks this passage “With a techno feel, mechanically steady,” invoking the reeling ecstasy commonly found in nightclubs. Eventually, a marimba plays the leader of this cosmic bacchanalia, luring Dorman’s instrumental worshippers away from the cacophony of their full-orchestral madness into a more controlled catharsis. Reaching a peak, a brief pause in their dance is reminiscent of the sublime star-gazing of the first movement, as Dorman explains, to “take one last look at the cosmos, admiring its beauty and mystery,” before bringing the frenzied dancing to its fated, energetic climax.

* * *

Uriah, subtitled “The Man the King Wanted Dead,” was commissioned and premiered January 2011 by the San Francisco Symphony under the music direction of Michael Tilson Thomas and conducted by David Robertson. Mentioned in the Books of Samuel, General Uriah the Hittite was King David’s trusted soldier, who was ultimately betrayed by the king while away at war. The story goes that King David, lusting after Uriah’s wife, arranged for Uriah’s death to hide his adulterous misdeeds and to take Bathsheba as his eighth wife. (It should be noted that the divine punishment for David’s misdeeds would be the death of their firstborn.) Dorman’s orchestral tone poem revolves around this story, but focusing on the character of Uriah, and in doing so positions itself as a type of protest piece against unchecked power. For Dorman, *Uriah* is “an earnest cry of outrage” against the violence done by corrupt politicians, a refusal to dismiss the sins of even an important ruler in the face of such egregious monarchical malfeasance.

The musical story of *Uriah* unfolds over the course of five interlocking movements in a symmetrical “arch form” akin to Bartók—or to a more recent composer, Dorman’s teacher at Juilliard, John Corigliano. *Uriah* is bookended by its outer movements in a dense cacophony of righteous orchestral indignation. An “Andantino Indignato” [4] is ripe with upwards-bounding barbs from the brass in “skewed allusion[s] to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.” This opening anguish turns more accusatory in the “Epilogue.” [8] Dorman’s stentorian musical protest is focused by the collective scorn of altissimo string sustain, eviscerating tuba blast, and tumultuous percussion crash. And while the death of Uriah himself can be heard plainly in the third movement (“Presto barbaro” [6])—namely, when rapidly repeated triplet figures and an explosion of percussion artillery heralds the fall of the betrayed Hittite general—the lyrical character of the second (“Lento, dawn in the desert” [5]) and fourth (“The Song of the Angels” [7]) movements expresses more directly a strife on an internal, reflective level.

Over the course of *Uriah*, Dorman is sensitive to the musical violence that he creates, offering salves to any offended ear. Amidst “strange frosty textures and hot waves of desert

[orchestral] color," moored by the drumming of the Middle Eastern *doumbek*, can be heard a soberingly lonely solo bass clarinet, whose stoic lament grapples with and reminds us how war brings cataclysm to the innocent and how hapless individuals are set adrift in its violent throes.

* * *

Not only are Dorman's three intermezzi for orchestra based on the monumental music of composer Johannes Brahms, they are an orchestral reworking of a previous piano piece by Dorman of the same name, commissioned by Orli Shaham and inspired by the mid-Romantic composer's late piano compositions (namely Opp. 116, 117, 118, and 119). It comes as no surprise then that the focus revolves around a sense of remembrance and nostalgia, providing a rather deep and intricate listening experience steeped in historical and modern imaginings.

This orchestral version was commissioned by the Lexington Philharmonic, conducted by Scott Terrell and premiered in April 2016. The work aptly follows a traditional framing in three movements: the first dashes forth like a story that begins *in medias res*, virtuosically immersive and gripping; the second, slower and quieter, provides a reflective and tender breather from the saturation and density of the first; and the third bridges the gap between the previous two, meshing and transforming the contrasting moods into one maturely balanced and symphonized statement.

Following the source material from Brahms—that is, the originals being firmly of a late German Romantic tradition, which strove to stretch and innovate notions of harmony, rhythm, and phrasing without breaking their inherited molds—Dorman also models his music after the autumnal character so commonly found in Brahms's late period. However, there is a more modernist objective sense in Dorman's music than the individualistic

expressivity of the German composer, furthered by the Israeli composer's deft handling of the orchestra. The first movement [9] therefore feels more like a Neoclassical affair than a Romantic one, the music being richly layered into an almost mechanical maelstrom of simultaneous chromatic lines. To complicate matters, these lines are hocketed—that is, split up between different instruments—and move at different speeds, akin to the mensuration techniques so often found in both medieval and contemporary periods. But while the effect verges on abstraction, there is still an authentic emotional urgency intact at the core of Dorman's manipulations of Brahms. A constant cascading of both downward and upward figures drips with an expressive romanticism, achieving a surreal euphoria like a Salvador Dalí painting. So, while being dropped into this thicket of emotional textures may at first be confusing, their effect is immediately perceived: it is as if the moments of one's life were being played back all at once in an outpouring of remembrance of old age—truly, a most bittersweet effect.

For those attempting their own Brahmsian scavenger hunt, Dorman offers the following breakdown of how he used his source material:

The first intermezzo derives its structure and underlying texture from the left-hand arpeggios of Brahms's Intermezzo, Op. 118, No. 1, and these figures appear in the lower strings and brass. While the high strings and winds evoke the original descending melodic line, they clash with Brahms's accompanimental texture both rhythmically and harmonically. The middle and low winds contend with the accompaniment as well, providing harmonic contrast. As the piece progresses the explosive elements of the texture ultimately take over, erupting energetically in both rhythm and sound.

When searching for Brahms in the second movement [10], Dorman again provides the following helpful technical hints:

The second intermezzo draws its inspiration from Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 119, No.1. The original descending arpeggios change in a series of meter shifts—each bar is one pulse longer or shorter than its predecessor, creating a pendulum-like pattern. Following an ABA' form, the middle (B) section is reminiscent of popular music of the day, much like in Brahms's original intermezzo. In Brahms's case that piece could be a waltz, and in *After Brahms*, it evokes a pop song of the early twenty-first century. The final A section includes more syncopation and a wider palette of orchestral color. The end of the piece utilizes Brahms's original harmony while expanding the range and colors of the orchestra, closing in the deep register of the tuba.

The tone of this second movement is decidedly clearer than the first, as if Brahms has been reworked by the hand of Maurice Ravel with his early twentieth-century clock-maker's precision. Indeed, it is also easy to imagine this movement accompanying a film, with its sentimental minimalist approach akin to the finely paced tension and release of Philip Glass. Buoyantly brassy waves of emotion build upon each other, leaving in their wake tender moments of *delicato* winds and plucked *pizzicato* strings—like being lost in thought upon opening a music box.

While Dorman's last movement [11] does not draw directly from any specific piece by Brahms, the composer ironically notes that it is "perhaps the most Brahmsian in its emotional expression and musical content." While firmly focused on the same kind of introspection and reflection found previously, Dorman reimagines the kind of music Brahms may have written if provided with the techniques and devices readily available to contemporary composers. There are tragic moments—like emotions at the breaking point, overwhelming and devastating—as the sentimental mood of the second movement is fed into the more mechanical layering and simultaneity of the first to great dramatic heart-rending effect. Yet Dorman never loses his eternal sense of restlessly striving ever onward. Toward what,

we cannot precisely say, but the composer makes the journey feel all the more important in bringing his music to life.

* * *

Dorman's *Ellef Symphony* was written for the Young-Euro-Classical Festival in Berlin on the occasion of the year 2000. *Ellef* meaning "one thousand," this is Dorman's symphony for the "new millennium," premiered by the Young Israel Philharmonic in August 2000 at the Schauspielhaus (Berlin), then again at the Expo 2000 in Hanover. Received enthusiastically, the work would go on not only to win the Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers in Israel's (or ACUM's) Golden Feather Award in 2001, it would also be selected as one of three pieces for Israel's prestigious Prime Minister's Award, making Dorman the youngest composer to have received this honor at 25 years old.

Dorman cues us into the main theme of his symphony, described as a relatively simple gesture of a single note repeated four times, followed by silence. In the first movement, this motive is given a slowly seeping treatment "in a Gothic manner" to capture a mood of fearful foreboding. In the second movement, the music picks up its pace. The now heavily accented motive is given new upbeat life, imitating the martial sound of swords and guns. The penultimate movement sets the motive against very dense harmonies to cause pulsing resonances, giving the music the very human effect of a heart beating. In the final movement, the motive all but disappears entirely, leaving only silence in its wake.

For the first three movements, Dorman pairs each with a Jewish poet from across the last thousand years so that each selected poem can serve as programmatic fuel to depict three distinct perspectives on the theme of war. The last movement avoids this association, however, illuminating Dorman's optimistic hopes for our current millennium's potential to

break the historical pattern, set up by these war-themed poems, and solve our differences. The following provides a brief breakdown of each movement in relation to their selected poem.

“Fear” [12]: The opening movement is inspired by a poem by Shmuel HaNagid (993–1056), who was a Talmudic scholar, grammarian, philologist, poet, warrior, and statesman living under Moorish rule in Spain. The music opens with warm synth-like pads from the orchestra that set a tone of eerie seriousness. A motivic tolling of bells, piano, and harp gives way to the sickly-sweet swelling of high strings and shimmering celesta and glockenspiel. However, the movement ends in an abrupt outburst of brass and percussion, a musical rolling boil that spills over into the jauntier opening of the second movement, itself a more hard-edged, leather-necked scene of urban vibrance and adrenaline.

“Slaughter” [13]: The second movement’s more visceral music shifts its focus from fear to its tragic consequence: violence. Here, Dorman depicts the suffering experienced in times of war, inspired by “On the Slaughter” by Haim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934), Israel’s National Poet. Bialik wrote prolifically at the turn of the 20th century, a period of time when Russian pogroms were perpetrating mass persecution and murder of Jews throughout the historic Pale of Settlement area.

“Elegy” [14]: This movement is inspired by a poem by contemporary Israeli poet, actor, and playwright, Yuval Rappaport (b. 1975). The poem deals with maternal grief for the loss of a son, where the simple Schumann-like nostalgia of a quietly plaintive piano is all the more tragic as it dissolves in the orchestra’s well-intentioned hands like the innocence of melting snow. A slow, searing glissandi slides into the upper registers to temper any previous naïveté with a truly anguish-torn feature for the string section.

“... (silence)” [15]: A bell signals an end to the previous three-movement meditation on violence, and Dorman uses the finale as the grounds to balance the heaviness of his

symphony with a “prospect of peace and nonviolence.” The new direction of the last movement demonstrates a composer who “want[s] to treat the new millennium as an empty canvas, a poem unwritten, where it is up to us to write the poem of the future.”

Almost two decades after the premiere of *Ellef Symphony*, Dorman’s pleading for peace in the face of the past millennium’s atrocities seems all the more relevant. While this new millennium is young, we have seen the Middle East continue to destabilize, its unraveling witness to the very kind of violence and suffering that incentivized Dorman’s symphony in the first place. But Dorman’s *Ellef Symphony* leaves us with the quiet tenderness of a lone piano as surrounding strings slowly evaporate to bring the work to a close. Perhaps this is to remind us that our hopeful dreams of peace are not gone per se, but simply evaporated for the time being, just out of reach. Like the piano, we must face this loss with humility and compassion, lest we be doomed to repeat the misdeeds of Dorman’s previous three movements and the past millennium.

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Clifton Ingram is a composer, performer (Rested Field, guitars/electronics), and writer interested in the fault lines between contemporary and historical traditions. He holds degrees in music (composition) and classics from Skidmore College and The Boston Conservatory.



"COSMIC CLIFFS" IN THE CARINA NEBULA (NIRCAM IMAGE) CREDIT: NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI

שמואל הנגיד – בן קהלת

הרסוה ימי קדם קצינים
 ותחתינו בעליה ישנים
 ועמים שכנו בזאת לפנים
 חלים ועבדים ואדנים
 ובנים ואבלים וחתנים
 בימים אחרי ימים ושנים
 והם היום בלב ארץ שכונים
 ועפר מחצרים נעמנים
 שללוננו נפשים ועדנים
 אהי אני ואלה ההמונים

הלינותי גדוד כבד בכירה
 וישנו עלי גבה וצדה
 ודברתי ללבי אי קהלים
 ואי בונים ומחריבים ושרים
 ומולידים ושכולים ואבות
 ועם רב נולדו אחר אחרים
 והיו על פני ארץ שכנים
 וקבר חלפו מארמנותם
 ואלו העלו ראשם ויצאו
 אמת נפשי אמת כהם למחר

I Quartered the Troops for the Night

Poem by Shmuel HaNagid, trans. Peter Cole

I quartered the troops for the night in a fortress
 which soldiers destroyed long ago,
 and they fell asleep at its walls and foundations
 while beneath us its masters slept on.

And I wondered ... What had become
 of the people who dwelled here before us?
 Where were the builders and soldiers, the wealthy
 and poor, the slaves and their lords—

the mourners and grooms, sons and fathers;
 the bereaved and the women in labor?

Great nations had come in succession
 in the course of months and years.

They settled across the back of the earth,
 but rest in the heart of the ground—
 their magnificent palaces turned into tombs,
 their pleasant courts to dust,

and if they could lift their heads and emerge,
 they'd take our lives and pleasure.

In truth, my soul, in truth and soon,
 I'll be like them—and these sleepers.

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חיים נחמן ביאליק – על השחיטה

שמים, בקשו רחמים עלי!
אם יש בככם אל ולא אל בככם נתיב –
ו א נ י לא מצאתיו –
התפללו אתם עלי!
א נ י – לבי מת ואין עוד תפלה בשפתי,
וכבר אזלת יד אף-אין תקוה עוד –
עד־מתי, עד־אנה, עד־מתי?

התלין! הא צואר – קום שחט!
ערפני ככלב, לך זרע עם קרדם,
וכל הארץ לי גרדם-
ואנחנו – אנחנו המעט!
דמי מתר – הך קדקד, ויונק דם רצח,
דם יונק ושב על כתנתך –
ולא ימח לנצח, לנצח.

ואם יש צדק - יופע מיד!
אך אם־אחרי השמדי מתחת רקיע
הצדק יופיע –
ימגר־נא כסאו לעד!
וברשע עולמים שמים ימקו;
אף אתם לכו, זדים, בחמסכם זה
ובדמכם חיו והנקו.

וארור האומר : נקם!
נקמה כזאת, נקמת ילד קטן
עוד לא ברא השטן –
ויקב הדם את התהום!
יקב הדם עד תהמות מחשכים,
ואכל בחושך וחתר שם
כל מוסדות הארץ נמקים.

On the Slaughter

Poem by Haim Nachman Bialik, trans. Peter Cole

Sky, have mercy!
If you hold a God
(to whom there's a path
I haven't found), pray for me.
My heart has died.
There is no prayer on my lips.
My hope and strength are gone.
How long? How much longer?

Executioner, here's my neck: Slaughter!
You've got the ax and the arm.
The world to me is a butcher-block—
we, whose numbers are small,
it's open season on our blood:
Crack a skull—let the blood
of infant and elder spurt on your chest,
and let it remain there forever, and ever.

If there's justice—let it come now!
But if it should come after I've been
blotted out beneath the sky,
let its throne be cast down.
Let the heavens rot in evil everlasting,
and you, with your cruelty,
go in your iniquity
and live and bathe in your blood.

And cursed be he who cries out: Revenge!
Vengeance like this, for the blood of a child,
Satan has yet to devise.
Let the blood fill the abyss!
Let it pierce the blackest depths
and devour the darkness
and eat away and reach
the rotting foundations of the earth.

קרן אור / יובל רפפורט

זריחה אדישה עוטפת.
לבקש לה רוח חדשה.
המיית הים הסוחפת
קוראת לי;
ואני עונה בלחיישה:
קדוש.
קדוש.
קדוש.
קדוש לי ילדי המת.
קדוש לי ילדי הנותר.
קדוש לי הרגע הזה שעבר,
הזועק קינתי מקולות השופר.

קרן אור,
ועוד... קרן אור;
מבקיעות בליל פרצה אדומה,
להרחיק מעלי נשימה עגומה.

ילדי הבכור ישן.
ילדי ישן לנצח.
כמה סמוקה הייתה לחיו,
וכמה עז המצח.
ואיך שאל
ולא נבהל,
ואיך עיניו אל החלל,
שלה,
כשהלך.

נסמך לפתיחת תערוכתה של ואבה קונס, בבית יד לבנים ברמת השרון
ע"י יובל רפפורט, דור שלישי לניצולי שואה.
אפריל, 2000.

Ray of Light

Poem and translation by Yuval Rappaport

A ray of light,
And another... ray of light;
Breaking through the night a red breach,
To drive away my sad breath.

My firstborn is asleep.
My child sleeps forever.
How flushed were his cheeks,
And how defiant.
How he asked and was not scared
How he sent his eyes
Into the void...

When he left

An indifferent sunrise wraps around me.
In its quest for a new spirit.
The sea's immense murmur
Is calling me;
And I whisper back:
Holy.
Holy.
Holy.
Holy is my dead child.
Holy is the one that is still alive.
Holy is this moment that just passed,
A moment that cries my lament louder
than the voice of a shofar.

Written for the opening of an exhibition by Ze'eva Kunes at Beit Yad Levanim in Ramat-Hasharon
by Yuval Rappaport, third generation descendant of Holocaust Survivors, April 2000.



Poet Haim Nachman Bialik

FELIX GRÜNSCHLOSS



Avner Dorman writes music of intricate craftsmanship and rigorous technique, expressed with a soulful and singular voice. A native of Israel now living in the United States, Dorman draws on various cultural and historical influences in composing, resulting in music that affects an emotional impact while exploring new territories. His music utilizes an exciting and complex rhythmic vocabulary, as well as unique timbres and colors in orchestral, chamber, and solo settings; many of his compositions have become contemporary staples in the repertoire.

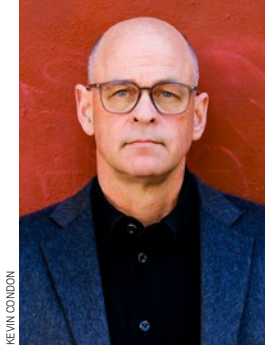
Dorman's music is championed by renowned conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Christoph Eschenbach, Ricardo Chailly, and Andris Nelsons, and soloists such as Pinchas Zukerman, Gil Shaham, Martin Grubinger, and Hilary Hahn. His music has been commissioned and performed by some of the world's leading orchestras, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony.

The 2022-2023 season featured several notable performances of Dorman's music, including the Finnish premiere of his Piano Concerto No. 3 at the Kuopio Philharmonic conducted by the composer and the New York premiere of his Concerto for Cello, Piano, and Orchestra performed by Duo Ekstasis and the College Orchestra at SUNY Fredonia. In November 2022, his Concerto for Mandolin, Guitar, and Orchestra received its world premiere by Mantar Duo and the Ra'anana Symphonette, and his guitar concerto *How to Love* received its European premiere with Grammy Award-winning guitarist Jason Vieaux and the Thüringen Philharmonie Gotha-Eisenach, conducted by Markus Huber. In January 2023, Illia Ovcharenko presented the world premiere of Dorman's Piano Sonata No. 6 at Carnegie Hall. Additionally, Theater Bonn will stage eight performances of Dorman's opera for children, *Die Kinder des Sultans*,

and his new orchestral work *Tanyaderas*, commissioned by the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, will receive its world premiere in April 2023. Furthermore, a film score composed by Dorman will be featured in Avi Nesher's film *The Monkey House*, making its debut in Israeli theatres in June 2023.

Throughout the season, Dorman's works continue to be performed by prominent orchestras, chamber ensembles, and soloists around the world. Dorman's percussion concerto *Frozen in Time* receives performances in Germany, Belgium, and Austria; his Mandolin Concerto is featured in a US tour by Avi Avital and The Academy of St Martin in the Fields as well as at the Toronto Symphony; *Astrolatry* receives repeat performances by the Alabama Symphony; *After Brahms* by the Chattanooga Symphony; and Ensemble 4.1 continues to tour *Jerusalem Mix*.

Dorman's music has garnered numerous awards and prizes, including Israel's prestigious Prime Minister's Award for his *Ellef Symphony*, and international awards from ASCAP, ACUM, and the Asian Composers League. His music is available on Naxos, Deutsche Grammophone, Canary Classics, and other labels. Dorman studied composition with John Corigliano and Josef Bardanashvili, and he holds a doctorate in composition from the Juilliard School. Dorman currently serves as Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College.



Gil Rose is one of today's most trailblazing conductors, praised as "amazingly versatile" (*The Boston Globe*) with "a sense of style and sophistication" (*Opera News*). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works, "Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he's built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic" (WQXR).

A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who "bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming... with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction" (*The New York Times*), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by *The New York Times* as "bold and intriguing" and "one of the East Coast's most interesting opera companies."

Since its founding in 1996, the "unique and invaluable" (*The New York Times*) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Rose's leadership, BMOP has won seventeen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, been selected as *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2016, and in 2021 was awarded a *Gramophone Magazine* Special Achievement Award in recognition of its extraordinary service to American music of the modern era. Under Rose's baton, BMOP has been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and the MATA Festival in New York.

In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. Working with an international roster of singers and directors, Odyssey has presented more than 35 operas in Boston, with innovative, thematically linked seasons. The company has also established

itself as a leader of modern opera in the United States, having given three world premieres and numerous U.S. premieres.

In addition to his role as conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 86 recordings of contemporary music by today's most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others. With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured eight GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Odyssey Opera's in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*.

Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony, among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across the U.S. at institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, New England Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. He is a visionary curator of music, inaugurating the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and programming three seasons for the Fromm Concerts at Harvard series.

In the coming seasons, Gil Rose leads Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brings John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. In addition, he and BMOP will travel to Carnegie Hall for the orchestra's debut performance and culmination of their 25th season, and BMOP and Odyssey will continue their co-produced opera series *AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage*, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.



The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Described by *The New York Times* as “one of the most artistically valuable” orchestras in the country, BMOP is a unique institution in today's musical world, disseminating exceptional orchestral music “new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be” via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span over a century. Each season, Rose brings BMOP's award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall, with programming that is “a safe haven for, and champion of, virtually every *ism*, and every genre- and era-mixing hybrid that composers' imaginations have wrought” (*Wall Street Journal*). The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP's distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*, Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Lei Liang's *A Thousand Mountains, A Million*

Streams. The composers performed and commissioned by BMOP contain Pulitzer and Rome Prize winners, Grawemeyer Award recipients, and MacArthur grant fellows.

From 1997 to 2013 the orchestra won thirteen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. BMOP has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America's 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization's history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge's Club Oberon and Boston's Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP's independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP's extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today's most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has released over 75 CDs on the label, bringing BMOP's discography to 100 titles. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, eight GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical "night at the symphony." Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

FLUTE

Ashley Addington* [1-5]
Sarah Brady* [1-3, 5]
Rachel Braude (piccolo) [3-5]

OBOE

Nancy Dimock [1-5]
Jennifer Slowik* [1-5]
Catherine Weinfield

(English horn) [3, 5]

CLARINET

Amy Advocat [1-5]
Gary Gorzcyca (bass clarinet)
[1, 3, 5]
Jan Halloran* [1-5]

BASSOON

Ronald Haroutunian* [3-5]
Jensen Ling* [1-3, 5]
Adrian Morejon [4]
Gregory Newton
(contrabassoon) [1-3, 5]

SAXOPHONE

Wilson Poffenberger
(tenor) [4]
Philipp Staeudlin (alto,
tenor) [1, 4-5]

HORN

Alyssa Daly [1-5]
Hazel Dean Davis [1-2]
Neil Godwin* [1-5]
Whitacre Hill* [3-5]
Kevin Owen* [4]
Sarah Sutherland [1-3, 5]

TRUMPET

Eric Berlin* [1-2, 4]
Michael Dobrinski [3, 5]
Terry Everson* [1-2]
Andrew Kozar* [3-5]
Dana Oakes [3, 5]

TROMBONE

Hans Bohn* [1-3, 5]
Alexei Doohovskoy [1-2]
Victoria Garcia-Daskalova*
[3-5]

BASS TROMBONE

Christopher Beaudry [1-5]

TUBA

Kenneth Amis [1-3, 5]
Jobey Wilson [4]

PERCUSSION

Jonathan Hess [2]
William Manley [3, 5]
Craig McNutt (timpani) [1-5]
Matthew Sharrock [1-3, 5]
Nicholas Tolle* [1-3, 5]
Aaron Trant [5]
Michael Zell [2-3, 5]

PIANO

Yoko Hagino [2]
Linda Osborn [3, 5]

HARP

Ina Zdorovetchi [2-3, 5]

VIOLIN I

Sarah Atwood [4]
Gabriel Boyers [1-2]
Piotr Buczek [1-5]
Benjamin Carson [1-2, 4]
Sonia Deng [3, 5]
Gabriela Diaz* [1-3, 5]
Omar Guey* [3-5]
Zenas Hsu [1-2]
Susan Jensen [1-5]
Janny Joo [1-2, 4]
Sean Larkin [4]
Mina Lavcheva [1-2, 4]
Jae Young Cosmos Lee [1-2, 4]
Yumi Okada [3, 5]
Nicole Parks [1-3, 5]
Megumi Stohs [3, 5]
Zoya Tsvetkova [3, 5]
Audrey Wozniak [3, 5]

VIOLIN II

Colleen Brannen* [1-2]
Paola Caballero [1-3, 5]
Sasha Callahan [1-3, 5]
Julia Cash [3, 5]
Tudor Dornescu [1-2]
Lilit Hartunian [1-3, 5]
EmmaLee Holmes Hicks [4]
Janny Joo [3, 5]
Annegret Klaua [1-2]
Aleksandra Labinska [1-2]
Judith Lee [1-2]
Annie Rabbat [1-2]
Micha Ringham [3, 5]
Kay Rooney-Matthews [3, 5]
Nivedita Sarnath [3, 5]
Klaudia Szlachta [1-3, 5]
Katherine Winterstein* [3, 5]

VIOLA

Abigail Cross [1-5]
Daniel Doña [4]
Joan Ellersick [1-3, 5]
David Feltner [3, 5]
Noriko Futagami [3-5]
Ashleigh Gordon [1-2]
Samuel Kelder [1-2]
Kim Lehmann [4]
Dimitar Petkov [1-2]
Emily Rideout [1-5]
Emily Rome [1-5]
Peter Sulski* [1-5]
Alexander Vavilov [3-5]

CELLO

Darry Dolezal [1-5]
Katherine Kayaian [3, 5]
Mina Kim [3, 5]
Jing Li* [1-2, 4]
Ming-Hui Lin [1-2, 4]
Stephen Marotto [1-3, 5]
Francesca McNeeley [4]
David Russell* [1-3, 5]
Benjamin Swartz [1-2, 4]
Becca Thornblade [4]
Aron Zelkowicz [3-5]

BASS

Anthony D'Amico* [3-5]
Scot Fitzsimmons [3, 5]
Katherine Foss [1-5]
Michael Hartery [1-2]
Bebo Shiu* [1-5]
Peter Walsh [1-2]

KEY:

[1] Siklòn
[2] Astrolatry
[3] Uriah
[4] After Brahms
[5] Ellef Symphony

*Principals

Avner Dorman

Siklòn
Astrolatry
Uriah
After Brahms
Ellef Symphon

Producer: Gil Rose
Recording and engineer: Joel Gordon
Assistant engineer: Peter Atkinson
SACD authoring: Brad Michel

All works on this disc are published by G. Schirmer, Inc.

Uriah and *Ellef Symphony* were recorded November 24, 2019, in NEC's Jordan Hall, Boston, MA. *Siklòn* and *Astrolatry* were recorded November 9, 2021, and *After Brahms* was recorded November 30, 2021, at Mechanics Hall, Worcester, MA.

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