

Ellef Symphony (for orchestra)

for orchestra

Composer: Avner Dorman
Year: 2000
Duration: 19 min
Orchestration: 3(pic).2+ca.2+bcl.tsx.2+cbn/4331/timp.5perc/hp.pf/str
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Program Note

Note: Savage Overture is the second movement of Ellef Symphony

Ellef Symphony was composed for the Young-Euro-Classical Festival in Berlin in the year 2000. It was first performed by the Young Israel Philharmonic on August 13, 2000 at the Schauspielhaus in Berlin, and on August 14, 2000 at the Expo 2000 in Hanover. The piece went on to win ACUM's Golden Feather Award in 2001, and was one of three pieces for which the composer received Israel's prestigious Prime-Minister's Award in 2000.

The piece has four parts that are performed continuously. The first three parts are inspired by Jewish poetry of the second millennium (1000-2000), each concerned with a different aspect of war. The fourth movement leaves hopes that the poetry of the third millennium will not have to deal with wars.

I. Fear: The impetus of this movement, the collective experience of fear during a time of war, comes from a poem by Shmuel ha-Nagid (993-1056). Shmuel ha-Nagid was a Talmudic scholar, grammarian, philologist, poet, warrior, and statesman, who lived in Spain at the time of the Moorish rule.

II. Slaughter: The second movement touches on the experience of war itself and of the suffering inflicted on people during times of war. "About the Slaughter" by Haim Nachman Bialik (1873-1934), Israel's National Poet, is the source material.

Bialik wrote prolifically about the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe at the turn of the 20th century.

III. Elegy: Dealing with the pain of an individual mother having lost a son, this movement was inspired by a poem from Yuval Rappaport. (b. 1975), a young Israeli poet, actor, and playwright.

IV. ... (silence): This movement shifts to the hope that the third millennium will take humanity in a new direction. Metaphorically, I wanted 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.

The main motive of Ellef Symphony is the repetition of a single note four times followed by silence. In the first movement this motive is played slowly in a Gothic manner, expressing fear. In the second movement it is played rapidly and accented, as if imitating the sound of swords and guns. In the 3rd the acoustic beats which are a result of the dense harmony imply tense heartbeats while in the fourth, it almost disappears, leaving after it silence.

— Avner Dorman

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