Mantra

Composer: Avner Dorman
Year: 2012
Duration: 5 min
Orchestration: ob, cl, vn, vc, pf
Publisher: G Schirmer Inc

Program Note

Note:

A mantra is a means of meditation, a word or phrase, or even a single sound, repeated over and over again for the purpose of spiritual centering. The repetition of a mantra is said to bring about personal transformation as the words move from a mere outward, mechanical repetition to a true, inward resonation within the speaker. The mantra is believed to elevate the soul, to bring out a higher, deeper level of peace and understanding.

In Avner Dorman's piece, **Mantra**, the composer presents the mantra itself through repeated rhythms, a continuous, steady beat driving the piece forward. This beat develops over time, embellished with an increasingly thick texture and more complicated rhythmic context, the thick texture and driving sense of beat symbolic of a mantra's automatic, almost robotic repetition. Yet the voices slowly fade out as the piece nears its end and even the driving beat, changing gradually, grows less pronounced, representing the transition from harsh reiteration to simple, pure spiritual ascent.

Written specifically for SHUFFLE Concert, **Mantra** incorporates each instrument of the unique ensemble into the overarching theme of a mantra. The repetitive beat passes among the voices fluidly, from violin to the entire ensemble, to the oboe, to the voice, and so on, changing slightly as it passes through each instrument, indicative of the slow, but steady transformation of a mantra in its speaker.

— Rachel Barber

Avner Dorman

G Schirmer Inc

Accessed on October 16, 2026