

Rhapsody on Diwan Songs

Composer: Avner Dorman
Year: 2023
Duration: 12 minutes
Orchestration: Bass Clarinet in Bb, Viola da Gamba
Publisher: Lyric Row Press

Program Note

"Rhapsody on Diwan Songs" draws influences from traditional Yemenite Jewish songs and rhythmic elements drawn from traditions of Jewish communities of the Middle East and Central Asia. The piece also alludes to some harmonic, formal, and contrapuntal styles of early European music, from the late Middle Ages to the Baroque era. The piece, written for Bass Clarinet and Viola Da Gamba, was commissioned by and is dedicated to Gambelin duo. The work begins with a slow introduction followed by a series of lively dance sections, each using a different melody that follows a traditional model. After several sections alternating melodies and rhythmic patterns, the work centers around a 15/8 pattern that becomes the harmonic source for a set of variations. The piece ends with a return to the opening material. Throughout the piece, I employed various musical techniques, including hockets, beat displacement, interlocking rhythms, polyrhythms, Euclidean rhythms, and various modes derived from Diwan songs. Additionally, the piece employs various contrapuntal developmental techniques, such as inversion of motives and imitation. "Rhapsody on Diwan Songs" is a personal and cultural journey for me, as it represents the intersection of two of my cultural heritages. I hope the piece will touch audiences emotionally and spiritually, showcasing the deep connection between these seemingly disparate traditions. Through this work, I aim to explore the many points of contact between different musical traditions, even those that developed in different parts of the world.

Avner Dorman

Lyric Row Press

Accessed on December 6, 2025