MUSIC FOR SOLO VIOLA BY ISRAELI COMPOSERS AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

By

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Introduction

Pieces for solo string instruments have long been a platform for exploration and progress. They provide much freedom to both composer and performer, allowing these works, in a sense, to go farther than other genres, thus becoming vehicles for advancement of the instruments over the centuries. Bach, Biber, Paganini, Hindemith, Kodály, Ysaÿe, Bartok, Britten and Ligeti all made significant contributions to the evolution of string instruments through their solo compositions.

While a solo work can be greatly used for exploration of new sounds and extended techniques, it can also call for a very particular means of expression. A piece that would ultimately take shape in the most intimate performance setting often invites the most personal voice of the composer to use it as a vessel. But even when setting out to compose the most intimate of pieces, one does not come alone. Collective and personal experience, musical tradition and national identity are all part of the process.

This paper deals with five pieces for solo viola by Israeli composers. They present their own personal voices through these different works, while taking part in a long heritage of Jewish culture and a fairly young tradition of Israeli music.

In the 1930's, more than thirty Jewish European composers immigrated to Mandatory Palestine, on their way to take part in the creation of a new culture for the soon-to-be country. These immigrant composers had a special relationship with the family of string instruments and mostly with the violin, which was strongly associated with Jewish folklore and cultural life in Jewish communities. Notably, many of the greatest violinists of the time were Jewish, which made the bond even stronger. String instruments therefore became an important ally to the immigrant Jewish composers, as they were both an integral part of Jewish culture and a link to the European heritage they were forced to leave behind.

While Jewish and Israeli musicians were famously associated with the violin through most of the twentieth century, the viola gradually increased in status, as remarkable Israeli violists emerged through

the decades. Oedoen Partos, Zeev Steinberg, Daniel Benyamini, Atar Arad, Rivka Golani and Amihai Grosz placed Israeli violists at the top of the field alongside their violinist colleagues. In accordance with the global trend, the better the violists that were around, the more music was composed for them. Two important figures should be noted in this context: Tabea Zimmermann and Rivka Golani, both pioneers of contemporary music, actively promoted Israeli music for decades and premiered dozens of works, inspiring composers and making a significant contribution to the repertoire of Israeli music for viola.

The purpose of this paper is to examine and analyze music composed for solo viola by Israeli composers at the turn of the twenty-first century. The five pieces selected for this purpose were composed between the years 1999-2010 by Israeli composers of four generations. They present different degrees of connection to their heritage and musical ancestors, as well as a wide range of personal styles and characters.

While this paper focuses on music composed at the turn of the twenty-first century, its opening chapter will examine an earlier era exploring the early days of Israeli music, in order to put the selected pieces in their proper context and gain a better understanding of the phenomenon.

The Jewish composers who made their way to Palestine in the 1930's did so with heavy hearts as they left behind their European motherlands. They grew up in established countries with rich cultural histories in which they took an active part, only to arrive in a society struggling to develop a national identity. Striving to compose music that would represent their place and moment in history, the immigrant composers soon elevated their status to "founding fathers" as they laid the foundations of a new musical style, aimed first and foremost at representing their new home rather than their old motherlands. Composers were encouraged to *compose the land* and, in the process, explore the ancient biblical texts, study the local dialect and absorb the unfamiliar sounds and landscape. Semitic and Eastern influences were welcomed, while the composers were expected to neglect their Western tendencies. Several decades passed, bringing social, political and national change. The society was becoming more diverse, the social structure more fluid, and the winds of political change started blowing. The young and naïve country, that

once was struggling for its very existence, became a local superpower. All these changes naturally affected the land that composers had once been expected to reflect in their works. The changing circumstances led composers of the second generation and beyond to broaden their spectrum of inspiration and to welcome back Western influence.

This paper contains an analysis of five pieces for viola by Israeli composers, in historical context. As will be shown, some of the composers maintained a connection to the ideals and musical features of the founding fathers, while using their own personal voices, and others departed from their ancestors, toward a more cosmopolitan style. These differences are apparent in their choice of tonality, intervals, shape and length of phrases, use of Middle Eastern musical idioms and the character of their melodic lines.

I have been interested in Israeli music for a long time, and I was fortunate to meet all the composers discussed in this paper for fascinating conversations about their pieces for viola, as well as about their music in a broader sense.

Part I: A journey to a new style – The early days of Israeli music

The story of Israeli music is certainly a unique one. It is a product of centuries of Jewish history alongside a relatively quick adaptation to a new identity in a new status formed in a new home on an ancient land.

More than thirty professional composers immigrated to Palestine between 1931-1939. This was an especially large number considering the size of the Jewish population in the *Yishuv*[1] (about 400,000 at that time). These composers did not know each other before immigrating and did not necessarily come from the same school and style of composition. Many of them arrived at their new home already experienced composers who wrote in the styles of their places of origin, combined with other influences. With a few isolated exceptions, no art music was created in the *Yishuv* prior to their arrival, and the immigrant composers found almost no existing musical ground or culture to absorb. It was therefore up to them to create an entirely new culture and style.

At the same time, the number of classical performers in the Yishuv grew steadily, and in 1936 the Palestine Orchestra was established. The vast immigration seems to have created a reality of two parallel cultures in the land. On the one hand, a rich musical culture of performances of Arabic music, artistic and folk, which had existed in the country for many decades, and on the other hand (and totally separated), a culture of western music that dominated the concert stage.

Many of the composers came from some of the cultural centers of Europe, and the land they arrived at was substantially different from the ones they left behind. It was ancient but fresh and presented a clean slate. Foreign and unknown, and yet it was their new home.

These "newly appointed" founding fathers of Israeli music started to observe and absorb their new home. They understood that their new location calls for a new style of composition. One that would represent their experience of the scenery, the people, the dialect and the atmosphere.

[1] The *Yishuv* refers to the Jewish society in the land of Israel from the late 19th century until the declaration of independence in 1948

Creation of a new and unique style, inspired by the new land

In the spirit of the day, one was expected to actively support the collective effort to form a new society. Part of the effort was aimed at leaving the old European Jew behind and creating a new Jewish identity. One that would plant trees, work in the fields and wear his nationality and Jewishness with great pride.

That spirit was embraced by many of the immigrant composers in the form of collective nationalism and a joint effort to form a new style. According to the collective nationalism trend,[2] an Israeli composer was encouraged to support the national effort by adhering to certain principles, such as reflecting the time and place in his work, compose in a remarkably different way from his old European style and consider the Bible and biblical Hebrew as a source of reference. Collective nationalism became a powerful trend led by Alexander Uriah Boskovich, one of the most prominent composers in the *Yishuv*. A movement to form a new national Jewish style emerged. There was no clear notion of the properties of that style, except for a vague vision of an Eastern character. And so, each performance of a new composition evoked an ideological debate, which evaluated the extent to which the new composition would contribute to the new style. It was generally recognized that a composition that is mainly of western nature is not a contributing member towards establishing that new Jewish style.

It was expected that in the reality of an emerging, struggling society, the composer should act as a *Shliah Tzibur*[3] (a public representative). Therefore, his music should express and represent the collective

[2] Musicologist Jehoash Hirshberg identifies four trends in early Israeli music. **Collective nationalism**, according to which one should compose the land and reflect the time and place in their composition. **Individual nationalism**, which asserts that a composer's residency and nationality are sufficient to dim him an Israeli composer, therefore each individual may compose as he pleases. **Popular nationalism**, representing a desire to compose in a way that would be easily understood and received by the audience. **Cosmopolitanism**, reflected mostly in the post Independence War era, when a reality of minimal communication with both the Arab world and the Arab population within Israel led composers to seek inspiration and training in the west.

[3] *Shliah Tzibur*, literally messenger of the people, is a title referring both to a leader of the congregation in a synagogue service and to any official representative of the public.

and shun any expression of personal emotions. For this reason, Boskovich rejected the use of Romantic aesthetics as legitimate in the new style.[4]

Composing the landscape

In order to form a style that would fit their new home and the new Jewish identity, the composers were looking for elements with links to the essence of the land. They found such elements both in the landscape and in their heritage.

Alexander Uriah Boskovich, the most articulate ideologist of early Israeli composers, laid out a fundamental principle in the new style, according to which one should be *composing the landscape*. He made the distinction between *static landscape* and *dynamic landscape*. The static landscape referred to the physical landscape: the land, the sand, the desert. These all felt foreign to the composers who had just arrived from Europe. The dynamic landscape referred to the local living culture itself, the sounds and the general atmosphere. These were seen and heard all around and were also foreign and new to the immigrant composers. Some of these new sounds included the Arabic language and the Jewish Sephardic dialect, which was believed to follow the ancient Hebrew accent and was adapted in the early days of the *Yishuv*. These were considered to be authentic and representative of the current state of the land, greatly assisting in the process to achieve a new style of music, true to the time and place.

When looking for sources of inspiration for the new style in accordance with the new Jewish identity, a preference was given to both the present and the ancient past. This was part of a broader trend, according to which the period of exile is a period of national disintegration, treated as a "historical detour" in the eyes of the nationalist who attempts to bypass it by creating a symbiotic bridge between antiquity and the modern period.[5] Emphasis was therefore put on ancient biblical times and on the present

[4] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: Ideological Pressures in the Yishuv Period and Their Offshoots in Israeli Art Music during the Recent Two Decades," *Min-Ad: Israel Studies of Musicology Online* 4 (2005): 5

[5] Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 31-32.

day, with minimal attention to the centuries of exile in between. It was generally agreed that any connection to the ancient past would be a pure link to the ancient land, and therefore of great value to the new style and identity. A product of Western society, the recently European composers grew up in Europe, studied with Western composers and composed accordingly. The musical traditions of the Mizrahi Jews,[6] on the other hand, were considered to be more carefully preserved as they were more isolated and had less contact with non-Jewish people over the centuries. Any influence by Arabic elements they may have come across wasn't considered an interference but rather a legitimate reinforcement of authenticity. In essence, the recently Western European composers were tagging their closest outsiders as "authentic."[7] The more isolated from western influence a community was perceived to be – the more pure Mediterranean it was considered. Therefore, the Yemenite Jews drew the most attention from the early Israeli composers.[8]

The general message was clear, as stated by Paul Ben-Haim, one of the most prominent composers of the founding fathers: *"If we are speaking of an Israeli renaissance, we must welcome every Semitic influence and oppose Western influence"*.[9]

In this context, Ofra Itzhaki points to an interesting observation about the special case of folklorism and orientalism in Israeli art music.[10] In Western music, folklorism mostly means the use of local folklore and melodies by a composer, like the use of Hungarian folklore by Brahms and Liszt. In the case of Israeli music, the material and melodies are indeed borrowed from local folklore, but these melodies actually originated in Jewish communities hundreds of miles away, all the way from Morocco

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[6] *Mizrahi Jews*, literally means Eastern Jews, refers to descendants of Jewish communities who resided in Western Asia and Northern Africa for centuries until their immigration to the State of Israel in the mid twentieth century. Most notably, these communities resided in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Morocco.

[7] Assaf Shelleg, "Israeli Art Music: A Reintroduction," *Israel Studies* 17, no. 3 (2012): 129.

[8] Ronit Seter, "The Israeli Mediterranean Style: Origins, 1930's-1950's." (2013): 15. https://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/Seter%20Ronit%20Med%20Style.pdf

[9] Ronit Seter and Arbie Orenstein, "'An Exotic Ornament': Amnon Shiloah on Israeli Art Music," *Musica Judaica* 21 (2015): 176.

[10] Ofra Yitzhaki, *"Israeli Piano Music after 1985 – Analysis and Comparison in Historical Perspective,"* (DMA diss., Julliard School of Music, 2006), 128-129.

through Russia to Iraq. The Israeli composer thus uses folklore from afar as a foundational element to establish his own local style.

Orientalism in Western music often borrows material from other cultures and presents it as foreign and different, as can be observed in the use of Turkish music by Mozart. In the case of Israeli music, the foreign musical elements are used by the composers not in order to describe the "other" but rather to explore their own ancient history and to learn something about themselves.[11]
Another meaningful connection to the national identity and to the land of Israel in ancient times was found in the bible. Despite being mostly secular, the immigrant composers and their descendants viewed the bible as a great source of reference and inspiration. They considered it a link to the past and a useful ally in the quest to understand the essence of the ancient land. Accordingly, one of the principles of collective nationalism indicated that biblical past and biblical Hebrew are strongly connected to the renewed Jewish presence in Israel.

Stylistic elements of Israeli music

In the process of creating the new Israeli style, the composers were looking further to the east while trying to leave their western heritage behind. In doing so, they went through a process of autoexoticism, mostly finding their inspiration in Mediterranean music.[12]

The term Mediterranean music was informally coined by Alexander Uriah Boskovich, yet it was Max Brod (author, translator, composer, librettist and Boskovich's composition student) who was the first to use the term formally in his 1951 book. He describes the Mediterranean style as one where the "music is southern, infused with the bright light of the Mediterranean air, lucid, striving for clarity… (featuring) harsh irregular beat, the obstinate repetition, but also the manifold, ceaseless variation… linear, unisonal

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[11] Ronit Seter, *Yuvalim Be-Israel, Homage to Art Music in Israel: State of Israel Jubilee 1948-1998* (Jerusalem: The Council for Culture and Art Music Books, 1998), 11.

[12] James Parakilas, "How Spain Got a Soul," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 139.
As observed by Asaf Shelleg, the term autoexoticism originally coined by James Parakilas in reference to Spanish music can be applied to the process Israeli music went through.

or at least not polyphonically overburdened."[13] Brod also speaks about clear influence of the melodies of the Yemenite Jews, the naturalization of the boundaries between major and minor keys, the return to ancient modes and the neglect of the augmented second that used to be so characteristic of Jewish music in the diaspora. He mentions how a connecting line can be drawn between this musical style embraced by the local composers and Arabic music.

Melody was clearly an important factor in the new style, and discussions about its character and sources of inspiration were frequently held. As previously mentioned, the composers showed a special interest in the music and melodies of the Yemenite Jews, who were thought to be relatively isolated through the centuries and therefore considered to be an authentic source. Perhaps the most notable attempt to build a bridge between the two cultural worlds was made by Bracha Zefira, a singer of Yemenite origin. She was orphaned at the age of three and raised by several volunteering foster families of different ethnic origins. From these different backgrounds she learned a large repertory of traditional songs. At the end of the 1930's, Zefira commissioned arrangements of songs of eastern origins from nearly all the composers in Palestine, insisting western orchestral instrumentation.

Boskovich also emphasizes the importance of Israeli melody and rhythm. Both are to be based *"on Hebrew and Jewish tradition, which is entirely vocal."*[14] That statement can certainly connect with what was described earlier by Max Brod as a *"tendency for a linear texture, or at least not polyphonically overburden."* The local Arabic music that influenced the composers, along with some of the Jewish-Arab music, is also known to be vocally oriented and is typically set in a monophonic texture. Melody, in fact, was such a meaningful element for the Israeli composers that in many cases the harmony was a result of the meeting of several melodic lines rather than the foundational structure of the musical works.

[13] Max Brod, *Israel's Music, trans. Toni Volcani* (Tel-Aviv: 'Sefer' Press, 1951), 57.
[14] Ronit Seter and Arbie Orenstein, "'An Exotic Ornament': Amnon Shiloah on Israeli Art Music," *Musica Judaica* 21 (2015): 176.

Challenges facing the ambitious mission

The mission to form a new style within the emerging society met several challenges along the way. Some of the challenges were uniquely Israeli, while others were the result of global circumstances.

An artificial process in a heterogenic society

Ideas and ideologies are powerful and can initiate change, but organic and natural evolution takes time. The circumstances called for the need to establish a new society in Israel and to do it quickly, a challenging task for any community. The society in Israel was young, diverse and somewhat segregated, made of people from several different backgrounds. In addition, the historic conflict and tension between Jews with origins in Western countries and the ones from Eastern countries was so substantial, eventually becoming the fundamental element organizing the political system in Israel, pushing the two further away from each other. Naturally, the separating lines between the many different groups are being slightly blurred every day for the past few decades, but perhaps that is the point. If allowed to occur in a natural, organic manner, this kind of process takes many decades, perhaps even centuries. The process of creating a new Jewish-Israeli society, identity and musical style was more immediate and coincided with the melting pot ideology, as articulated by David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister.

Israeli art music was making its early steps in the 1930's and it was moving quickly. While the major schools of art music in Europe (and in the east) had the luxury of centuries of tradition that allowed them to develop a cohesive style in their own lenient pace, the new school of Israeli music was created in an artificial way and almost overnight in terms of evolution of style and culture. The effort to amalgamate Eastern and Western elements was noble but not always successful and would later receive criticism. Some of the people who were initially in favor of this effort in the 1930's and 40's, such as the singer Bracha Zefira, later described composers' attempts as artificial and not a real quest for the essence of the local culture. The composers were accused of using the local music merely as an oriental ornament to their otherwise western works.

The attachment of the composers to their homelands

The Jewish identity underwent a meaningful process in the early part of the twentieth century. After many years living as a minority, the Jewish people suddenly found themselves as the majority for the first time. This change of status demanded a shift in the way in which this community used to handle itself for centuries.

> "A large population at once majority and minority, at once grounded and diasporic, tied not to an ethnic homeland (Europe being destroyed as a base), but to a newly-created substitute homeland (the State of Israel)"[15]

The immigrant composers went through a very challenging experience, having to leave their established homelands and move to a struggling new country. As much as they were committed to creating a new style, leaving their old ways behind was not a trivial matter, as they had strong emotional attachments to their past. Musicologist Jehoash Hirshberg describes it –

> "The peculiar situation of the first-generation composers. They had escaped Europe as refugees. None of them had planned to settle in Palestine… They found themselves entrusted to a unique challenge of creating a completely new national musical culture. At the same time, the only way they were able to soften the trauma of displacement was to preserve the cultural links with the heritage of the West."[16]

Post Independence War circumstances

With the declaration of independence in 1948 and the Independence War that immediately followed, a new reality was formed. The gates to the Arab world were shut and almost all local communication between Jews and Arabs, cultural or otherwise were discontinued at once. These were the

[15] Mark Slobin, "Ten Paradoxes and Four Dilemmas of Studying Jewish Music," *The World of Music* 37, no. 1 (1995): 22. While this statement appears in its original source describing Jewish composers who settled in the United States in their post-European phase, it certainly captures the situation of the Israeli composers at that time.

[16] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: Ideological Pressures in the Yishuv Period and Their Offshoots in Israeli Art Music during the Recent Two Decades," *Min-Ad: Israel Studies of Musicology Online* 4 (2005): 6

early days of the second generation of Israeli composers who, in search for new sources of inspiration, started looking to the West. And so, the founding fathers of Israeli art music who had made the decision to leave European music behind as a fundamental principle of their newly created style, were training a new generation who would eventually return to Europe, reabsorb that culture and later incorporate it in their own Israeli compositions. This turning point presented a challenge to the very young Israeli style of composition that had only taken its first steps a little more than a decade earlier. Israeli composers to this day are affected by both the local flavors and the global trends and are often in search of the balance between composing the land and composing the times.

Global circumstances

The global circumstances surrounding the immigration of the composers to Israel presented their own challenges. The period between the wars in the 1920's-30's was full of uncertainty and instability. In addition, the arts and classical music in particular were undergoing one of their more complicated phases, in which centuries of relative stability and unity of style were replaced by an avalanche of ideas, individual voices, multiple trends and new schools of thought and composition. It is hard to determine whether creating a new style is made easier or more difficult at such times, but it is safe to assume that the events of the day were on the minds of the composers.

The composers of the third generation and beyond had a significantly different experience than their ancestors. Most of them were born in Israel to a solid undisputedly independent Jewish State. The foundations for a strong society as well as a local musical style were much more present than they were for their predecessors. These composers of the later generations did not feel the responsibility to prove their Israeliness in any way, since there was no dispute about it to begin with. Free from this burden, they were content to welcome external influences and innovations from the western schools. Most of these composers studied in Europe and in America and some set their homes over there.

The Israeli style that was eventually formed is as wide and varied as the number of composers it hosts. The western school and training, the Middle Eastern flavors, the politics, the conflict, the biblical text and the national experience all continue to have a lasting influence on composers and their work.

Part II:
Musical Analysis in Historical Perspective

Motivic unity and Middle Eastern aesthetics:
Atar Arad – *Tikvah* (2008)

Atar Arad was born in Tel Aviv in 1945 to a family of artists. His mother was a painter, his father a sculptor and photographer and his younger brother a designer and architect. Arad emerged as a world-class violist, winning the City of London Prize at the Carl Flesch Competition (1972) in his first public performance with the instrument. He was awarded First Prize in the International Geneva Competition a few months later and went on to a remarkably successful career as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher. Arad was a member of the Cleveland Quartet, taught at some of the most prestigious schools and festivals in the United States and recently received the American Viola Society's Career Achievement Award (June 2018) and the International Viola Society's Silver Alto Clef 2018 "in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the viola" (November 2018).

Arad does not perform *"to please the musicologist"*,[17] and he does not compose to please the musicologist either. His compositions are very intuitive and improvisatory in their nature. A fairly modest task of setting into writing certain musical ideas and technical discoveries evolved into his first composition, a Viola Sonata presenting new challenges and innovations, and reflecting longing to his homeland and childhood. As evident in his first composition, his pieces often feature elements of Bulgar music and Sephardic folklore, which were an integral part of his home and environment in Tel Aviv of the 1950's-60's.[18] Ever since, Arad added many compositions, including concertos, pieces for chamber ensembles and solo works.

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[17] Atar Arad, "Ask the Pros | Violist Atar Arad - "How Important Is It for a Performer to Be Versatile in Many Styles?" [Advice]," November 9, 2017, https://theviolinchannel.com/atar-arad-important-performer-versatile-many-styles-advice/

[18] Atar Arad, interview by Noam Ben Zeev, *Haaretz*, August 11, 2009, https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/1.3339430

In addition to his compositions, Arad's contribution to the viola repertoire includes his edition of Bach's *Fantasia Chromatica* and Paganini's *Sonata per la Grand Viola*. His recordings are available on several labels and his music is published by Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag and the Israel Music Institute.

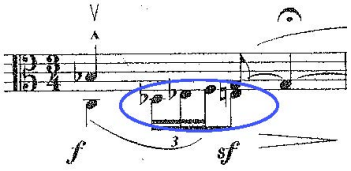
Tikvah, by Atar Arad was commissioned by the ARD International Competition in Munich in 2008. In the preface to the piece, the composer states that the commission made him think of another contest that had previously taken place in that same city, the tragic 1972 Olympic Games. Despite the somber source of inspiration, the composer chose to name the piece *Tikvah*, "hope" in Hebrew, reflecting the hope for a better future, in which "conflicts are resolved in peace, dignity and respect for human lives".[19] These two elements (the pain and the hope) are evident in the music. A sense of hardship and suffering is often present in the piece, but a glimpse of hope makes an occasional appearance when needed.

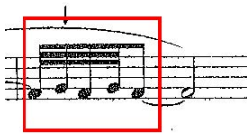
The piece is structured in several large parts, maintaining its unity through use of motivic and thematic elements. It contains features of Middle Eastern aesthetics and a hint of nostalgia, as the composer reflects on an event heavily rooted in the collective experience.

Main motivic forces

One of the greatest strengths of *Tikvah* is its motivic unity. It supports connection between large sections, helps the musical flow and maintains a sense of clarity and coherence in the piece.

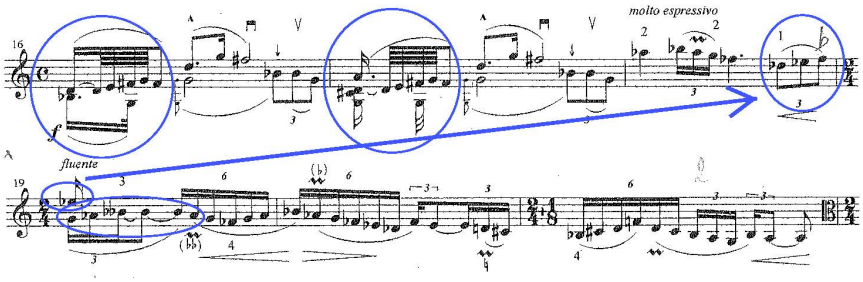
Tikvah begins with an opening statement, containing two of its main motivic fragments.

Motive A – 

Motive B – 

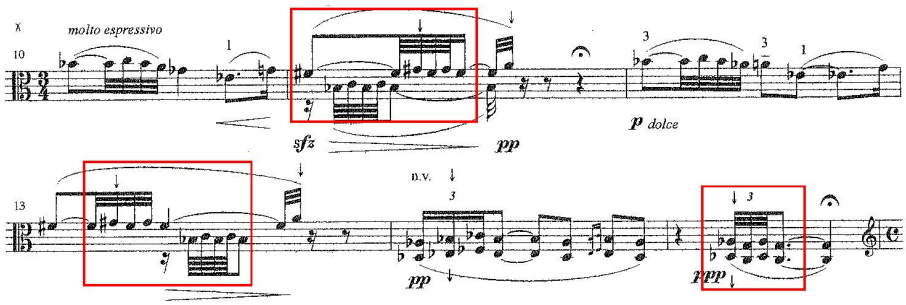
[19] Atar Arad, *"Preface"* to Tikvah (Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, 2016). This statement by the composer appears in the original print of the piece

Motive A is an energetic gesture, which normally sets the music in motion and pushes it forward. It often appears at a beginning of a phrase or a musical idea (see example 1.1). **Motive A** is a four note motive. It starts with an ascending three note gesture followed by a descent of a semitone. Later in the piece, **motive A** appears in some cases as a descending gesture rather than an ascending one and the essence of the gesture is preserved in those cases.



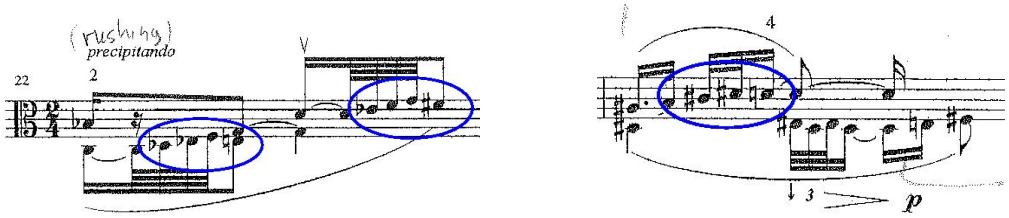
Example 1.1 – **Motive A** as a moving force in the music, mm. 16-23

Motive B is a more static gesture than **motive A**, ending on the same note with which it began. It often brings the music to a complete stop and appears right before a rest or a fermata (see example 1.2). **Motive B** typically contains five notes and forms a somewhat enhanced sigh gesture. In some cases, the first note of the fragment is omitted, creating a version of **motive B** with only four notes (see the last instance marked in example 1.2). The motive in such instances ends on the lower neighboring tone of the first note of the fragment, making the sense of a sigh gesture even more evident. In most cases **motive B** involves a quarter tone interval, an expressive element with an additional oriental flavor. The note affected (marked with a ↓) is usually the second note of the fragment (first note in cases where **motive B** appears as a four-note fragment). As a result, that note is highlighted, and the overall gesture (a descending semi-tone sigh) is emphasized.



Example 1.2 – **Motive B** often leads the music to a complete stop, mm. 10-15

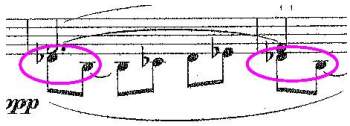
In both **Motives A** and **B**, the contour and shape of the gesture are the determining factors rather than the rhythmic figuration. **Motive A**, for example, most often appears (as in the opening gesture) as a triplet but also makes use of other rhythms later in the piece. (see example 1.3) **Motive B** appears in a different rhythmic form as early as measure 4. (see example 1.4)



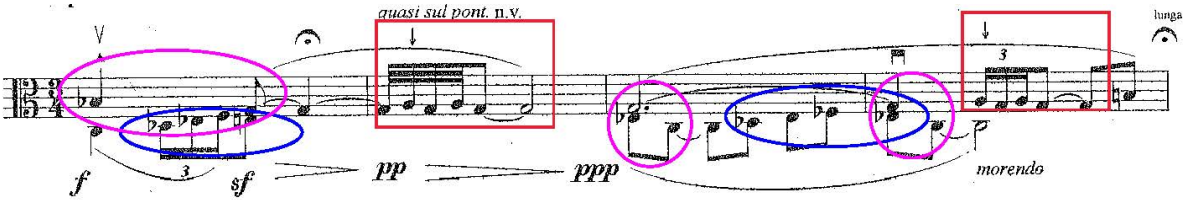
Example 1.3 – Motive A in different rhythmic figurations, mm. 22, 42

Motives A and **B** are mostly prominent through the first major part of the piece (Sections A-B, mm. 1-79. see form analysis below).

In addition, a third fragment in the form of a descending minor third is introduced at the very opening of the piece in measure 3 (with an even earlier hint in the first measure's top line descending B^{b}-G). This fragment is marked as **motive C** and, while making a modest appearance at the opening, will evolve and prove to be significant later in the piece.

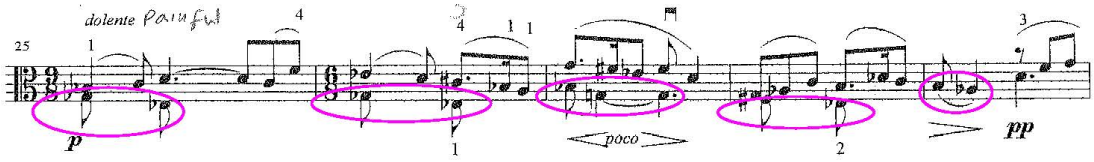
Motive C – 

Motives A, B, C are all found at the very opening of the piece, as shown in example 1.4.



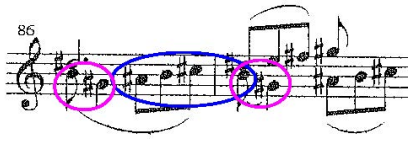
Example 1.4 – Motives **A**, **B**, **C** in measures 1-4

The central melodic theme of the piece is introduced in measure 25. It is accompanied by **motive C** and frequently features an augmented second interval as an expressive device. (see example 1.5) The theme is the main thematic feature of the piece, on which variations and development will later be applied. It appears twice in the opening of Section B (measures 25-32) before immediately taking on variations in three subsequent appearances (starting at measure 34). In the meantime, **motive C** gains more prominence through this section, still in a secondary role, but much more present and persistent than earlier. (see example 1.5)



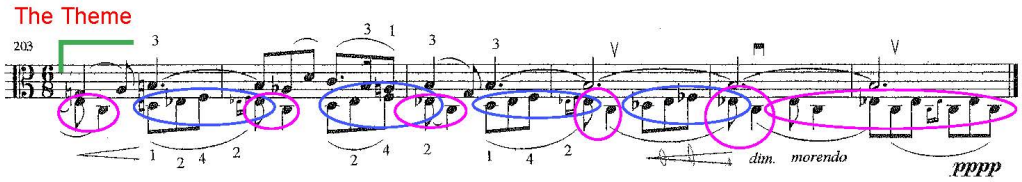
Example 1.5 – The theme, with prominence of **motive C**. mm. 25-29

Measure 85 presents a great example of motivic unity as **motives A** and **C** join forces and form a new thematic figure (see example 1.6). It is in that moment that **motive C**, mostly in the background until that point, assumes a more prominent role.



Example 1.6 – A new thematic figure, mm. 86-87

Several of the main motives meet once again at the very end of the piece. After three measures of a meditative, prayer-like mood (mm.200-202), the piece comes to its final statement (see example 1.7). The Theme is played softly for the final time, accompanied by **motives A** and **C**, creating a sense of closure and providing a final moment of motivic unity in the piece.



Example 1.7 – The theme and **motive A, C** come together in order to form the final statement of the piece. mm. 203-End.

Overall structure

The piece is in several large parts, linked to one another through motivic and thematic connections. Unity through the piece is maintained by motivic connection (motives A, B, C), thematic connection (the theme and its development through the piece) and through its modal sonority. The parts are differentiated from each other by their character and by the motivic and thematic material they employ, and they are clearly separated in the score in various ways, either by a fermata, double bar, change of tempo or a new performance indication. In several cases, these markings in the score also serve a purpose of maintaining a connection between the large parts. An example can be seen when the composer uses a metronome marking to support thematic connections between sections – the sections starting at mm. 25, 43, 69, 105 and 189 all feature some variation on the main theme and are all marked with a similar metronome marking. Most of these sections are also marked with either *Andante, dolente* or both. As can be seen in table 1.1, each part has clear prominent motivic or thematic material that becomes a foundation of its vocabulary and greatly affects its character.

Table 1.1 – Main features and prominent motives in *Tikvah*.

Part	Measures	Description, special features	Prominent motives
A	1-24	Introduction	**A, B**
B	25-79	New thematic material Introduction of the theme	**C**
	43-67	Improvisatory	**A**
	68-79	Paraphrasing over the theme	
Transition	80-84	Introducing a new fragment	**C**
C	85-104	**Motive C** evolves into a thematic motive	**C**
B'	105-151	Variations on the theme	**C**
Transition	151-162	Improvisatory	
	160-162	Setting up the closing section	**B**
Closing section	163-199	Recalling the theme, with emphasis on **motive C**	**C**
Transition	196-199	Recalling **motive B**	**B**
Coda	200-End	Quote of National Anthem Final statement of the theme accompanied by **motives A, C**	**A, C**

Middle Eastern aesthetics and memories of the homeland

The piece features several elements of Middle Eastern aesthetics. They include use of quarter tones, obstinate repetition and ceaseless variation, short phrases ending abruptly and embellishments resembling Arabic *Maqamat*. These elements appear mostly in parts A, B (in mm.1-67) and at the end of

the piece (mm. 176-end), but other hints and examples can also be found elsewhere.
Most of the main motives of the piece include some elements of Middle Eastern aesthetics. These can be seen in the contour of the gestures, the intervals used and the way in which they reappear.

Use of Middle Eastern embellishments

Motive A typically opens with a group of three rapid notes leading to a longer and more central one. These three rapid notes go around the central note in one way or another, thus emphasizing it. This quasi-arabesque gesture resembles a performance technique often applied in Arabic *Maqamat*, where an important note is being embellished by a group of quick neighboring notes preceding it.

Use of quarter tones

Quarter tones were certainly part of the *dynamic landscape* in the early days of the State of Israel. They are a clear example of an element one will likely encounter while growing up in a Middle Eastern country and is much less likely to be exposed to while growing up in Europe. In *Tikvah*, quarter tones are marked with a ↓ and are mostly used in the context of a sigh gesture. The quarter tone is used to enhance the sigh gesture and does so very effectively.

Motive B regularly features a quarter tone. It is an integral part of the gesture, lending it a Middle Eastern flavor and perhaps even supporting its tendency to end phrases. By presenting an unusual sonority in a western music context, the quarter tone demands more time in order to be fully absorbed. Perhaps that is the reason it tends to appear right before a rest, creating a much-needed moment for both the listener and performer to process it.

Obstinate repetition and ceaseless variation as elements of Middle Eastern aesthetics

As mentioned earlier, among the musical elements often found in the Mediterranean style indicated by Max Brod,[20] are obstinate repetition and ceaseless variation. Both elements are present in the

[20] Max Brod, *Israel's Music, trans. Toni Volcani* (Tel-Aviv: 'Sefer' Press, 1951), 57

piece, reinforcing the sense of Middle Eastern aesthetics. **Motive C** tends to be relentlessly followed by ceaseless variation. The clearest example can be seen in part C, mm. 85-104. This section introduces a simple fragment containing **motive C** which ends up being restated ten times within this twenty-measure segment. A case of ceaseless variation can also be observed in the way the composer treats the theme. It appears for the first time in its simplest form in m.25 and is immediately applied with alterations. The theme is able to evolve throughout the piece as it appears in several different harmonies, rhythmic figures, embellishments and in different textures. Thus, its appearances are never quite the same, but rather, with some variation. Examples can be seen in the sections starting in mm. 68, 111, 203.

Use of augmented second

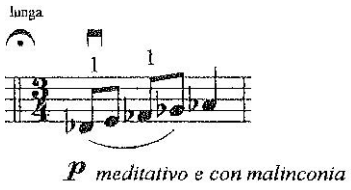
The expressive use of augmented second was considered by the founding fathers of Israeli music to represent the Jews of the diaspora, and as such they decided to neglect it. They believed that leaving the augmented second behind would contribute to the process of creating a new Jewish-Israeli identity. Over time, the discourse regarding the use of augmented second has changed, and some composers started feeling more comfortable using it in their works.

Arad uses the augmented second unapologetically in *Tikvah*. Featured in the many appearances of the theme, the augmented second becomes an integral part of the piece's sound world, adding an expressive element to it. When growing up, this interval was often present in music listened to by Arad's parents, and appeared in many of the local popular songs of the time. It therefore became a meaningful part of Arad's musical vocabulary and a part of his own *dynamic landscape* experience of Israel in its early days. Denying its use would be an artificial interference with his creative process.

In our conversation, Arad spoke about the use of elements of Middle Eastern aesthetics in his music as a testament to his longing for the land and for his childhood. These elements are both memories and a part of his identity. They are a powerful link to his formative years, his parents, his upbringing and to a naïve and modest homeland.

The title of the piece and the collective element

A special moment at the closing section of the piece should be noted. Following a long pause (*lunga*), the composer chooses to open the coda (m.200) with a partial quote of the Israeli national anthem (called *HaTikvah*, The Hope, much like the piece). This is not an obvious or over-simplified patriotic fanfare, but rather a careful hint (see example 1.8). The statement is made exquisite as the dynamics in which it appears is *piano* and the performance indication is *meditativo a con melinconia*, unlike the majestic and proud manner in which national anthems are typically performed. This unusual appearance reflects the contrast between how the national anthem was played in Munich in 1972 and the context in which national anthems are supposed to be played at Olympic games. The Hope is therefore hinted, implied and silently whispered in lieu of recent musical and historic events.



Example 1.8 – Partial quote of *HaTikvah*, the Israeli national anthem, m. 200.

It is worth noting that this is the only piece with a Hebrew title by Arad, who decided on that title only after completing it. As described in the preface, the commission of the piece evoked certain emotions and memories in the composer, both on a personal and a collective level. The idea of a contest taking place in Munich, made him immediately think about the tragic events that took place during the Olympic Games of 1972 in the same city. The title of the piece is in some way a result of that process. In our conversation, Arad explains how after realizing he had included a quote of the Israeli national anthem, he concluded this was a significant event in the piece. Naming it as he did was the natural next step to take.

- All the musical examples in this chapter are courtesy of

Individual experience meets the collective: Gilad Hochman – *Akeda* (2006)

Gilad Hochman was born in Herzliya, Israel, in 1982, to an Odessa-born father and a Paris-born mother. He started playing the piano at age six and started composing when he was nine years old. Hochman later studied composition with Ilya Heifetz and Gil Shohat before moving to Berlin in 2007, where he has been residing ever since. While still exploring other avenues, Hochman developed his own musical voice maintaining a solid connection to Jewish music and culture and to his Israeli origin. He frequently makes use of Jewish idioms and folklore in his music, whether it's an allusion to Jewish cantillation, inspiration from biblical sources and Israeli landscapes or the choice of Hebrew titles for some of his most notable pieces. Two representations to the way in which Hochman's attachment to his heritage and national culture is reflected in his work can be seen in a joint project he developed with a German photographer,[21] where the memory of the Holocaust is preserved through his music, and in his piece *Nedudim* (Wandering), where he explores the wandering experience of the Jewish people through the centuries.[22] Hochman makes frequent visits to Israel, during which he often travels within the country and absorbs its landscape. Some of his impressions from such scenes find their way to his compositions.[23] At his young age, Hochman already enjoys a successful career including frequent commissions and several awards. Most notably, the Prime Minister Award for Composition (2007) which Hochman received at the age of twenty-four, being the youngest ever to have received this prestigious award.

In the early days of Israeli music, there was an intense ideological discussion over the direction this new style should adopt. A strong movement was formed by composers advocating for a style that would represent the collective in accordance with the spirit of the day in the *Yishuv*. In an effort to

[21] Gilad Hochman, "His Heart is in the East," interview by Yaacov Bar-On, *Maariv*, October 23, 2015, https://static.wixstatic.com/media/77ea0c_e5b41536b7664e6493749330ada8b088~mv2.jpg
[22] Gilad Hochman, "The Sound of Silence," interview by Elisabeth Neu, *Jewish Voice from Germany*, October 5, 2016, http://jewish-voice-from-germany.de/cms/the-sound-of-silence/
[23] Hochman, "His Heart is in the East," *Maariv*

compose the land they were looking for a link to the essence of their new home, borrowing from the Mediterranean style, exploring biblical texts and welcoming Semitic influence.

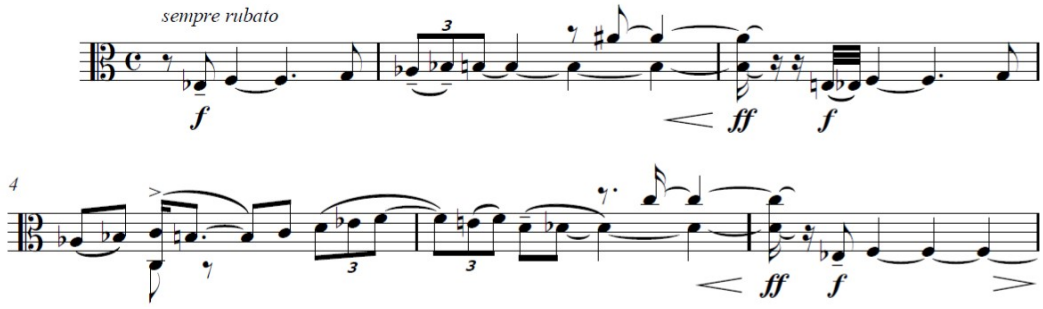
An evolved and more modern take on collective nationalism can be seen in *Akeda* by Gilad Hochman, which was commissioned by the 2006 Aviv Competition in Tel Aviv. Decades later and while using his own personal voice, Hochman's work is shaped by some of the cultural aspects that influenced early Israeli composers. The piece is inspired by a biblical story, makes use of Mediterranean elements and recalls Jewish literature and synagogue music.

The word *Akeda* in Hebrew refers most often to the biblical story of the binding of Isaac by his father Abraham. For many years this has been the nearly exclusive context in which this word was featured, until a tragic event on a national scale occurred and broadened its use. In November 1995 Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated and after centuries, the word *Akeda* received additional meaning and was associated to a national figure (incidentally, with the same first name). While the biblical story was the main point of reference, Hochman states that the late Prime Minister was on his mind as well while writing the piece.

Hochman chooses to portray the biblical monumental story through his own lens, by borrowing the main motive of *Akeda* from an earlier piece linked to a personal experience.

As previously mentioned, the title *Akeda* refers to one of the most famous biblical stories from the book of Genesis. According to the story, God commands Abraham to take his son, his only son, to the mount of Moriah, and there to make an act of sacrifice and commitment to him. In *Akeda*, the composer contemplates on the thoughts and emotions of a father who was given such an order. The piece therefore explores the inner struggle and doubts, the anger and frustration that must be on the mind of someone who has to suddenly (and probably reluctantly) accept such a task, while at the same time being motivated by great faith and commitment to God. The composer successfully portrays the mixture of emotions and the inner drama of the story through his music. He also provides a contour to the musical line that portrays a sense of climbing, thus setting the scene of the climb of mount Moriah in an almost visceral

manner. The opening phrase is especially descriptive in that sense and will be restated relentlessly through the piece. It moves by ascending steps with great effort, takes a quick breath to regather its energy and then goes at it once again. (see example 2.1)



Example 2.1 – Opening phrase

Overall structure

The piece contains two main parts and a coda section. The parts are very clearly separated in the score by rests, performance markings and double-bar lines.

A (mm. 1-50) → **B** (mm. 51-102) → **Coda** (mm. 103-end)
1-25, 25-34, 34-50

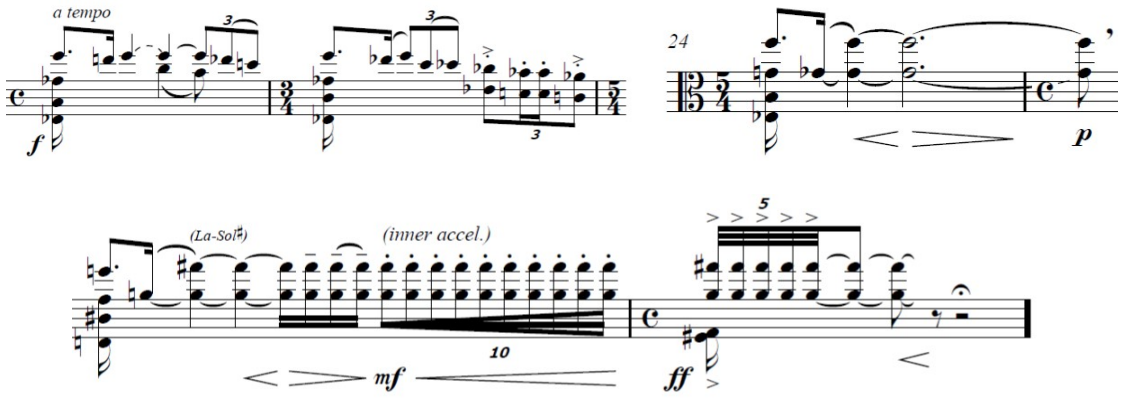
The two main parts move at a similar pace (both marked with the same metronome marking, quarter=55) and the main motivic elements they use are at the very least related (motive A' seems to be a variation on motive A). However, they differ in their contour and overall shape. Part A mostly moves in small steps, and it often has to restart after an abrupt pause (as shown in the opening two phrases, see example 2.1 above). Part B, on the other hand, seems to be more static at first, but once it starts opening its range it does so in a much more rapid and immediate manner resulting in a musical line with a wider range and very different contour.

While Part B is through-composed and constantly moves in a general direction of growth and development, Part A is set in ternary form (mm.1-25, 25-34, 34-50) with several waves of musical action.

The two outer sections of Part A (mm.1-25, 34-50) correspond to each other in their use of similar thematic and motivic material, as well as in their overall shape. They also build up to very similar climactic endings (mm. 22-24 and 47-50). The inner section presents a different character, as it often moves in descending steps and features *legato* articulation and softer dynamics. It also reaches its climax at the end of the section, but it is more modest.

Waves of musical action

While the piece could easily be assimilated into a traditional form as shown above, it can also be viewed through several dramatic waves of action. These waves tend to build relatively slowly before reaching a resounding climax that signals the end of each section. The growing levels of drama and intensity within the waves are achieved by increasing the frequency of notes, widening the range and enriching the texture throughout each section. As a result, the waves start with a single *cantabile* musical line moving at a lenient pace and usually end with a climactic section involving some mixture of fast moving notes in a thicker texture and frequent use of chords. (see example 2.2)



Example 2.2 – Climactic moments of the musical waves, mm. 22-24, 49-50

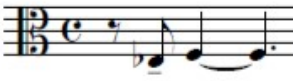
The Coda stands out in that sense, as it has a much calmer demeanor than the previous parts. Marked with *sempre p*, it recalls the modal language, motives, contour and phrase structure of Part A, albeit in a softer, less driven manner.

Prominent motives and motivic unity

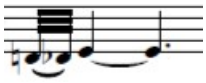
Most of the main features of the piece are presented right off the bat. The opening phrase contains three significant fragments:

- The opening two notes – **E^{b}→F**, marked as **motive A**
- The four following notes – a figure of four notes with the following sequence of intervals: semitone, tone, semitone, marked as **motive B**
- The major seventh interval leaving the phrase in a state of suspension. This expressive interval plays an important role throughout the piece.

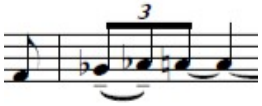
In addition, **motive A'** appears in measure 3 and will be greatly featured in Part B.



Motive A



Motive A'



Motive B

Identifying **motive A'** as a variation on **motive A** obviously implies a close relation between the two. However, their character and influence over the phrase are different. **Motive A** tends to initiate a process of ascending steps forming a phrase while **motive A'** seems more active and quicker at first, but the music that follows it is more static.

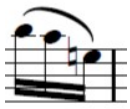
The ascending contour of the opening two measures should be noted, as it is greatly indicative of what follows. Much like the opening phrase, most of Part A moves in ascending steps (tones and

semitones) featuring **motive B**. The contour, therefore, not only indicates the direction of the musical line, but is also fundamentally linked to the character and the modal language of the piece.

The major seventh interval, introduced in measure 2, is one of the most prominent intervals of the piece. It meaningfully appears at key moments, including local and structural climaxes, as well as dramatic endings of phrases.

Motive C

The piece remarkably opens with 11 measures of steps – with an almost exclusive use of tones and semitones. The music constantly moves forward in fairly loud dynamics and in an ascending line. A distinctly new gesture is introduced at the upbeat to measure 12 – **motive C**. Different and refreshing in a couple of ways, **motive C** adds the powerful tritone to the palate of intervals and moves in a descending line, presenting a contrast to previous ascending phrases.



Motive C

In order to emphasize the addition of new material, the composer clears the surface just before its first appearance. Measure 11 presents a cadential figure followed by a comma, and **motive C** is introduced after that careful setup by the composer. This is the first case of a phrase ending in such a manner, following the abrupt *ff* endings of the opening phrases. As in its first appearance, **motive C** tends to bring the piece to its calmer moments providing a balancing element to the more dramatic sections. Appropriately, the composer chooses to use this motive as he gradually sets up the ending of the entire piece (mm.111-112).

All main motives make an appearance in the coda section (m.103), which opens with a recollection of **motives A** and **B**, including their ascending contour. However, the composer does make

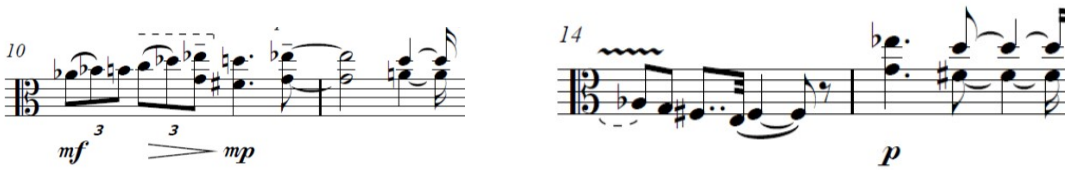
several distinctions between the opening and the closing parts of the piece. These meaningful changes can be seen in the character – the coda is much less driven and energetic than earlier parts, and in the dynamic markings – the coda is marked *sempre p*, in contrast with the nature of previous sections where the dynamics frequently change and move within a wide range. In addition, Hochman chooses to end the piece with a phrase moving in steps, this time in a descending line responding to the ascending contour of steps, so characteristic of earlier parts of the piece.

The final sonority of the piece leaves the listener in a remarkable sense of suspension with a D-E^{b} semitone. Once again, recalling a musical idea widely in use in the early part of the piece. While the moments of suspension at the end of phrases had the tendency to appear in loud dynamics and end abruptly earlier in the piece, such a musical event is much gentler and quieter when it appears in the coda.

Melody and modality

The piece is very vocal in its nature and character, as it is mostly composed in a lyrical and reciting manner, recalling synagogue and liturgical music. In a private conversation, the composer described it as a vocal, liturgical piece and referred to it as an *instruvocal* composition. The melody is therefore of great significance and is supported by the character, range and texture of the phrases. Whether moving in a single line, double stops or chords, the melodic line is always clear and easy to follow.

The language of the piece is mostly modal as the phrases in Part A are set in different modes and the *finalis* moves between the notes F and D. The opening phrases are set in Dorian mode on F, while later phrases are in Locrian mode (mm. 9-11, 25-26) and Aeolian mode (m. 21) before returning to Dorian in m. 35. In addition, the composer uses quasi-cadential figures to establish prominence of certain notes. (see example 2.3)



Example 2.3 – Quasi-cadential figures, establishing D as a central tone

A pitch repeated often in the piece and at significant moments is E♭. While it is not an arrival note indicating a tonal center, it is a useful one to follow, as it often leads to a more foundational note. As will be further discussed below, E♭ is a member of two significant pairs of notes in the piece and it is always the first note of the two. It either appears at the beginning of a phrase and goes to F (as it does at the opening) or closes a phrase leading to a cadence on D, which functions as a finalis of some kind in the piece. It is where the music goes to in quasi-cadential moments, often through the figure E♭→D. (see example 2.3, above)

The main motives of the piece are strongly connected to their modes and maintain them while using similar pitches at later appearances. The opening theme is set in Dorian mode on F in its first appearance and again when it returns in measure 35. The climactic sections in both measures 22-24 and 47-49 are both in Ionian mode on G♭.

Tension and release

In our conversation, Hochman talks about different sections of the piece. Some are characterized with great drive and movement and some more still and static. He links this to the biblical story of the binding of Isaac and his interpretation of it. Hochman contemplates on how Abraham, who showed great moral standard and willingness to confront God in the story of Sodom and Gamora, accepts the order to sacrifice his own son with no apparent resistance or protest. The fact that he previously showed moral character and willingness to stand up for his principles leads to the conclusion that Abraham must have been experiencing great inner conflict and doubts in that case as well, even if he did not voice them. This inner process that he must have been undergoing is reflected in the music. The confusion, doubt and anger

facing the act he was ordered to commit are represented by areas of movement and turbulence, while the moments in which he is more calmly driven by his faith and commitment to God are represented by the quieter and more peaceful sections.

Two main pairs of notes in the piece

One representation of tension and release in the piece can be found in two pairs of notes. They appear at key moments and act as agents of action and rest, tension and release.

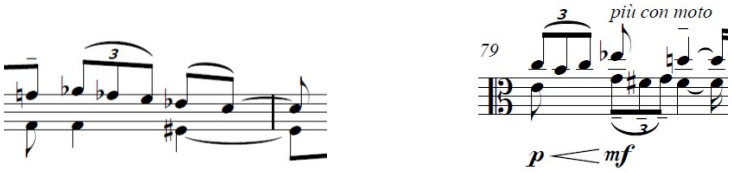
One of the pairs tends to open phrases (including at the opening of the piece) and the other functions as a cadential figure.

Pair 1: **Eb → F**

Opens a phrase, often initiating ascending motion.

Pair 2: **Eb → D**

Functions as a cadential figure. (see example 2.4)



Example 2.4 – The pair E^b-D in a concluding function of phrases, mm. 30-31, 79

Pair 1 opens the piece, as well as several following phrases. As an integral part of **motive A**, it often appears at the beginning of phrases and short statements.

Pair 2 appears in the final measure as the closing sonority of the piece. In earlier instances, it is often found at the end of phrases or at other local arrival points. Its first appearance is in measure 10 and will later make significant appearances in mm. 11, 15, 17, 79, 80. (see examples 2.3, 2.4 above) While Pair 1 almost always initiates movement and action, Pair 2 has a more concluding function and indicates moments of rest and release.

Major seventh and minor sixth, expressive intervals in key structural moments

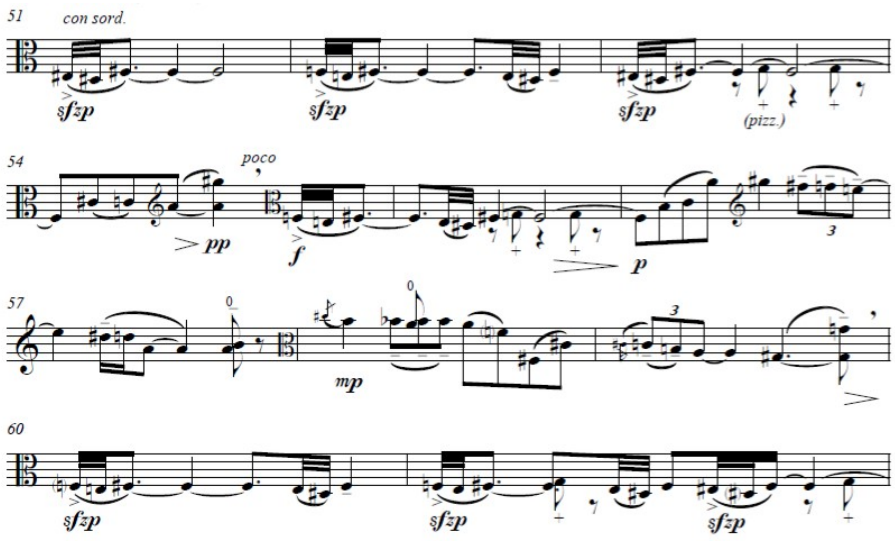
As mentioned above, the step intervals are prominent in the piece. They make a fundamental part of **motives A** and **B**, and mostly appear as a melodic interval greatly supporting the lyrical character and the sense of recitation in the music. Two other prominent intervals in the piece are the major seventh and minor sixth. These intervals are mostly used vertically and serve important expressive and structural roles. Both are often found at the end of phrases, larger sections and other moments where the action comes to a relative stop. Unsurprisingly, these two different sonorities end phrases in extremely different ways.
The major seventh interval is easily noticeable through the piece, due to its striking sonority and its effective use by the composer. It makes its first appearance at the end of the opening phrase, capturing the spotlight early on. The major seventh interval later appears at the end of short statements as well as larger sections, ending them dramatically and creating a powerful effect. It makes its mark on the climactic sections of the piece, as it is featured in many of the chords, as well as being a powerful closing sonority of both Parts A and B. (see example 2.2, above)

The minor sixth interval is gentler in nature and tends to appear at the end of phrases, providing a softer closing gesture. It first appears in mm.10-11 (see example 2.3, above) as part of a cadential figure and most of its subsequent appearances are of a similar nature. The cadential figures featuring minor sixth have an added role, as they often lead the music to **motive C**.

Obsessive and relentless

An obsessive element is constantly present in this piece, as many of the gestures and statements are restated relentlessly soon after their first appearance. This is evident throughout the two main parts while the Coda presents a different character. It is more concise in dynamic markings and in its motivic ideas, hence each musical figure appears once and allows the music to move on.
In the more obsessive parts, the short statements and even shorter fragments that are being immediately restated, usually do so with slight changes from previous appearances allowing them a sense of urgency

and relentlessness while remaining fresh and familiar. The obsessive aspect is most evident in the frequent use of both **motives A** and **A'**, appearing 9 times in Part A and 25 times in Part B. They appear over and over again with urgency, sometimes even interfering a previous statement with a new one. The fact that **motive A'** is a variation on **motive A** to begin with increases the sense of relentlessness in their appearances. (see example 2.5)



Example 2.5 – Frequent appearances of **motive A'**, mm. 51-61

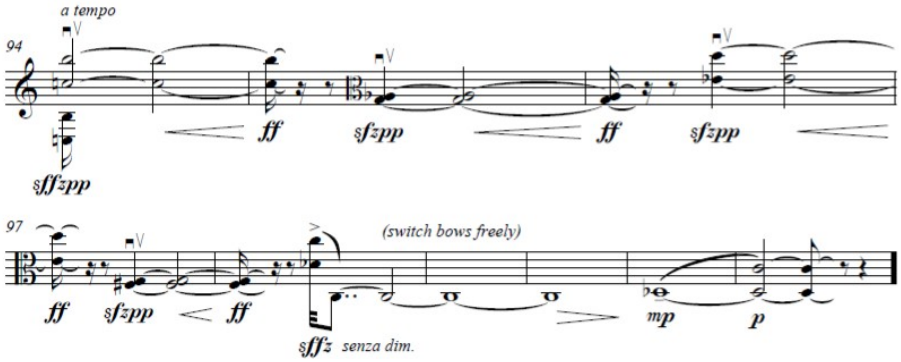
While the element of repetition is most easily observed when happening on a local, immediate level, it is also possible to identify it in the piece on a larger scale. In a couple of cases, the composer restates entire measures with slight alterations, creating a powerful sense of insistence. For example, a strong resemblance is apparent between mm.56-57 and mm.62-63. Another similar case can be observed when mm.58-59 are almost identically restated a semi-tone lower in mm.64-65.

The individual experience meets the collective memory

At a certain point, the story of the binding of Isaac became associated in the collective national consciousness with the untimely death of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the two of them sharing their first name. There is at least one other Israeli composition with a similar name, by composer Noam Sheriff,

making an explicit reference to the more modern story of the murder of the Prime Minister.[24] In our conversation, Hochman states that this story was also on his mind when composing the piece.

In the biblical story, an angel is being summoned at a crucial moment in order to stop Abraham before fully executing the task. While Isaac's life was spared, Hochman asks to take a closer look at the emotional experience this must have put him through. Those dramatic moments are portrayed in mm.94-102 while using the incredibly effective major seventh interval (see example 2.6). The sonority is further increased as the other prominent interval through this section is minor second, which is the inversion of the major seventh and one sharing the same interval content. Further reflection on the emotional toll of such experience is found in the following mellow coda section.



Example 2.6 – The emotional experience of Issac, as portrayed in Hochman's music

Both **motives A** and **A'** are featured in other pieces by Hochman. He uses **motive A** in two previous works: *Lior* and *On the verge of abyss*. **Motive A'** is used in the piece *Whom my soul loveth*. These musical siblings are vocal pieces and ascribe a single word to each of the motives. Looking at these pieces provides context to the motives and certainly adds meaning to their appearances in *Akeda*.
Lior was composed in response to the death of Lior, a friend of the composer's. In this piece, the emotionally charged name Li-or is consistently set to **motive A.** It is therefore reasonable to assume that the composer has an emotional connection to the motive. In another piece by the composer, *On the verge*

[24] *Akeda, In Memoriam Y. Rabin* is a piece for orchestra by Noam Sheriff, composed in 1997 shortly after the death of the Prime Minister.

of abyss **motive A** represents the word E-li, my Lord. It is certainly possible to imagine Abraham using that same motive to converse with God in *Akeda*.

In composing *Akeda*, Hochman features very personal material from earlier works in a piece directly connected to monumental national stories. In doing so, Hochman allows a meeting between his own personal experience and the collective one.

- The musical examples in this chapter are courtesy of © Gilad Hochman

Integration of borrowed material:
Shulamit Ran – *Perfect Storm* (2010)

Shulamit Ran was born in Israel in 1949. She started setting Hebrew poetry to music at the age of seven and by the time she was nine she was already studying composition with Alexander Uriah Boskovich and Paul Ben-Haim, two of Israel's most important composers. She moved to the United States at the age of fourteen, where she continued her piano and composition studies with Nadia Reisenberg, Norman Dello Joio, Dorothy Taubman and Ralph Shapey.

Ran has received numerous prestigious fellowships, grants and awards including the Pulitzer Prize (1991). She was Composer-in-Residence of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and her compositions have been performed by some of the world's leading orchestras and ensembles. A recipient of five honorary doctorates, her works are published by the Theodore Presser Company and by the Israel Music Institute and have been recorded on more than a dozen different labels.

In 2010, violist Melia Watras commissioned a piece from Shulamit Ran with one special request. She asked that the composition would allude to, or form some connection with an existing piece from the viola repertoire. As a reference to the new piece, Shulamit Ran chose the song *Black is the color*, the first song from Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*. Although technically not a viola piece (the song cycle as a whole is scored for singer and an ensemble), the specific song Ran used is orchestrated for singer, viola and harp. The viola plays a vital role in the song with a quasi-ritornello motive, often returning with some alterations. Ran borrowed that motive along with its structural function and implemented it in her own work. In her program notes, she describes how "the Berio motif serves as a focal point that, once established, is used as a 'return' moment and the point of departure for extended new elaborations."[25] Indeed, many of Ran's melodic shapes originate in Berio's motive and their connection to it is very clear. These little musical tributes appear frequently throughout the opening part, first as mere hints and later

[25] Shulamit Ran, *"Preface"* to Perfect Storm (Theodore Presser, 2010)

evolve, gradually becoming closer to Berio's version. Markings in the score make the relationship to Berio explicit, indicating *poco a poco omaggio* and *omaggio a Luciano Berio*. A more covert connection to Berio is found in the motive's structural role: as in Berio's song, the motive turns out to function as a ritornello, returning at the opening of large episodes and at structurally important moments.

Overall Structure

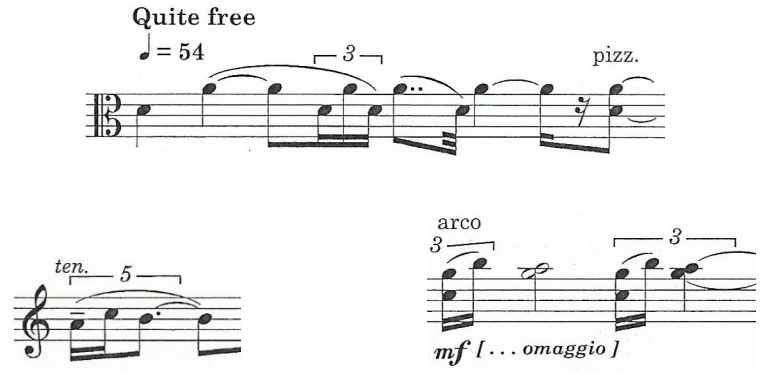
The piece is composed in five large parts, with a clear ritornello aspect, as previously mentioned. Table 3.1 shows a formal diagram of the piece. (The letters are annotated in the score)

Table 3.1 – Form and notable features in *Perfect Storm*.

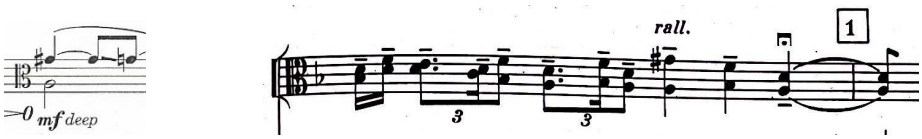
	Formal function	**Performance markings**	**Notable features**	**Intervals, modality**
Part A	Introduction A	*Cantabile* *With delicacy*	Gradual introduction of the Berio motive	Perfect fifth Dorian on D
Part B	The first signs of a storm	*Dark* *Menacing* *Intense*	Extreme ranges Rapid changes	Minor second Major seventh Chromatic
Part C	A'	*Sunny* *Dance-like*	Dance, fiddle style, constant accelerando, ferociously fast	Perfect fifth Dorian on A
Part D	A''	*With greater urgency and growing passion*	Growing obsessive Digging lower in register	Perfect fifth Dorian on E Chromatic
Part E	Closing section	*Cantabile* *With delicacy*	Disintegration of Berio's motive into its simplest components	Perfect fifth Dorian on D

Most of the piece is set in an improvisatory and spontaneous manner. The music is constantly moving and developing, and it does so for the most part without a sense of urgency, but rather at its own gradual and organic pace. Each large part opens with a relatively simple texture and calm demeanor. It then picks up as it moves along, becoming faster and more intense, as if each section is carefully forming its own little storm. After a while, this somewhat repetitive tendency of the musical structure becomes almost predictable and yet the composer is able to keep it fresh and interesting. She does so by installing certain surprises and by painting each appearance of the Berio motive and each local storm with different sonorities, leading the music to new and exciting places.

Part A represents the calm before the storm. While presenting some minor wind swirls here and there, the atmosphere is relatively peaceful for the most part. It is in effect an introduction, in which the modal language of the piece is being introduced, as well as the perfect fifth interval, which is of great significance for the piece's narrative. Berio's motive, the central feature of the piece, is being carefully generated by the composer. The section starts with a perfect fifth and then more elements are slowly added, so by the time the homage to Berio is presented (*ommagio a Luciano Berio*), it feels as if his motive naturally emerged from within Ran's music (see example 3.1). Although the section is mainly modal and consonant there is a single point of great dissonance as an interval of a major seventh (A-G$^{\#}$) occurs, foreseeing the most prominent interval of the dramatic Part B that is coming up. That interval appearing in this particular manner is also borrowed from Berio's song. (see example 3.2)



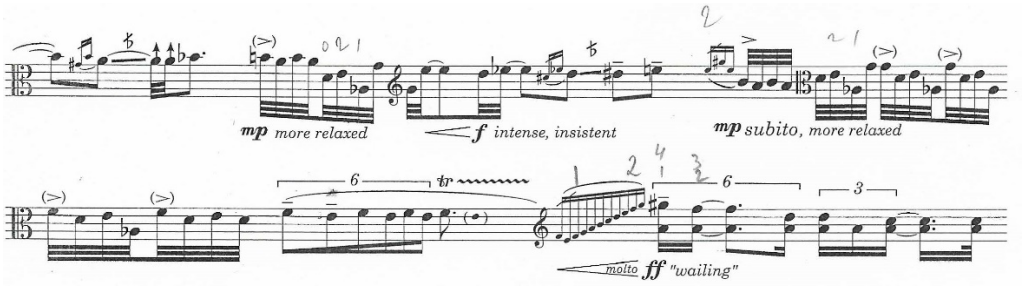
Example 3.1 – Evolution of the Berio motive in part A



Example 3.2 – Major seventh interval A-G$^{\#}$ in *Perfect Storm* next to the same interval in Berio's song

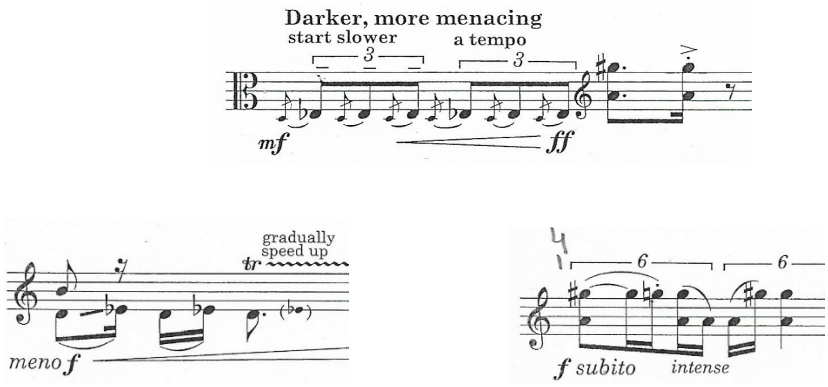
The final statement of Part A is homage to Luciano Berio. It is the culmination of the entire opening but, remarkably, should be played in soft dynamics and *with delicacy*. The homage is briefly stated, ending on the D-A sonority, which was so prominent through the entire opening part.

Right from the get-go, Part B challenges the peaceful atmosphere set up in Part A. The phrases are shorter and tend to end more abruptly. The dynamics are more extreme, both in range and in the manner in which they change. The *delicacy* and *cantabile* of Part A are replaced by *intense, insistence* and *menacing* of Part B, and the mood changes are much more immediate and extreme. (see example 3.3)



Example 3.3 – Extreme dynamic and mood changes in part B

Another example of the stark difference between the two opening sections is found in the prominent intervals they feature. Part B opens with a powerful statement comprised of a minor second and major seventh, two of the intervals furthest away from Part A's perfect fifths. These two intervals are a foundational component of Part B, as the music keeps returning to them. The gestures that first introduce these intervals appear several times in Part B, while using the same pitches as in their first appearance: D-E^{b} are used for the minor second interval and A-G$^{\#}$ for the major seventh. (see example 3.4) The perfect fifth is not entirely absent from Part B and makes a couple of appearances, although in quite a different role than the one played in Part A.



Example 3.4 – Minor second and major seventh intervals in part B

Part C is marked "sunny" in the score. Appropriately, it seems to be much more optimistic, at least most of the time. It opens with the Berio motive in its ritornello role, this time with an A as its central note, and makes a clear reference to the opening part. The music slowly picks up and turns into a somewhat primitive dance at letter C1, the only measured part of the piece. The change in mood is once again supported by a change in sonority. Both major and minor sixths make frequent appearances and greatly affect the overall sonority of this section. At the same time, the composer does maintain some memory of section B by occasionally incorporating the D-E^{b} semitone. (see example 3.5)

Example 3.5 – Instances of D-E^{b} semitone in part C

Part C is generally moving in constant acceleration: it starts with a tempo marking of quarter=88-92, moves through 100-104 and 116-120 to *ferociously fast*. The primitive dance of letter C1 transforms into a fiddle style playing, which quickly turns into what feels like an ecstatic ritual, eventually bringing the music to a complete stop.

Part D also starts with the Berio motive, this time with E as the central note. Once again, the opening part of the section is relatively stable and optimistic, although more chromatic than in earlier

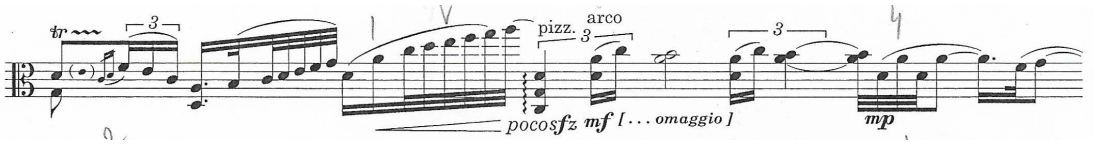
appearances. The music quickly evolves *with great passion and bravura* and it is even *growing obsessive*, increasing the degree of chromaticism, digging into lower registers and eventually leading the section from the opening E to a closing E^b.

The coda is a clear recollection of the opening part of the piece. The markings indicate *with delicacy* and *cantabile* as they did in the beginning and D is again the tonic. The opening gesture and overall mood are similar. It almost seems as if the Berio motive dissolved back to its most basic elements.

Perfect fifth for a perfect storm

Berio's original motive makes great use of the open strings and so does Ran in her homage to the Italian composer. Naturally, the frequent use of open strings leads to frequent appearances of perfect fifths and they become the most prominent sonority throughout *Perfect Storm*. The perfect fifth is introduced at the very first statement of the piece and reappears at the opening of sections A, C, D and E. This sonority is of great significance to the overall shape of each section, as it tends to support and represent the sense of calm and stability before the more stormy events that follow.

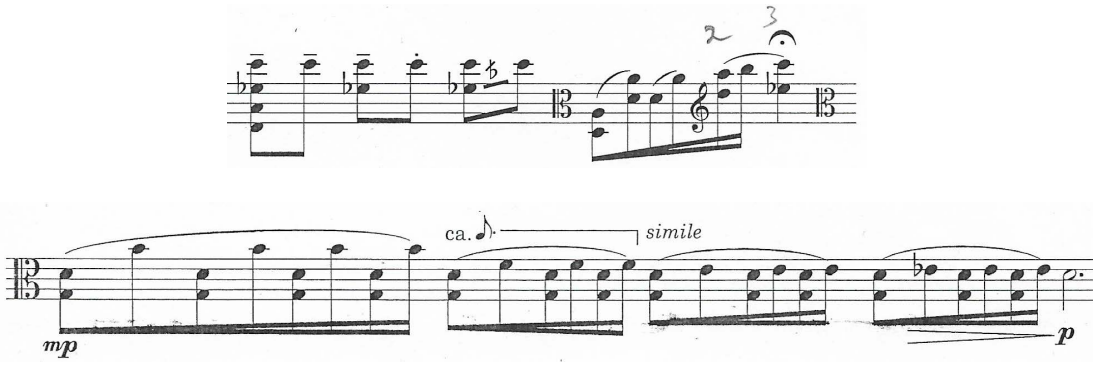
The opening section starts and ends with a D-A perfect fifth. It is the most prominent interval of the section, as the composer makes sure to constantly use that sonority to embrace the sound world she creates. Perfect fifths appear melodically, harmonically, as grace notes and in pizzicato. Broadly speaking, each appearance of a perfect fifth throughout the opening part brings the music closer to the Berio motive. (see example 3.6)



Example 3.6 – Perfect fifths in part A leading to the Berio motive

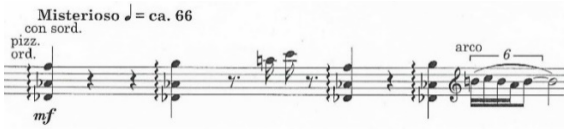
As an integral part of the Berio motive, perfect fifths are greatly featured in later ritornello sections at the openings of letters C and D. It is also meaningfully present in the closing section (letter E), where the composer breaks down Berio's motive back to its simple features, the most prominent of which being the perfect fifth.

While these are the most notable instances of perfect fifths in the piece, they do make appearances in other sections and often in a meaningful way. The perfect fifth is not a prominent interval in part B, but it is featured in one of the most intense moments and shortly after in the calmest moment of the section. In both cases, it greatly supports the atmosphere created by the composer. (see example 3.7)



Example 3.7 – Perfect fifths in intense and calm moments of part B

Shortly after, at letter C1, the perfect fifths are somewhat manipulated and extended into a tritone and an augmented fifth supporting the general destabilization and growing intensity of that entire section. The perfect fifths return at letter C2, this time as a key component of the fiddle style playing.
In the short transition to the closing section (letter D1), the perfect fifths are in one of their classic roles, functioning as the solid foundation of chords. Their pure quality greatly assists in creating a relatively pure atmosphere while setting up the closing section of the piece. (see example 3.8)



Example 3.8 – Perfect fifths as foundation of chords in the transition to the closing section

Tonality

The piece is mostly modal, with some more chromatic parts.

It opens in Dorian mode, with D as the tonic. This is in part dictated by the frequent use of open strings and the use of the Berio motive. Naturally, the great use of the D-A fifth supports the status of D as a tonic, as it opens and closes the piece, as well as several other phrases on a more local level.

Being set in Dorian mode, the Berio motive itself naturally affects the larger sections of the piece, in which it is prominently featured in one form or another. Sections A, C, D are all in Dorian mode, at least throughout their opening parts, while sections B, C1 are more chromatic. The composer maintains freshness by moving the mode through the circle of fifths and by increasing the level of chromaticism as the piece moves along. With every appearance of the ritornello and the Berio motive, the tonic moves through the circle of fifths: the tonic is **D** in the opening, moves to **A** at letter C, moves later to **E** at letter D before returning to **D** in the closing section. As a result, the sonority changes dramatically with each appearance of the Berio motive as the number of available open strings changes with each of these different tonics.

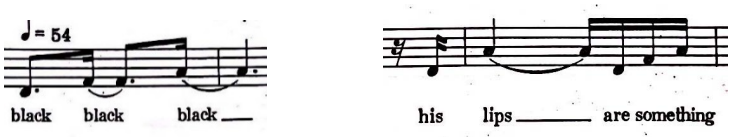
The closing section (letter E) opens in a very similar manner to the opening section, with a D-A fifth in Dorian mode. It starts deviating at some point, alluding to A minor and leaving the piece with a feeling of suspension on the closing D, in what was previously assumed to be a solid tonic.

Notable references to Berio's song

The decision to use the motive from Luciano Berio's song leads to additional links between the two compositions. *Perfect Storm* makes several references to Berio's song throughout the piece, some obvious and some require a closer look.

- The clearest link to Berio's song is naturally the use of his motive, which is sometimes hinted at and sometimes appears in its more extended form and is explicitly marked as *omaggio a Luciano Berio*.
- The opening D-A fifth of the piece, is a simple harmonic building block of Berio's motive, but is also connected to his song melodically. All the phrases in the song's voice part open with a D-A fifth, sometimes adding an F in between to form a minor triad as in its opening phrase. (see example 3.9)
- Another significant interval early in *Perfect Storm* is the major seventh. As one of the most dissonant intervals, it is perhaps the furthest away from a perfect fifth, making its appearance very powerful.

  All major seventh instances in the opening two pages of *Perfect Storm* make a clear reference to Berio's song as well. This interval, formed by the exact same pitches A-G$^{\#}$, makes a meaningful appearance in each of the quasi-cadenzas in Berio's short song, most notably in the opening part and at the end of the song. (see example 3.2, above)
- The performance indication of Berio's song is *Like a wistful "country dance fiddler"*, and it is very likely connected to Shulamit Ran's decision to include an *almost 'fiddler' style* part in *Perfect Storm*.



Example 3.9 – D-A perfect fifth regularly opening phrases in Berio's song

Observing the musical language as it relates to other Israeli compositions for viola

The sonority of Perfect Storm is significantly different from other pieces discussed in this paper, most notably *Tikvah*, *Akeda* and *Phoenix*. While these other three pieces are more chromatic and make great use of semitones and small steps supporting an easily sung musical line, Ran's piece features perfect

fifths and other consonant sonorities in search of a different type of sound world and expression. She also tends to move more frequently and rapidly between different ranges, leading to a very effective use of the instrument but not necessarily supporting a singable line. The result feels more like a force of nature (as the title of the piece seems to suggest) than a Middle Eastern prayer or reflection, as the other pieces seem to represent.

The musical language reflected in *Perfect Storm* is at least partially formed by the link to Berio's song. Rather than artificially planting a quote in foreign soil, the composer uses the most basic elements of Berio's motive in order to form a meaningful connection and successfully integrate it into her own piece in a natural and organic way. In a way, that is exactly what some of the founding fathers of Israeli music were aiming to do with the borrowed material they found in their quest for a new national style.

In Shulamit Ran's own words:

> "At the end, I believe that the borrowed materials, the 'found object', is thoroughly integrated into my composition, spawning music not readily suggested by the original point of inspiration, yet obviously enabled by that miraculous alchemy that is part of the process of creating music."[26]

[26] Ran, Shulamit. "Perfect Storm." *Program Notes*, Theodore Presser, 2010.

Speech and recitation in music:
Tzvi Avni – *Phoenix* (2001)

Tzvi Avni was born in Saarbrücken, Germany in 1927 and immigrated to Mandatory Palestine in 1935, four months after the region was reclaimed by Germany under the Nazis.
He started developing his interest in music at a young age, teaching himself to play the harmonica, mandolin and recorder, and began composing short pieces for these instruments. Not knowing how to read a single note since circumstances did not allow him a proper musical training, he came up with his own method of writing music. In 1943 he started studying piano and music theory and later went on to study at the Music Academy in Tel Aviv. Among his teachers were some of the leading figures of early Israeli music, including composers Paul Ben-Haim, Mordechai Seter and Abel Ehrlich. He then became significantly involved in the music education scene in the country, eventually joining the faculty of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance in 1971.

Being part of the second generation of Israeli composers, Avni's early works were influenced by the local prevalent Mediterranean style. In the 1960's, he developed an interest in electronic music, which led him to compose in a more abstract and cosmopolitan manner. He continued his studies in the United States, at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center with Vladimir Ussachevsky and in Tanglewood with Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss. His music shifted back towards his musical roots in the 1970's, with his later compositions including more tonal elements, importance of melody and some Jewish folklore.

A senior composer, Avni won several prizes, including the Israel Prize (2001), the Culture Prize of the Saarland (1998) and the Israel Prime Minister's Prize for Lifetime Achievements (1998). Tzvi Avni's music is published by the Israel Music Institute.

Phoenix was composed by Tzvi Avni in response to the horrific events of 9/11/2001 in the United States. The piece is a means through which the composer mourns and commemorates the tragic events that took place on that day, but also celebrates the human spirit and the power to overcome and rebuild – the phoenix. These two elements, the mourning and the spirit of overcoming hardships, are the driving forces of the piece and they take shape in two distinctly different parts of the composition.

The composer chooses to address this monumental event on a global scale through a more local lens. The musical language is modal in a large portion of the piece, recalling elements of speech and prayer recitation in a synagogue-like atmosphere. The notation is kept relatively simple (almost the entire score consists of quarter notes, eighth notes and triplets) and the phrases are short, but not at the expense of maintaining an expressive melodic line. The main notes of each part are highlighted by elements of tonality and an axis of symmetry. This is the only piece in this paper that was neither commissioned nor dedicated to someone. In our conversation, Avni shared with me that the massive global event called for a personal reaction and his great affection for the viola caused him to turn to it at that moment.

Overall structure

The piece is set in two parts – Part I and Part II (with a coda section starting in the upbeat to measure 164). The two parts reflect the two characters discussed above: Part I represents mourning and grief, and Part II celebrates the incredible human spirit and the power to overcome and rebuild. Naturally, they differ in character, texture, articulation and flow, and in their use of motivic elements.

Part I – Part II

A B – Coda (mm.164-end)

Part I is mostly composed in a single line and has a monophonic texture. The music has a *recitativo* quality, as it moves slowly in short phrases, each separated from the subsequent one by a rest. The articulation marking is *legato* for the most part, and there is clear and frequent use of motivic elements as well as two prominent intervals – semitone and tritone.

Part I moves in an improvisatory manner in a relatively flexible atmosphere, which is supported by the performance marking *Rubato*. The result is a feeling of a sorrowful and profound prayer, achieved by the intervals used, the musical gestures, the short statements ending abruptly, the range of the musical line and the overall pace.

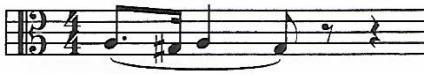
Part II presents a stark difference. It is composed in a quasi-toccata style and the texture is heterophonic, mostly moving in double stops. In terms of form, Part II is a loosely shaped Rondo with the opening section representing the main thematic idea to which the music returns after exploring other material. Unlike Part I, there is no interval that is more prominent than others (with the exception of two sections recalling the material and the mood of Part I in mm. 66-101, 164-end).
The improvisatory, *recitativo* nature of Part I is replaced with a more rigid one, both in character and in texture. Part II is very energetic and forceful, constantly moving with great sense of purpose, unlike Part I, which moves in short statements and a much slower pace. In a way, Part I presents many open questions in the form of short statements with suspended endings, while Part II seems to have all the answers it needs, moving ahead with great conviction.

The difference between the two parts is also apparent in their titles:
Part I – *Lento, rubato e espressivo*
Part II – *Feroce, con moto*

A couple of sections within Part II clearly recall Part I. They provide a short pause from the continuous motion and use the musical language, character (including the short phrases ending abruptly), intervals and motivic elements of Part I. These are the sections in mm. 66-101 and the coda in mm. 164-end. The coda brings elements of both parts together as if bridging the gap and bringing a sense of peace between them. It uses the intervals, motivic elements and general character of Part I with the constant double-stopped notes texture of Part II.

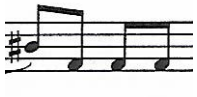
Main motivic elements

The first measure of the piece introduces the semitone, one of the two prominent intervals of the piece alongside the tritone. The semitone is immediately restated in the second measure from which all main fragments of the piece are generated. (see example 4.1a-b)



Example 4.1a – Measure 1, introducing the semitone

Example 4.1b – Measure 2



Motive A

Motive A'

Motive B

Motive C

A – The four eighth notes in measure 2. While the number of repeated notes may change in its appearances through the piece, the shape and pattern are always clear.

A' – Ending statement figures made of descending tritone eighth notes. They clearly originate from the first two eighth notes of **A**. **Motive A'** makes its first appearance in measure 12.

B – Motive B is somewhat of an evolution of **motive A**, with a descending augmented sixth rather than a tritone. It is usually a three eighth note figure, the first moving by a descending augmented sixth leading into two similar notes. **Motive B** makes its first appearance in measure 5.

C – Two following sets of eighth notes descending by half steps. An enhanced sigh motive, this fragment echoes the descending half step figures of the opening two measures. **Motive C** makes its first appearance in measure 4.

It is worth mentioning that these motives frequently return using the same notes as in their original appearance, sometimes in different registers, supporting a sense of a tonal center in the piece.

Motives found in other pieces

The main motivic elements of the piece are not coincidental. These are rooted in Avni's compositional language and appear in some of his other works. Both **motives A** and **B** include an aspect of repetition of a single tone as an element of speech and recitation, an expressive device frequently used by Avni. **Motives A'** and **B** both appear in his pieces *Credo for String Trio* (2008) and *Summer Strings for String Quartet* (1962). Similar figures to **motives A** and **A'** appear in *Intermezzo for Solo Bass* (2006). **A'** is also meaningfully present in *Is This A Man, for soprano and orchestra* (1998) where it is restated several times at the very end of the piece.

Tonality, intervals and axis of symmetry

The note A is clearly central in the piece. It is present as a landing point and a main source of gravity in several important moments, especially through Part I and in the coda. The significance of A as a tonic is mostly seen in both the opening and ending of the piece.

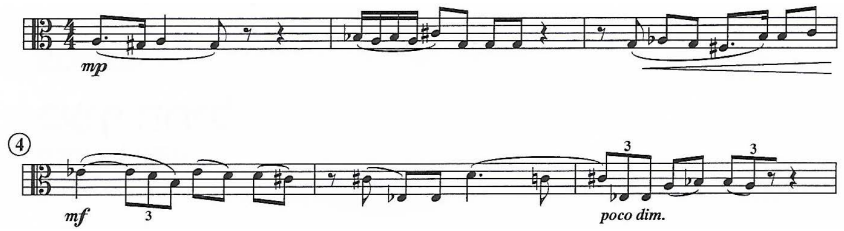
Opening the piece, A is marked as a clear central note, while the first measure contains only one additional pitch – $G^{\#}$, which functions as a lower neighbor tone reinforcing the significance of A. The composer further emphasizes the central note, as the opening phrase (mm.1-6) starts and ends on A while creating an axis of symmetry in which A is the center. (see example 4.2a) In addition, Part I starts and ends on an A, as does the entire piece, ending on a chord alluding to A major. The composer maintains the sense of tonality as the phrase returns later in the piece in its original key (m.25 and again at the coda in m.164). While A is the central note of Part I and the Coda, the central note of Part II is $F^{\#}$, which is emphasized by the composer's use of axis of symmetry on several different occasions throughout the movement.

Axis of symmetry

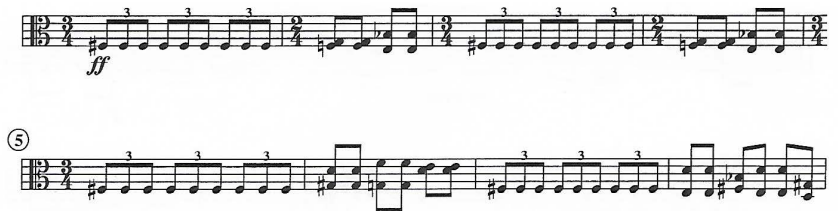
As stated above, the composer uses an axis of symmetry in order to establish main pitches through several sections of the piece. This compositional technique is mostly employed in Part II, but makes a single appearance at the very opening of the piece as well. The pitches that are emphasized through the axis of symmetry are the two main pitches of the piece – A in Part I and F$^{\#}$ in Part II. (see examples 4.2a-b)

A – Part I: mm. 1-6

F# - Part II: mm. 1-8, 18-23, 33-37, 42, 44, 54-56



Example 4.2a – The opening phrase creates an axis of symmetry in which A is the center



Example 4.2b – The opening phrase of part II creates an axis of symmetry in which F$^{\#}$ is the center

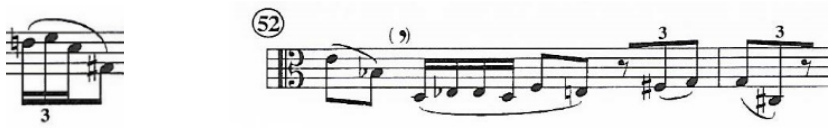
Expressive use of intervals

Unlike most pieces examined in this paper (with the exception of Arad's piece), Avni is not shy in his use of the augmented second in *Phoenix*. A sense of Jewish cantillation is quite present and apparent in Part I and its corresponding areas in Part II, at least partially due to these frequent augmented second appearances (see example 4.3)

Example 4.3 – Augmented second appearances in mm. 18, 23

The frequent use of the augmented second is not an act of defiance against an older generation who decided to neglect that interval, but a simple welcome of it into Avni's musical vocabulary in a natural way, as it is a feature of Jewish folklore after all.[27]

The phenomenon of short statements that end abruptly with great use of certain particular intervals is one encountered earlier in this paper. Both *Tikvah* and *Akeda* use such statements, appearing in their opening parts as they do in *Phoenix*. All three pieces (including *Phoenix*) feature the semitone as an instrument for motion and action while using a dissonant interval to lead to a suspended ending of a phrase. While these pieces all contain several short phrases, some meaningful differences between them should be noted: Both Arad and Hochman frequently use an ascending major seventh interval to abruptly end their short statements, while Avni's interval of choice is often a descending tritone (see example 4.4). In addition, Arad and Hochman use a double stop to end their phrases, while Avni keeps a single melodic line. These differences in contour and texture are quite significant, as they close Avni's phrases in a more gentle and lyrical manner.



Example 4.4 – Phrases ending with a descending triton, mm. 12, 52-53

[27] In our conversation, Avni told me that several decades ago he had an opportunity to work with Mordechai Zeira and to orchestrate some of his songs. The legendary composer of popular Israeli songs shared a small secret with him in the form of several hidden augmented seconds within his music, providing further supporting evidence of their presence in the local culture.

A sense of speech and recitation in the music

The piece seems to speak in two different voices, reflected in its two distinct parts. One presents a more personal voice while moving in a flexible manner, and the other is more rigid and forceful. The more personal voice presented in Part I (and making isolated appearances in Part II) greatly resembles speech and prayer recitation. This is evident when looking at the intervals used, the short statements with abrupt endings and the overall pace. The melodic line tends to move in small intervals around a single pitch, repeat certain notes and feature a fair use of the augmented second interval. These are all elements of prayer recitation and Jewish Cantillation. The *Rubato* marking allows freedom and flexibility, while the range used through these melodic sections rarely exceeds the limits of a common vocal range, greatly supporting the sense of speech and recitation. **Motives A'** and **B** both end with repeated notes, a feature frequently present in Avni's music. He describes this kind of gesture in our conversation as one recalling a storytelling device and, in any case, one representing speech in music.

The importance of melody and tonality

In an interview, Avni states that he has long believed in the principle that music should have a clear structure, and a melody should be at the center of it. He has the player in mind when composing and makes an effort to assign interesting and engaging parts whether in inner or outer voices. He does not see a reason to rewrite in the ways of the *avantgarde* of the seventies. Instead, he believes that the current version of that style would be one with a widened sense of tonality, a flexible harmonic world and a fresh definition of melody.[28] Appropriately, he still believes that "melody is the soul of music".[29] Along with maintaining the role of a melodic line in music, Avni maintains a connection with his Jewish origins and

[28] Tzvi Avni, interview by Amir Mandel, *Haaretz*, October 30, 2018, https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/music/classicalmusic/.premium-1.6610064
[29] Tzvi Avni, "On a personal note: Life chapters in music," interview by Haggai Hitron, *Ha'aretz*, July 3, 2012, https://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/study/1.1746465

with his predecessors in the Israeli style. In our conversation, he states that he believes that the style of Israeli music is still alive and well, admittedly with as many variations as its number of composers.

A student of John Cage, Lukas Foss, Karl Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez and Aaron Copland, Avni states in an interview that as Aaron Copland with all his innovation still drew from local folklore when composing *Appalachian Spring* so was Avni reluctant to forego Israeli and Jewish elements despite his training in electronic music and his desire to be a composer of the twentieth century. In the same article, when asked what is the difference between Israeli composers and composers of other nationalities, Avni responds that "The Israeli composers feel more socially, politically and artistically responsible for the society in which they live and create. It appears that people here respect their origins and that the composers heavily rely on them." As an example, he states that "You can hardly find an Israeli composer who doesn't have a biblically related piece."[30]

- The musical examples in this chapter are courtesy of
  © Israel Music Institute

[30] Tzvi Avni, interview by Yaacov Bar-On, *Maariv*, September 28, 2017, https://www.maariv.co.il/culture/music/Article-600813

Solmization and Poetic Phrasing:
Menachem Wiesenberg – *Monodialogue* (1999)

Born in Tel Aviv in 1950, Wiesenberg credits his father, a Klezmer clarinetist who was active in several genres, for being an early musical influence.[31] After completing his studies in New York, Wiesenberg returned to Israel and started his professional career as a chamber music pianist as well as being active in popular music and jazz settings. He only started composing in 1987, when he received two commissions from former students, eventually making composition his main occupation. Wiesenberg never studied composition, formally or informally and he does not consider himself as necessarily continuing the traditional school of Israeli art music. However, the Jewish element is ever present in his music – he defines himself as a Jewish-Israeli composer and acknowledges the effect that identity has on his music. His first compositions were vocal and were based on biblical verses, as were several later vocal and instrumental pieces. His pieces for Oud, a prominent instrument in local Arabic music, in a setting of classical music, reflect how the point of departure for his composition is here and now. They also point to another important element in his composition – Wiesenberg, founder of the cross-disciplinary department at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, is a very eclectic musician who often amalgamates several genres in his work. His experience as an arranger of popular music, a jazz player and a classical musician all contribute to his composition style. The two composers he considers as the greatest influence on his work are Bartok and Debussy. Bartok's main influence can be seen in rhythmical aspects and the use of folklore[32] while Debussy's influence mostly has to do with the concept of form. Wiesenberg often uses episodes in his compositions, much like Debussy. In our conversation, he refers to these episodes as part of a mosaic form, acknowledging the Eastern element in the word, he mentions the Eastern influence in both Debussy's music and his own.

[31] Menachem Wiesenberg, "I Was a Composer before I Was Ever a Composer," interview by Noam Ben Zeev, *Haaretz*, July 27, 2007, https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/music/1.1429212

[32] Menachem Wiesenberg, "Jewish Music Is a Vague Concept," interview by Merav Yudilovitch, *Ynet*, February 19, 2011, https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4030718,00.html

Wiesenberg is the recipient of several awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award in Composition granted by the Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers in Israel (ACUM Ltd.) and the Prime Minister Award for Composition on two separate occasions (1998, 2012). Wiesenberg took part in many recordings as a pianist, arranger and composer and his works are published by Schott and the Israel Music Institute.

Wiesenberg started composing *Monodialogue* as a piece for viola and piano but he soon 'got rid of the piano' (in his own words, during our conversation), realizing this should be a piece for solo viola. His concept of maintaining a dialogue even within the solo piece, led him to name it – *Monodialogue*. Dedicated to Tabea Zimmermann, *Monodialogue* reflects the composer's personal relationship and admiration for this legendary violist. This relationship is evident in the preface of the piece, where the composer dedicates the piece *To Tabea, with love* and speaks of her personal character, demeanor and how they are reflected in the piece. As both the dedicatee and source of inspiration, Zimmermann has a direct effect on the main motives, the various characters and the spontaneous manner in which the piece carries itself.

According to Wiesenberg, that connection is first and foremost established through a musical link between the syllables of her first name (Ta-be-a) and the main thematic motives of the piece.[33] Through process of solmization, Wiesenberg realizes the syllables of Zimmermann's first name and translates them into musical notation, thus forming the building blocks of the entire work.

Ta[34] = B♭

Be = B♭

A = A

[33] Menachem Wiesenberg, *"Preface"* to Monodialogue (Schott Music, 1999)
[34] According to the Kodaly system

Accordingly, the main motivic idea is derived of **B^b-B^b-A**. In many cases, for purpose of interest and variety, the composer alters one of the ***B-flats*** into a ***B-natural***, resulting in a **B-B^b-A** motive. The latter case is more prominent and appears more frequently throughout the piece, hereafter **motive a**, while the original motive of **B^b-B^b-A** will be marked as **motive b**. **Motive a** is a member of set class (012), which includes every group of three chromatically following pitches regardless of their register. Wiesenberg makes varied and meaningful use of set class (012), which becomes a significant part of the vocabulary of the piece and shall be marked as **motive c**.

Motives:

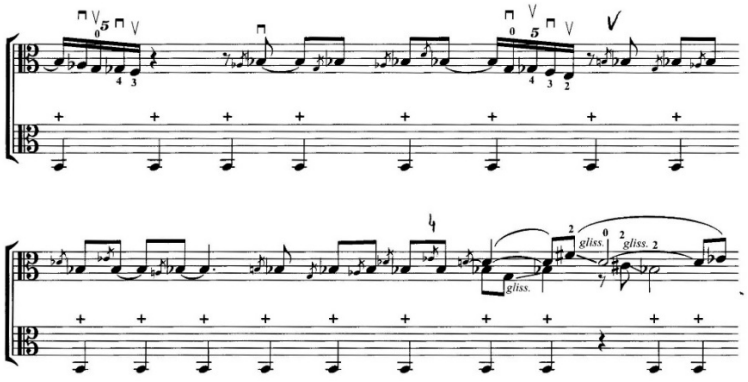
a – B, B^b, A

b – B^b, B^b, A

c – (012)

The composer uses various compositional techniques to explore these motives: vertically (as a chord), horizontally (as a melodic line), different registers, while applying several techniques at once (for example, by using left hand pizzicato while playing with the bow) and more. In addition, the motives are used to support the expressive nature of the piece and the frequency of their appearance is directly linked to the level of drama and intensity. The more frequently they appear, the more intense and passionate the music gets.

Another way in which the composer emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the notes B-A is through *scordatura*. The C-string is being tuned down to B-natural and the newly created open B-string makes a meaningful and vital contribution to the sound world of the piece. (see example 5.1)



Example 5.1 – Effective open B-string pedal point

Use of Greek Prosody

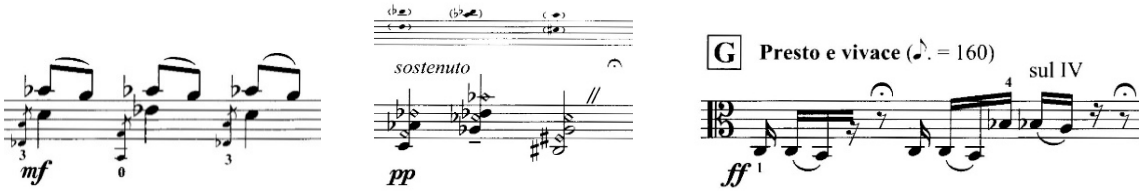
An additional link between Tabea Zimmermann's name and the expressive gestures of the piece was created by turning to Greek Prosody.[35] Wiesenberg uses *Amphibrach*, a metric foot in Greek Prosody representing a heavy syllable in between two lighter ones: light, heavy, light.[36] This feature naturally fits the name Ta-be-a for its stressed second syllable.

The first case of *amphibrach* phrasing in the piece can be found in the very first pizzicato statement, where the second of each set of three chords is marked with a *tenuto*, making it the heavier of the three (see example 5.2a). Other instances of *amphibrach* phrasing can be found all over the piece, therefore becoming an integral part of its expressive vocabulary. In addition to maintaining the link to Tabea's name, the *amphibrach* structure often indicates a sigh gesture which is an important expressive feature throughout the piece. (see example 5.2b)

Example 5.2a – *Amphibrach* phrasing indicated with a *tenuto* marking in the opening pizzicato statements

[35] Menachem Wiesenberg, "I Was a Composer before I Was Ever a Composer," interview by Noam Ben Zeev, *Haaretz*, July 27, 2007, https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/music/1.1429212

[36] *Amphibrach* also represents a short-long-short syllable structure.



Example 5.2b – More examples of *amphibrach* phrasing in the piece, where the middle syllable is the heavier of the three

Overall structure

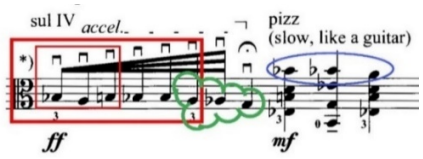
The piece is composed as a fantasy consisting of several different episodes, described by the composer as a kind of mosaic. The episodes represent several distinct characters. They are remarkably different from one another and are clearly separated in the score in various ways. Most of the episodes are introduced using common vehicles such as a *fermata* marking or a rest preceding them. Other performance markings preceding new episodes include *calando, rubato* and *poco rit*. Such markings in transitional moments are quite common, as they set the scene for the appearance of new material. However, in several instances the episodes end with an opposite effect and include markings such as *stringendo, poco a poco piu mosso* and *accel.* These markings either lead the music directly into a surprising *fermata* or, in other cases, more naturally into the following episode that often picks up the pace. These unexpected mood changes in between episodes represents the unique character of its artistic source of inspiration mentioned by the composer in the preface.

Use of the thematic motives

The piece uses the motives listed above as its main building blocks. The pitch class and interval class (in the case of **motive c**) are found all over the piece and often in key moments, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

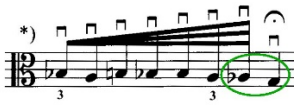
The piece starts with a powerful opening statement, in which all three motives are presented: (see example 5.3)

- The first three notes of the piece present **motive a**.
- The opening gesture ends with **motive c (012)**.
- The top notes of the following pizzicato statement outline **motive b**, including a *tenuto* marking supporting the *amphibrach* phrasing.

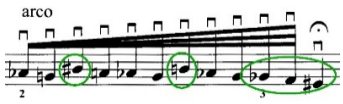


Example 5.3 (**motives a, b, c**)

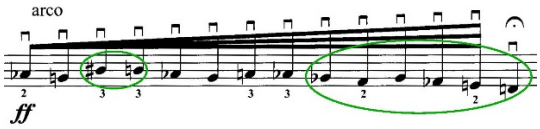
The opening gesture is immediately restated two more times. Each statement applies slight augmentation and broadening, creating space for a few more neighbor tones to be included. With each appearance, the gesture further deviates from the pitch boundaries of **motives a** and **b** culminating in its fourth appearance (example 5.4d and top of page 8 in the score), which leads to a new section starting in letter **A**. (see example 5.4a-d)



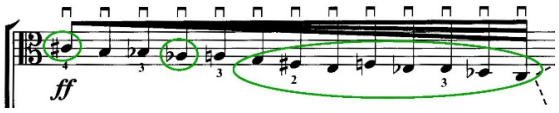
Example 5.4a



Example 5.4b



Example 5.4c

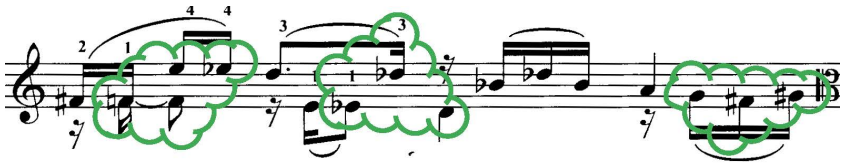


Example 5.4d

Examples 5.4a-d – All four versions of the opening statement.

The notes foreign to **motives a, b** are marked by a circle.

This final gesture leads to letter A with a resounding **B-B^{b}** sonority. The intense semitone interval of **B-B^{b}** is then thoroughly explored until it evolves into **motive c**, which appears first at letter **A1** and serves as the prominent motive until letter **B** (see example 5.5)



Example 5.5 – An example of the prominence of **motive c** between letters **A1-B**

A new intervallic figure is introduced in letter **B** – a member of **set class (0257)** (see example 5.6). It is a pentatonic figure mostly prominent between letters **B-C**, and its appearance is significant due to its use of a completely new intervallic pattern. The previous intervallic motives are narrow in range, comprising mostly semitones (although frequently moving between registers) and in the case of **motives a** and **b**, include very few specific pitches. Figure **(0257)**, on the other hand, features a wider range of notes and intervals with a modal sonority. In addition, being made of four notes makes figure **(0257)** quite remarkable in a piece mostly made of three-note figures. That difference is apparent, as figure **(0257)** has a driving force which tends to move the music forward differently from the other prominent motives of the piece. Moreover, it basically introduces the four sixteenth note pattern to the piece. There are sixteenth notes before and after that section, but they are usually grouped differently, while the only part in which the music is set in groups of four sixteenth notes is between letters **B-C**, assisted and flavored by figure **(0257)**. The four-note grouping creates a regular beat pattern, which in turn allows the music to develop a certain dance feeling.

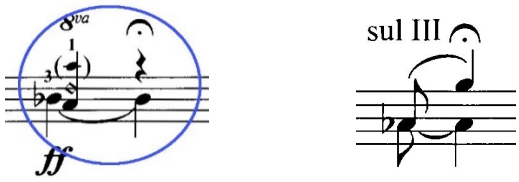
Example 5.6 – Set class **(0257)**

Notable use of the motives later in the piece

As mentioned above, the presence of **motives a, b, c** is linked to key moments in the piece, both structurally and expressively. The composer uses several ways to highlight the main notes and motives, thus addressing them in a meaningful manner as will be described below.

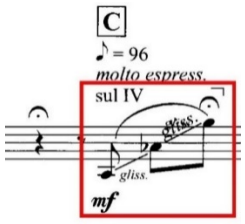
Use of *fermata* – The suspension of a note often highlights it. Nearly all of the *fermata* instances in the piece (and there are many) are linked to the aforementioned motives in clear and obvious ways. Here are a few examples:

- All the *fermata* markings in the three opening statements are preceded by **motive c**.
- Both *fermata* markings, right before letter A3 and the second one after letter C, highlight **motive b** played as a double-stop. (see example 5.7a)



Example 5.7a – Use of a *fermata* to highlight motives

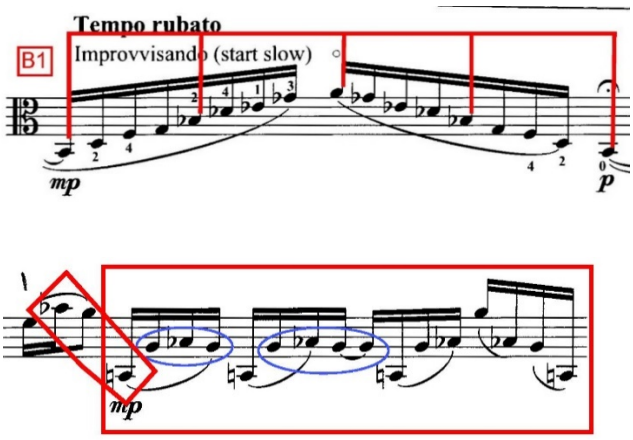
- Perhaps the most striking appearance of **motive a** is on letter C (see example 5.7b). In this case, the three notes of **motive a** alone form the entire gesture, and what a powerful one it is. The notes are spread across three registers, all played on the C string. The fact that this gesture takes place in between two fermata markings, isolates and further emphasizes it.



Example 5.7b – The most striking appearance of **motive a**

Use of the contour of a musical line to emphasize certain notes – Another effective way to highlight a note is by placing it at either the top or the bottom end of a gesture or phrase. It is also an effective way to show connection between several notes. Wiesenberg employs this compositional technique several times through the piece:

- In the two bottom lines of the opening page, **motive b** is highlighted in the chords as their top notes often spell the motive – **B^{b}-B^{b}-A**.
- In letter B1, the composer outlines **motive a** by placing two of its pitches at both the lower and top ends of the musical line, while the third pitch is placed right in the middle. (see example 5.8)

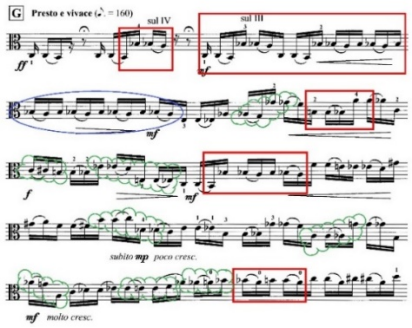


Example 5.8 – **Motive a** present as lowest & highest notes of a phrase

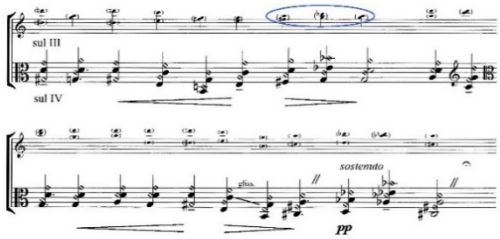
Use of pedal points – In several sections, Wiesenberg uses pedal points in order to highlight certain notes. The pedal points are marked with left hand pizzicato and appear in the very early and late parts of the piece (letters A and H). The two notes that are used as pedal points are two open strings – **B** and **A**, enhancing their presence in the overall sonority of the piece. (see example 5.1, above)

Expressive use of intervallic motives

In the preface to the piece, the composer states that *"(the) expressiveness (of the piece) owes a great deal of its inspiration to the unique and special character of Tabea Zimmermann."*[37] The piece in fact undergoes several different moods and character changes. The intervallic motives are often used to support the expressive nature of the piece, and the frequency of their appearance is directly linked to the level of drama and intensity of a certain section. The more frequently they appear, the more intense and passionate the music gets. (see examples 5.9a-b)



Example 5.9a – Intense and expressive with great use of intervallic motives.



Example 5.9b – Letter F. The music is calmer and softer with nearly no use of the intervallic motives.

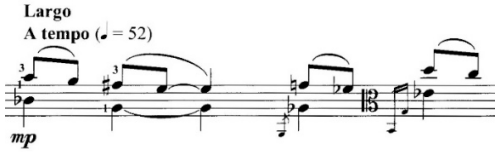
Use of major and minor sixth intervals

The major and minor sixth intervals are often featured in Wiesenberg's work. In our conversation, he explains that he views these intervals as a softening element thus playing an important role in the

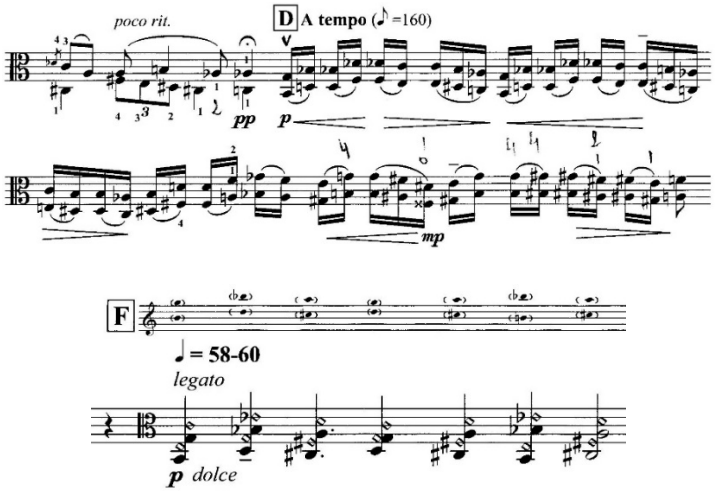
[37] Menachem Wiesenberg, *"Preface"* to Monodialogue (Schott Music, 1999)

concept of tension and release in music. Several instances of major and minor sixths can be observed in *Monodialogue*:

- The composer uses the major and minor sixths as part of a sigh motive supporting their role as a softening element following a major seventh (see example 5.10a)
- Wiesenberg highlights the sonority of the sixths as he moves in certain areas of the piece in parallel sixths. (see example 5.10b)
- The minor sixth sonority is also observed by the *scordatura* which indicates tuning the C string to a B, creating a minor sixth interval within the open B and G strings.



Example 5.10a – Major sixth in a softening role



Example 5.10b – Highlighting the minor sixth sonority by moving in parallel sixths

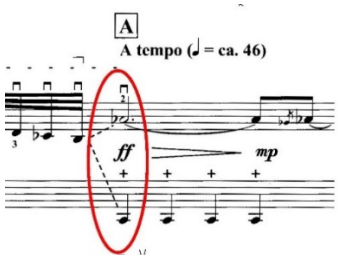
The use of semitones in a non-Middle Eastern manner

The semitone is perhaps the most important interval of the piece. It is part of each of the motives and appears at all the key moments. It is worth noting that while most of the composers featured in this

paper make frequent use of semitones in their writing, Wiesenberg uses it in a substantially different way. Avni, Arad and Hochman tend to use the semitone as a lyrical device supporting the musical line. The semitone in their pieces often serves a melodic purpose as part of an organic line, a sigh gesture or takes part in an embellishment gesture. While the other composers mentioned use it as an important building block of a longer line, in Wiesenberg's *Monodialogue* the semitone seems to play a more prominent role. That is the reason the semitones appear at the beginning and end of phrases, they form important double stops and present a musical event by their own appearance.

The importance of being B (or B^{b})

As introduced above, motive **A** is comprised of the notes – B, B^{b}, A. Naturally, B and B^{b} evolve into two of the most prominent pitches throughout the piece, sometimes working together but often creating a sense of tension. That tension is a result of the semitone interval between the two, which reflects (perhaps even leads to) the extensive and fundamental use of semitones throughout the piece. The most obvious meeting of the two is also the first, which takes place on letter **A** (see example 5.11). Somewhat appropriately, the score splits into two parts just as those two fundamental notes meet. The tension between them is highlighted through most of the following section, as the melody keeps returning to B^{b} in the top part while the lower part keeps insisting on the constant B-natural pedal point.



Example 5.11

Much like letter A, the relationship between the notes B and B^{b} is highlighted in letter H as well. The B-natural sonority is ever present as a pedal point while the arco line clearly maintains B^{b} as its central note, highlighted by grace notes and by the way in which the phrase is drawn to it. In the final

page, the composer lightens his insistence on **B^{b}**, and as a result it is resolved, in a sense, to **A**. Given the importance of the **B-B^{b}** relationship throughout the piece, the decision to resolve **B^{b}** to **A** at the very end can be seen as both tonal and dramatic resolutions.

The closing section

When Wiesenberg concluded that he had expressed himself as much as he could through the viola, he turns to the human voice.[38] The closing section (starting at letter H) clearly corresponds with an earlier section starting at letter A. The powerful B pedal with the melody played on top create a similar texture, with an added new vocal line in letter H. The multi-voice texture ends the piece in a truly remarkable way: voice, *arco (cantabile)* and left hand *pizzicato*. All three seem to be of equal importance and create a special sonority. It is worth noting that the closing section is the only measured part of the piece, perhaps for practical reasons, but it may also represent the work reaching an orderly state of peace after a long and dramatic process.

- The musical examples in this chapter are courtesy of

[38] Menachem Wiesenberg, "I Was a Composer before I Was Ever a Composer," interview by Noam Ben Zeev, *Haaretz*, July 27, 2007, https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/music/1.1429212

Conclusions

The seeds for this paper were planted nearly a decade ago, as I was playing Atar Arad's *Tikvah* for the first time. *Monodialogue* was on the menu shortly after that before being hit by *Perfect Storm* one sunny day in Bloomington, Indiana. These three pieces were incredibly attractive, challenging and unique, and they got me intrigued. I started looking deeper into them – all three were composed for solo viola by Israeli composers within a single decade. Pleased to observe these connections, I started looking at other pieces that shared similar features, eventually adding *Akeda* and *Phoenix* to a collection of pieces that I believe is a fine representation of music for solo viola by Israeli composers at the turn of the twenty-first century.

The link to one's heritage is a powerful one, whether in an obvious manner or beneath the surface. The founding fathers of Israeli music started a process that quickly became uninhibited by the principles they set, as Israeli composers were free to explore Western innovations, Eastern elements, Mediterranean flavors and Jewish folklore. Decades later, musicologist Jehoash Hirshberg concluded that a formation of an Israeli style was achieved, yet the result is the opposite of what was envisioned by the founding fathers:

> "The Israeli style is not a synthetic unified entity that enables identification within a few measures. Quite the contrary. It is a rich syncretism of sources, influences and methods of expression, which constitute a superb representation of Israel's extreme heterogeneity. The Israeli style simultaneously strives in three directions: to create a genuine national identity, to further the assimilation into the globalization process, and the continued search for links with the East."[39]

When examining the pieces included in this paper, one next to the other, similarities were found and differences were celebrated. Most of the composers featured in this paper make use of Mediterranean elements on some level, and they appreciate the significance of melody and shape the musical line

[39] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: Ideological Pressures in the Yishuv Period and Their Offshoots in Israeli Art Music during the Recent Two Decades," *Min-Ad: Israel Studies of Musicology Online* 4 (2005): 12.

accordingly. They maintain a link to their heritage and to their musical ancestors, recalling elements of Jewish liturgy, synagogue music and Jewish folklore.

In other cases, the composers were using elements from a broader spectrum of musical possibilities. These include the use of Greek prosody, quarter tones, modes, homage to contemporary composers, fiddle music and other elements, adding a unique flavor to each of the pieces while allowing a more cosmopolitan sound world.

Exploring the array of sources of inspiration used by the composers is fascinating. Menachem Wiesenberg was influenced by Bartok and Debussy, in addition to the inspiration of Tabea Zimmermann's artistry and personality, while Shulamit Ran picked a motive from a song by Luciano Berio as a reference. In both cases, the musical language of the compositions was greatly affected by those sources of inspiration, bringing modality and an open sound of perfect fifths to *Perfect Storm* and a rich and expressive semitone interval class vocabulary to *Monodialogue*. Tzvi Avni composed *Phoenix* in response to a tragic event on a global scale but chose to mourn it in a more local manner, in the form of a modest prayer recalling synagogue music. Both Atar Arad and Gilad Hochman gave their compositions Hebrew titles and chose sources of inspiration that are closer to home, so to speak. In the case of *Tikvah*, the composer refers to an event that happened more than three decades earlier: a national tragedy that occurred during the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, and was strongly marked in the collective memory. The sources for the musical language in the piece can also be traced to an earlier era, as the composer recalls elements of folklorism, intervals and other musical idioms absorbed while growing up in the earlier and more naïve days of the Jewish State. *Akeda* by Gilad Hochman refers to an awesome biblical story, one that had already occupied numerous moral and philosophical discussions before receiving a modern manifestation in the form of a national tragedy at the end of the twentieth century. Hochman meets both monumental events in his work while recalling elements of synagogue music and Mediterranean style in his writing.

This paper deals with pieces by five Israeli composers of four different generations. They live and work in different countries, each with their own distinct style and character and yet they all fit comfortably within the genre of Israeli music. After all, “we are all from the same village”, to paraphrase as an old Israeli saying.

Looking at the future of Israeli music, one can certainly maintain a degree of optimism. A multi-cultural society with a rich history, a fascinating story and a national identity in the making provides the Israeli composers with plenty to work with. Predicting exactly where it is going is not an easy task, as composers receive their influences and inspiration from many external sources. However, it is safe to assume that whichever road is taken will not entirely neglect elements of the home base, whether it is the Mediterranean flavor, the biblical link, the Jewish folklore or the relentlessness character representing the seemingly ever-present struggles of life in the Middle East.

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