

## Piano Pieces for the Youth

*I listen and hear the sounds of  
our country, listen and give voice  
to them in my music. - Composer*

This work was first published in 1945 (Naidat Publ.) The composer wrote these pieces for his piano students during the years of 1942-4.

Shortly thereafter he devoted all his time to writing music and teaching composition.

The six movements of the suite are dance-like in character. Their varied moods and distinctive style exude liveliness and joie de vivre.

The musical components which lend this suite an oriental sonority and character derive from the following:

- Multimodality-an interaction of different modes often sharing a common tonal center
- The main intervals- second, fourth, fifth, seventh
- The elaboration of organum and organ points (drones) as well as rhythmic and melodic ostinati (Debka #2, the accompaniment of the Pastoral #4)
- Unisono, heterophony, short melodic patterns recurring in variations, embellishment and chromatic tones
- A palette of diverse kinds of staccato touches- from pizzicato to marcato- is reminiscent of the energetic rhythmical plucking or striking of Middle Eastern string instruments like the uod, kanuon, santuor accompanied by the darbuka –drum.

### Hodaya-Praise

The lyrical mood of the opening dance moves in a moderate but fluent tempo. The tonal material is a fusion between the Ionian-Lydian modes on G and the Dorian-Mixolydian on A.

Enriched by chromatic tones, humming drones (G/A) and melodic, rhythmic variants the vivid interplay of the voices develops into a more complex texture, thus intensifying the dance impulses.

### Debka

The Debka is a male dance, associated with festive occasions celebrated in rural Arabic and Druze communities in the Middle East. A chain formation of dancers is lead by the soloist. Their steps, leaps and stomps are interspersed by enthusiastic shouts, often in contrast with the melody of the flute.

The tonal material is: a fusion between Dorian-Mixolydian-Ionian modes on D. The short melodic-rhythmic patterns, the unisono style, the drones (D-G-D) sounding throughout the different layers of the texture as well as the ornamental character of the semiquavers' pattern lend this music its oriental soundscape.

## Dance

ABA in structure, section A is based on the Aeolian mode on D whereas the B section moves in the Mixolydian one on C.

The middle section is faster and more transparent in sound than the opening and closing. The heterophonic unisono, the legato melody in the R.H. and the crispy staccato in the L.H. are reminiscent of the sonorities of an oriental shepherd's flute in dialogue with the santur (plucked instrument) accompanied by a darbuka drum.

By careful pedaling the upper voice and its organpoint will vibrate in a bell-like sonority, without blurring the staccato in the lower voice.

## Nof- yah (Pastoral)

The music of the pastoral has some imprint of Bible Cantillations. The accompaniment flows in a 5/8-meter nocturno like pattern, recurring throughout the movement. Its melodic variants undulating around the pivotal tones of D-G-C, create a diversified dialogue with the upper voice. Short asymmetric, ornamented melodic patterns are molded into a ten-bar phrase, arousing our imagination of an oriental flute sonority.

Employing the half –pedal adds an open space quality to the melody without clouding its articulation as well as that of the soft, waving accompaniment.

## Burlesque

The tonal material is a fusion between the Mixolydian mode on G and the Dorian one on D which are interwoven with double drones on C and D.

True to the spirit of the burlesca this music is of witty, playful character brimming over with joyfulness. The accented quavers, the sparkling staccato and the rhythmic pedal increase the vitality of the dance which is all rhythm, all drumming.

## Shepherds' Dance

The suite concludes with an energetic and lively dance based on an Israeli folk-song. The opening and closing section combine the Aeolian mode on E and A, while the middle section employs the Aeolian and the Ionian ones on D. The sounding double drones, the heterophonic, rhythmic variants, accented staccato and the persisting drumming of the semiquavers culminate into an atmosphere of excitement. The tempo slows down anticipating the enthusiastic outburst of the coda

Miriam Boskovich  
2014