

Joseph Phibbs

*Ritual Songs and Blessings*  
for seven instruments

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## *Ritual Songs and Blessings*

*Ritual Songs and Blessings* comprises five short movements, each of which corresponds in style to the songs used in the ancient Yemenite Jewish marriage ceremony. A number of folk songs are integrated into the piece, although these rarely appear in their original form and are not restricted solely to music from the Yemen, but rather from across the Jewish folk tradition. The ceremony as a whole may be interpreted as a symbolic dialogue between God (the bridegroom) and Israel, or the human soul (the bride).

The first of the five sections, the *hallelloth*, traditionally presents paraphrases of psalm verses, although these are represented here by the slow and fragmented emergence of an Israeli folk song, 'Sleep, my pet' ('Shlof, mayn feygele'). The song is first stated in the piano and finally taken up by the whole ensemble: 'Sleep my little pet/ Shut your eyes.../You may sleep in peace/And dream of lovely things..'

A *zafat*, or 'Processional Song' follows; this adopts a type of verse-and-refrain structure: wild, melismatic clarinet lines (the first of three wind solos) are contrasted with more regular tutti-style 'responses' which emphasize a fragment from a Yemenite marriage song, celebrating a wife's unerring fidelity in the light of a young man's intense courtship.

In the *nashid* ('Lament of the Bride'), a plaintive oboe solo alternates mournful, strained music at the extreme top of its register with richer, more sonorous phrases in its low range, outlining the melody of a traditional cradle song. The subject here provides a specific link to the trading aspects of the Spitalfields area: 'Beneath baby's cradle stands a little white goat./The little goat went off to trade in raisins and almonds/As almonds and raisons are tasty and sweet/So my child will be healthy and strong./My child will study Torah and write many learned books./God willing he will grow to be a good and pious Jew.'

There then follows a lively *hiddujjoth* ('Song of Joy after the Nuptial Ceremony'), which gains constantly in momentum, before finally giving way to the *shiroth* (Love Song of the Bridegroom) in which the horn offers a love song to the bride, and the nuptial couple are at last symbolically bound together in the music.

commissioned by the Spitalfields Festival with funds from the RVW Trust,  
and dedicated to the Chroma Ensemble

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# Ritual Songs and Blessings

## Part I- halleloth, zafat, & nashid

$\text{♩} = 56$   
SMALL TRIANGLE  
l.v.

Oboe  
*ff* (ob.) *ppp* *mf* *ff*

Clarinet in B $\flat$   
*ppp* *mp* *f* *pp* *mf* *ppp*

Horn in F  
*f* *ppp* *f* *pp* *fp*

Violin  
*f* *pp* *fp* *mf* *pp* *pp* *mp* *f*

Viola  
*pp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *fp*

Violoncello  
*f* *p* *f* *pp* *p*  
pizz., molto vib.  
l.v. sempre  
arco  
IV  
pizz.  
arco

Piano  
(Lid open, full stick)  
 $\text{♩} = 56$   
*p* *fff* *pp* *f* *p* *ff* *f* (8va.)

Ped. ———  
(continuous, except where indicated)

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Ob. *ppp*

Cl. *pp* *mf*

Hn

Vln *p*

Vla *pp*

Vc. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *p* *mp*

Pno *ppp* *p* *ff* *mf*

Ob. *mp* *ppp*

Cl. *p* *ff* *flz.*

Hn *pp* *f* *ritiss.*

Vln *mf* *fp* *ff*

Vla *mf* *ff*

Vc. *pp* *mf* *ff*

Pno *ff* *ff*



6 *flz.*

Ob. *ffmf* *fff* *p* *mf* *ppp*

Cl. *ffp* *fff* *ffp* *ff* *ffp* *f* *pp* *mf* *ppp* *pp* *ppp*

Hn. *ff* *pp* *mp* *ppmp* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *pp* *Solo (open)* *pp* *dolente e semplice*

Vln. *ffp* *fff* *ffp* *ff* *ffp* *f* *pp* *mf* *ppp* *(ppp)*

Vla. *ff* *f* *mf* *mp* *pp* *arco* *mf* *ppp* *ppp*

Vc. *ff* *p* *p* *ppp* *ppp* *p*

Pno. *ff* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *p*

*p*

♩ = 56, Tempo I

10 ♩ = c.38, Grave

Ob. *ppp* *mf* *ppp*

Cl. *SOLO* *mp* *p* *(solo)* *to bass cl.* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Hn. *mp* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *mfp* *mf* *ppp* *(solo)* *pp* *mp* *pp*

Vln. *pp* *sul pont.* *p* *ppp* *ord.* *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

Vla. *pp* *pp* *mf* *ppp*

Vc. *pizz. l.v.* *pp* *pp* *pp* *ppp*

♩ = 56, Tempo I

Pno. *pp* *mp* *p* *pp*

*8va*

*8va*

♩=56, Tempo I

16

Ob. *pp* *fff* bass cl. *ff*

Hn *f*

Vln *mp* *f*

Vla *mp* *f*

Vc. *mp* *f*

Pno *pp* *f*

♩=56, Tempo I

This system contains measures 16 through 18. It features six staves: Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Violin, Viola, and Piano. The Oboe part has a dynamic range from *pp* to *fff* and includes a 'bass cl.' marking. The Clarinet part has a dynamic of *ff*. The Horn part has a dynamic of *f*. The Violin part has dynamics of *mp* and *f*. The Viola part has dynamics of *mp* and *f*. The Violoncello part has dynamics of *mp* and *f*. The Piano part has dynamics of *pp* and *f*. There are various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and accents.

19

Ob. *f* *fff* *ppp*

Cl. *ppp* *pp* *mp* *p* (solo)

Hn *ppp*

Vln *pp* *p*

Vla *p*

Vc. *pp* *p*

Pno *mf* *pp* *p*

♩=c.38

This system contains measures 19 through 21. It features six staves: Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Violin, Viola, and Piano. The Oboe part has dynamics of *f*, *fff*, and *ppp*. The Clarinet part has dynamics of *ppp*, *pp*, *mp*, and *p*, and includes a '(solo)' marking. The Horn part has a dynamic of *ppp*. The Violin part has dynamics of *pp* and *p*. The Viola part has a dynamic of *p*. The Violoncello part has dynamics of *pp* and *p*. The Piano part has dynamics of *mf*, *pp*, and *p*. There are various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and accents.

8<sup>vb</sup>

23

Ob.

Cl.

Hn

Vln

Vla

Vc.

Pno

*f* *ppp* *p* *ppp*  
to soloist position- B flat cl.

*mf* *ppp*  
(solo)  
espress

*p* *f* *ppp* *f*

III  
*mf* *pp*  
pizz. (l.v.)

II  
*f* *ppp* *fp* *mp* *pp*

pizz.  
*p* *mf* *p* *f* *ppp*

*p* *mf* *p* *f* *pp* *pp*

*p* *mf* *p* *f* *pp* *pp*

*mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*

*p* *mf* *p* *f* *pp* *pp*

*pp* *pp*

♩ = 72

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29

Ob.

Cl.

Hn

Vln

Vla

Vc.

Pno

B-flat cl.  
wildly

*fff*

*flz.*

*fp* *fp*

*pp*

*fff* *pp*

L.H loco



6

31

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

*ffpp* *fff* *fpp* *fff* *ppp*

*flz.* *flz.*

*3* *3* *5*

*pizz.* *arco*

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

*pp* *ff* *fp* *ff*

*p* *fp* *ff*

*5* *5* *5* *5*

34

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

*flz.* *flz.*

*5* *3*

*ppvo*

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

*ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*



38

Ob.   
 Cl.   
 Hn   
 Vln   
 Vla   
 Vc.   
 Pno

flz.   
 ff   
 ffp   
 et sim.   
 et sim.   
 et sim.   
 8va   
 8va   
 8va

41

Ob.   
 Cl.   
 Hn   
 Vln   
 Vla   
 Vc.   
 Pno

ff   
 ffp   
 ff   
 ffp   
 ff   
 ffp   
 ff   
 ffp   
 ffp   
 ffp   
 8va   
 8va

open   
 3   
 3   
 3   
 3



53

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

*pavillon en l'air*

*fff*

*ff*

*ffp*

*fff*

*fff*

*fff*

*8va*

*8va*

*8va*

59

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

*flz.*

*bell down*

*ff*

*ffp*

*ffp*

*ffp*

*ffp*

*ffp*

*ffp*

*8va*

*8va*

*8va*



63

Ob. *fff*

Cl. *ff*

Hn

Vln *ff*

Vla *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Pno *ff*

15<sup>ma</sup>

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Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 63 to 65. It features seven staves: Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The Oboe part starts with a *fff* dynamic and plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Clarinet part has a *ff* dynamic and features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The Horn part is mostly silent. The Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts play a dense texture of sixteenth notes with a *ff* dynamic. The Piano part has a *ff* dynamic and plays a complex rhythmic pattern. A first ending bracket labeled '15<sup>ma</sup>' spans measures 64 and 65. A blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid on the score.

66

Ob.

Cl. *ffp*

Hn *ffp*

Vln *ffp*

Vla *ffp*

Vc. *ffp*

Pno *fff*

8<sup>va</sup>

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 66 to 68. It features seven staves: Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The Oboe part is mostly silent. The Clarinet part has a *ffp* dynamic and plays a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The Horn part has a *ffp* dynamic and plays a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts play a dense texture of sixteenth notes with a *ffp* dynamic. The Piano part has a *fff* dynamic and plays a complex rhythmic pattern. A first ending bracket labeled '8<sup>va</sup>' spans measures 67 and 68.



69

Ob.

Cl.

Hn

Vln

Vla

Vc.

Pno

*fff*

3

15<sup>ma</sup>

71

Ob.

Cl.

Hn

Vln

Vla

Vc.

Pno

*ff*

15<sup>ma</sup>

loco

8<sup>va</sup>

77

Ob. *ff* *ffp*

Cl. *ffp* *ff* *ffp*

Hn *ffp* *ff* *ffp*

Vln

Vla

Vc.

Pno

80



81

Ob. *fff*

Cl. *ff* *fff*

Hn *ff* *ffp* *ffp*

Vln *fff*

Vla *fff*

Vc. *fff*

Pno *fff*

*pavillon en l'air*

84