

***“The Show Goes On”*, Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra**

My composition ***“The Show Goes On”*** is a single-movement Clarinet Concerto of approximately fifteen minutes composed in 2008. For many years the clarinet has played a special role in my music, its huge range of possibilities and powerful dramatic potential allowing for fresh discoveries in a variety of contexts. From my ***For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet*** through various chamber works in which the clarinet is an important presence (such as ***Apprehensions*** for voice, clarinet and piano, and ***Concerto da Camera II*** for clarinet, string quartet and piano), the “soul” of the clarinet has been intertwined with important aspects of my compositional “voice”. It was, therefore, a happy moment for me when I was asked by Sarah Elbaz to compose a Concerto for the 2008 Clarinet Days in Israel.

The resulting work can be heard as having three interlocking sections, the characteristics of each of which may be defined by different types of motion, and emotion. The first section is notable for its smooth, gently lyrical motion, initially dream-like, but gradually building to the work’s first climax. The second section begins with the solo clarinet playing, as the score indicates “with an air of fantasy, as though recalling a past memory”. Soon, hints of a dance begin, “menacing, but also exciting, intermittently tender”. These reverie-like sections interspersed by dance motion, reach their peak in a tango-like deliberately raucous outburst, subsiding into an extended stretch of hushed strings against which the clarinet at its lowest range wails, as though deep in prayer. The third and last section is built on a number of self-contained musical entities each of which is reiterated almost obsessively, phasing in and out and gradually developing into a succession of fast, aggressive, relentless waves of sound. At its zenith, a syncopated phrase marked “One last time...” literally splinters into sound shards, leading to insistent chords interspersed with a repeating solo clarinet arpeggio which bring the work to a close, not so much through a resolution of tensions but, rather, by arriving at an almost scream-like state, with the solo on a held note fading away.

A short time after I began composing my concerto news of the untimely and tragic death of Jorge Liderman (1957-2008), a brilliant composer, student, friend, and colleague stunned the music world and those of us who knew him. The shock and profound sense of loss, as well as thoughts of some of the kinds of music Jorge loved and of the person he was, unquestionably entered the process of composing this work, although it is by no means elegiac in its character. ***“The Show Goes On”*** is dedicated to his memory.

Shulamit Ran