

Concept

AVRAM – an appellation for a supreme power which motivates all believers (also, the Avram who was, before he became the Jews' Abraham). This is my paraphrase on the birth of the three monotheistic religions, the angle from which I view the beginnings of monotheisms. I have now brought forth something I have long wanted to express, depth and mystery (like Gauguin's) steeped in ritualism. The words I have selected from the religious, contemplative and philosophical sources on this subject are like points pinned statically into space, which observe like a mosaic. They are planted into the texture, taking account of their sonoric essence, and presented in a clear, transparent and easily-digestible manner. The pointillist-plastic words are mainly in Hebrew, but words in Greek and Arabic have also found their way in. The Coda finally raises the hero's name into the listeners' consciousness, elevating it into its deservedly exalted level. He who wanted to know everything. All the words aside from his name are tied to his essence in the three religions, to their historical-philosophical point of origin, with four signification codes: Jewish, Christian, Islamic, general. These codes are marked in the musical language. At the moment, the image that seems most appropriate for visualizing this is the image massed believers, from all three religions, assembling at the gates of one temple dedicated to that one monotheistic God – a joyful assembly, positive and ecstatic.

Motion

The Oratorio's formal structure can be described as a flow of six parts, slightly separated from each other. I have created an aesthetic-dramatic motion. We begin with the Exposition of the believers: the first section moves in a particularly slow tempo (*Largo*), while the second moves at a slightly faster tempo (*Tempo giusto*); the choir's two voices are split between the characterisations of the endings *g* and *j*, such as:

On the phoneme *g*

Hebrew	Givura (hernism), makhshela (obstacle), ahava (love), Rei'ya (vision)
Greek	Logia khresthenta (Avraham's desire for divine knowledge)
Arabic	Al-Ka'aba

On the phoneme *j*

Hebrew	Ur Kasdim, avi hakhokrim (progenitor of seekers), hama'aminim (the believers)
Greek	pistis (belief, faith, confidence)

In the third section – **The ecstasy of the believers** (*Energico*) – the choir bursts in an energetic unison, the ecstasy resonates from sonorous Hebrew words with an 'on' ending: *hastanguinut* (astrology – diving the future through the stars), *pnimiyut* (inwardness), *hitbonenut* (reflection), *hishtokekut* (yearning), *dvekut* (devotion), and others. The decrees of destiny strike in the fourth section, **The believers struggle with one another**. This section's shape emerges from the two expressions which reflect this puzzling, horrifying dichotomous confrontation: the great contrast between *love of the land* (*ahavat ha'aretz*) – which leads to wars and alienation – and the *pursuit of peace* (*midat shalom*). The imitative strikes in 'Love of the land'

clear the way to the terpsichorean atmosphere as the 'Pursuit of peace', which intensifies into a whirlwind of great desire.

The fifth section, As we part, is shaped as a farewell *de-jà-vu*: we proceed through a "synopsis" of the work, presented in a calm *moderato*. The sense of prayer within a sanctified atmosphere is intensified by the increasing use of doubled *unisono* textures. After this prolonged process and its brief reminder, we move into the coda – **Chorale Grave** – where Avram's name appears as the only word in the entire section. It is as if we emerge into Avram only at the end, reaching him after a grandiose preparation. After all we have learned, with all its symbolism, we are finally ready, and only then does he appear, in all his spiritual being and in great splendour.

Shape

I have chosen the medium of the female choir, suffused with human warmth and bright colour, accompanied by three harps, who provide their own rich associations: antiquity, exoticism, femininity and an all-embracing diatonic. The violins breathe their own ancient atmosphere, and are obedient to the tonal patterns; the five young players symbolise the still-relevant addressees of the path that Avram pointed to – a path we have now strayed from.

World of Pitch

The pitch patterns of this work are faithful to basic tetrachords, shaped from two minor seconds + diminished second (or minor third), inspired by *maqam hijaz* – a key component derived from Arab music (see the booklet for the CD *The Box of Late Opuses*, p. 48 on the Hebrew side). Their treatment involves their shifting into higher and lower pitch levels, focused on F, G, E and F-sharp. There is no permanent basic pitch, no binding pitch order; instead, the 'flavour' of *maqam hijaz* acts as a constant yet ethereal presence.

In fitting with my quest for an ancient, exotic character, filled with hollow chords (fourths, fifths and octaves), the modulations – which do surface occasionally – are of the melodic type.

English translation: Dr. Uri Golomb

Tsippi Fleischer

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Outline for a projected symphonic version: guitars join the orchestra instead of the harps, whereas the harp/s play/s with the orchestra as usual; woodwinds play at important points in the melodic outline, and perform meaningful lines against the backdrop of the strings, and also in colour-patches borrowed from the five violinists' parts in the world-premiere version.

In choral rehearsals, the pianist will choose what to play/mark.

Available on the CD 'The Box of Late Opuses' (VMM 1065). Streaming and downloading on <http://www.tsippi-fleischer.com/disco.html>

AVRAM

(oratorio) op. 72

Tsippi Fleischer
(2011)

Score in C I Exposition of the believers

1 Largo ♩ = 60-72

mp

Women/
Girls'
Chorus
incl.
Solos

Two Voices

Gvu - - ra - mul makh še - la kha - yey av - ra -

p

a - vi

Harp I

Harp II

Harp III

F, E $\flat$, D, C, B, A $\flat$, G

Violin I

non trem.

Violin II

non trem.

Violin III

Violin IV

Violin V

10 (*mp*)

Women/
Girls'
Chorus
incl.
Solos

Two Voices

ham kha - yey sa - ra me - so - po - tam - ya

kol [1] ha - ma - 'a - mi - nim 'a - vi ha - khok - rim

Hp I

p

D, C, B $\flat$, A $\flat$, G, F $\sharp$, E

Hp II

Hp III

mp

E $\flat$, D, C, B, A $\flat$, G, F $\sharp$

Vln I

Vln II

Vln III

p

Vln IV

p

Vln V

p

SAMPLE

Women/
Girls'
Chorus
incl.
Solos

Two Voices

18 (*mp*)

khres - then - ta 'a - - ha - va - gvu -

p

me - 'ur kas-dim

ibid.

mp

p

mf

mp

p

mf

mp

p

Vln I

pp

mp

Vln II

pp

mp

Vln III

pp

mp

Vln IV

pp

mp

Vln V

mp

accél. sempre

non trem.

non trem.

mp

mp