JOSEF TAL

SYMPHONY No. 1
FOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (1953)

SCORE

IMI 6613
The First Symphony was written in Jerusalem in 1952 and first performed under the baton of Heinz Freudenthal in various European countries in 1956; the first performance in Israel took place in an Israel Philharmonic subscription concert in February 1957, with the same conductor. The composer describes his work as follows:

"This symphony consists of a single movement divided into three sections that follow each other without break. The thematic material is developed Out of music originally conceived for the choreographic creation By the Waters of Babylon inspired by Deborah Bertonoff. In this work I have used an ancient Persian-Jewish Lamentation as transcribed by A. Z. Idelsohn; the ancient tune actually furnished the entire motivic material for the symphony.

In its beginning, small melodic turns of the song are developed; through enlargement and variation they create new musical themes. After a slow introduction in the spirit of the Lamentation, there follows a transformation breathing the air of rebellion. In the second section, the ancient tune appears in its original form. In a series of simple variations it is taken up by various groups of instruments and developed in a quiet and restful way. The third section, which sets in after a short transitional passage, returns to the material of the opening. The passive spirit of the Lamentation is now transformed into a more active dance-movement which gradually increases in intensity and strength. The symphony ends with a short Coda, in which reminiscences of the past are combined with the youthful rhythms — and thus closes the circle."

Duration: 18 minutes
ORCHESTRATION:

PICCOLO
2 FLUTES
2 OBOES (Ob. II / E. Hn)
2 CLARINETs in B♭ (Cl. II / Bass Cl.)
2 BASSOONS

4 HORNS in F
3 TRUMPETS in C
3 TROMBONES
TUBA

TIMPANI

PERCUSSION (3 players):

HIGH TAM-TAM
TRIANGLE
CYMBALS
TURKISH CYMBAL
BASS DRUM
CAMPAŅA
TAMBOURIN

HARP

VIOLIN I
VIOLIN II
VIOLA
VIOLONCELLO
DOUBLE BASS

Dur.: 15′
Largo

dec. one half tremolo
one half non tremolo
ma espressivo
tempo come primo