

# **Exodus**

By: Josef Tal

## **Explanatory notes by the composer on the electronic performance of the work**

The name of the piece: "Exodus". I first wrote the music for the dancer Deborah Bertonov, with piano, narrator, and percussion. In that way, the dance was performed in different places in the country. Then I developed the musical concept for a symphony for a large orchestra. This work, entitled "Exodus" as well, was performed by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra during the first days of the War of Independence. Later the piece was also played in various places abroad.

The notes of the first piece were lost somehow, and in 1957 the issue of a dance accompanied by the original form of music rose again. By that time I was already dealing with the technical aspects of Electronic music. As the first attempt in this area, I decided to renew the work by using electronic sounds, i.e. without any traditional instruments - no strings, no wind instruments, and no percussion. All untraditional sounds are produced by Electronic instruments that activate the composer's imagination towards new ways. The individual sounds are not played but immediately recorded on a magnetic tape in technical processes that cannot be specified here. All these recorded sounds are assembled according to the will of the composer.

This of course creates a musical language that is different from the traditional one. The listener must, therefore, be prepared for surprising impressions, and it is possible that here and there the sounds will evoke memories of the exotic world that surrounds us in everyday life. This is a side-effect, and there is no intention to mimic outside noises. The listener should take in the different things together and grasp the work in its entirety, without losing his mind while listening because of some excessively salient details.

The work is based on the Passover Haggadah, and the words describe the whole story in a concentrated way, starting from labor in Egypt to the dance of Miriam. The verses were recorded by the singer Yehoshua Zohar, and his voice too was passed through electronic devices. Hence in many places, we do not hear the natural voice of the singer, but the processed voice is prepared according to the need of the piece. There are places where he is singing by himself; there are places where the tone of his voice changes, and there are also verses where he sings in his natural voice.

Lastly, I want to mention just one more technical example. The nocturnal escape from Egypt is described in a traditional fugue form. However, it has no melodic expression but is founded on a rhythmic theme only, and the tones that make up the theme are electronic pulses. Because of the high concentration of these measures, the fugue can reflect with great objectivity the nervousness and recklessness of the fugitive crowd. Such things are indescribable by traditional instruments and by a live rhythm. The compound and the rich web require musical instruments such as electronic devices that enable the translation of such a thought into reality.

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