

TO THE FRUIT OF MY LAND

Bitter-sweet sounds

"The source of inspiration for this work is the concept of the landscape of Israel as a poetic quality", in the words of the composer. Interestingly enough, it is the landscape of the fields and citrus groves in particular which pervade this work with their colour, the juiciness of their fruit and their earthy sensuality.

The shades of colour, the forms and sizes, the scents and tastes — all combine to produce a rounded work possessing its own musical language. The colours are provided by the richness of the guitar timbre, including the innovative contemporary techniques of sound-production; the forms and sizes are reflected in the structure and the rhythmic nature of each piece (light or heavy, fast or slow) as well as in the formal relationships between the various movements; the scents and tastes — these are the resources from the point of view of the elements of pitch and articulation. In this way each movement is provided with its own distinctive atmosphere.

The taste of the fruit, ranging from sweet to sour (as, for example, from tangerine to lemon in the citrus family), is the associative idea for the comprehension of the work. This is constructed by a process of extending the tonal centres from just a few to 12 centres; that is to say, as the work progresses, the overall sound becomes more and more dodecaphonic. The composer notes: "This was an attempt to examine the concept of dodecaphony over a period of time — to cause it to come into being in the course of a single work. I also tried to examine the wealth of colour and methods of sound-production of the guitar as solo instrument while delving into its hidden potential for the composition of contemporary music. At the same time, the "traditional elements" of guitar-playing are too appealing to disregard".

The rhythmic nature of each of the four dances (movements) is different: in the first, with its free rhythmic patterns, the atmosphere of an opening is provided and its clearly improvisational character brings to mind Oriental music; the second movement is rather agitated with folkloristic undertones; the third presents fragments of fugal texture and moves relatively heavily; and in the fourth, elements from the previous movements combine into a concluding unit.

The first movement is marked by abrupt transitions from one mood to another; the compositional technique is based on a number of textural cells which burst out over and over again in various ways during the movement. There is no preordained form, it is metreless, and the quasi-Oriental improvisatory impression is reinforced by the guitar-tone which here resembles the timbre of the qanun.

The central notes of the movement are E, A and D and these are embellished by the wide range of notes provided by the chromatic scale.

Many different techniques are employed in this movement. At the very outset, for example, we come across a light *arpeggio* ending with harmonics and with a trill (on one string as well as on two strings) in order to emphasize the harsh sonority. At this point the interval of the fourth — so characteristic of the guitar because of the tuning of its strings — is prominent.



Throughout the work, the function of the trill is not decorative but rather musically structural.

In the course of the same movement a tender melody appears, played in a relatively high position and consequently sounding soft and lyrical:



and blocks of chords also appear:



Towards the end, a *pizzicato* figure adds a new shade of colour:

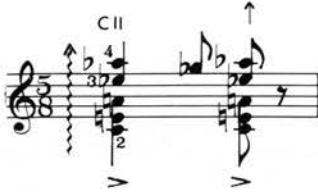


In the dance-like second movement, the distribution of centres of pitch is extended. The

opening motif in a harmonic mutation at the end of the work



as opposed to



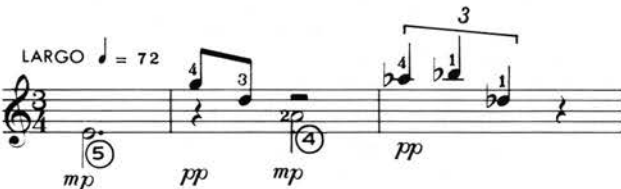
at the beginning of the work, creates the illusion of a sort of reprise. The energetic rhythmic nature and the consistent alternating metre $\frac{5}{8}$ introduce the listener to a strict rhythmic discipline, in contrast to the rhythmic freedom of the first movement. In order to stress the dance-like beat, the composer uses knocking (*golpe*) on the belly of the guitar:



The relative agitation is also expressed in the level of dynamics — usually *f*, in the selection of the repeated rhythmic fragments and in the use of a harmonically dissonant interval (playing simultaneously on two strings, rather than a trill):

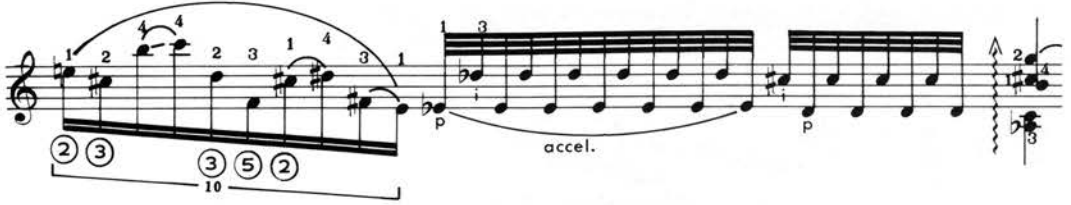


The considerable rhythmic heaviness which marks the third movement combines with a great variety of pitches and a texture of fugal fragments. This polyphony is expressed here in the repetitive element which serves as a substitute for the subject in the baroque fugue: the interval of the ascending fourth. This interval should be stressed during performance, while the various phrases — the countersubject and episodes as in traditional fugues — should be played more lightly. The following example, from the beginning of the movement, illustrates this texture:



The fourth also stands out as a significant harmonic interval — a type of harmonic element to which all the other intervals (chiefly the thirds and sixths) relate.

The fourth movement is the most virtuosic, mainly because of the almost equal usage of the 12 half-tones. Thus the chords are richer and bolder than in the previous movements, and the melodic *arpeggios* contain large and rapid jumps; see, for example, the breaking of chords and the quick repetitions of major and minor sevenths:



The changes in dynamics and mood are also rapid, the whole movement being played *ad libitum*, and thus the work comes full circle in an extended reminder of what occurred in the first movement.

The relative climax is to be found in four *ponticello* notes (stressed plucking near the bridge, giving the guitar a metallic sound) before the end:



After this comes a deep hush: the work ends with four quiet *glissandi* chords, continuously ascending and descending, as if a curtain were going down on the retreating sounds.

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