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DESERT CALL
TRANSFORMATION
THE "DREIDL" VARIATIONS
FABLE
KIDDUSH HA-LEVANAH
NIZK'ORAH

INVOCATIONS

MUSIC BY DALIT HADASS WARSHAW

Albany
CLASSICAL

THE COMPOSER

A prolific composer and active performer since childhood, Dalit Warshaw's works have been performed by numerous orchestral ensembles, including the New York and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras (Zubin Mehta conducting), the Boston Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, the Y Chamber Orchestra, the Colorado Symphony and the Albany Symphony.

Born in 1974, Ms. Warshaw began her piano studies at age three with her mother, Ruti Hadass Warshaw. She began composing one year later, writing her first orchestral work at age 8, for which she became the youngest winner of the BMI Award. In 1985, Zubin Mehta conducted her second orchestral work, *In the Beginning*, with both the New York and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras. She continued to study piano, musicianship and composition with Ruti Warshaw until the age of 17.

Ms. Warshaw went on to receive degrees from Columbia University and the Juilliard School, where she obtained her doctorate in music composition in May 2003. Significant teachers from that time include Milton Babbitt, David Del Tredici and Samuel Adler. Important awards and distinctions include a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, five Morton Gould ASCAP Foundation grants, two BMI Awards and a Fulbright Scholarship to Israel.

As a pianist, Ms. Warshaw has performed widely as both soloist and chamber player, in venues as diverse as Avery Fisher Hall, Miller Theater, Alice Tully Hall and the Stone, her repertoire ranging from the piano concertos of Mozart, Schumann and Grieg to her own compositions and improvisations.

Having studied with renowned thereminist Clara Rockmore from an early age, Ms. Warshaw has appeared with ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony.

Ms. Warshaw continues to cultivate a multi-faceted persona as composer, performer and educator. She currently serves on the composition faculty of the Boston Conservatory, previously teaching orchestration (beginning and advanced levels) at the Juilliard Evening Division from 2000 to 2005. She was also a Visiting Professor at Middlebury College and a composer-in-residence at the Interlochen Arts Academy and at the Bowdoin International Music Festival.

Frequently inspired by themes gleaned from literature and visual art, Ms. Warsaw has often collaborated with her brother, writer and filmmaker Hilan Warsaw. Musical influences range from Mahler, Ravel, Puccini and Stravinsky, to early Broadway composers and Jewish liturgical chant. Ms. Warsaw's music has been widely praised for its lyricism, its unique orchestral palette, its sense of drama and emotional intensity.

NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

Recording *Invocations* was a very exciting and personally meaningful project for me. First of all, it allowed me the perfect context in which to feature and reconcile diverse aspects of my musical identity, as composer, pianist, and thereminist. This CD also enabled me to exhibit multiple facets of my compositional voice, as the music runs across a broad harmonic spectrum, with instrumentation ranging from solo instrumental works to string quartet to voice. Additionally, this recording highlights my mission to integrate the theremin with acoustic ensembles through my writing in ways that feature the more lyrical, vocal and expressive capacities of this unusual instrument, and that reveal its limitless ways of blending and interacting with different timbral combinations.

Finally, this CD has provided me with the ideal venue in which to perform on a unique and profoundly historical instrument: Clara Rockmore's theremin, which was built and customized for her by its inventor, Lev Theremin, in the early 1930s. One of Clara's final performances on this instrument occurred at a memorial concert for her sister, Nadia Reisenberg, which took place at Merkin Hall in October 1989. I was 15 years old at the time and had taken part in that concert, playing one of my compositions for piano four-hands with my mother and teacher, Ruti Hadass Warsaw, herself a former piano student of Nadia. Nadia had been an extremely significant musical presence in my young life, in fact being the first to encourage my early composing endeavors, and Clara became a mentor upon her sister's death in 1983. When I turned 16, Clara began teaching me to play the theremin. It is my absolute pleasure, then, to share Clara's remarkable instrument with the public, in honor of what would have been her 100th birthday on March 9, 2011.

THE THEREMIN

The theremin, featured in two of the compositions on this program, is a wholly unique musical instrument that demands enormous precision and an extremely sharp ear to play well. Its singularity lies in the manner in which it is played: the performer does not actually make physical contact with it, but stands in front of the instrument and moves his or her hands in the proximity of two metal antennae—one of which controls frequency, the other amplitude—in order to control pitch and volume. While the performer can more easily achieve signature theremin effects such as glissandi, heavy vibrato and use of broad dynamic range, it is more challenging to invoke melodic content on the theremin. Therefore, the concert music repertoire written for it remains slim.

While the theremin is the technological and spiritual forerunner of today's synthesizer, it remains perhaps more profoundly musical than any other electronic instrument, with a timbral quality and tone that can sound deeply expressive and personal. Performing on the theremin as Lev Termen intended was to lend soul to a machine, to imprint the human musical and technical capacity onto the inanimate.

THE MUSIC

The program begins with *Desert Call* for solo cello. Whereas impetuses for my music often stem from texts or programmatic sources, abstract pieces such as this solo instrumental work derive their inspiration from more subconscious and emotional impulses. What better voice than the cello to evoke such qualities of intimacy, rawness and profound intensity? In this piece, the music revolves very strongly around the two lowest—and, therefore, most resonant—open strings of the cello: the note C and its dominant, G. Particular musical influences for this work were the timeless solo cello suites of J.S. Bach, the *E minor Nocturne* for piano by Chopin (which, as a pianist, I was playing incessantly around the time of the piece's composition), and the Mediterranean-influenced augmented second.

Transformation for string quartet and theremin is the first piece on this recording to feature Clara Rockmore's instrument. Conceived while I was in residency at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts during June 2007, the lush and golden San Angelo spring instilled within me a

sense of peace and silence, and lent a bucolic gilt to the music I conceived there. I therefore deemed it the perfect opportunity to feature the theremin as both a chamber and soloistic entity. The world of sultry enchantment that I sought to portray in this work seemed to call for the color of this instrument, at its best a Siren-like voice of utmost expressivity and lyricism. Combining theremin and strings was a wonderful way to reconcile two distinct and seemingly opposing sound-worlds that nevertheless share such human qualities.

I conceived the piece as an “etherlude,” my own term alluding to the *aetherphone*, one of the theremin’s alternate names. While the central melodic material is represented within the theremin line, the material is often anticipated and echoed in contrapuntal shimmer by the string quartet. My prevailing vision, from the opening pedal tone of C (presented by the cello’s open string), was that of a newborn shoot sprouting from within a tangle of branches, only to burgeon into a blossoming and majestic tree in its own right.

The “*Dreidl*” *Variations* are, in part, a nostalgic return to memories of celebrating Chanukah as a young child, when the song “S’vivon” (Hebrew for “spinning top”) would be sung and the *dreidl* (Yiddish for *s’vivon*) spun. I had been particularly intrigued by the off-kilter reeling of the *dreidl* before it fell: the rapid transformation from grace to perilous loss of control that would inevitably result as each spinning jaunt came to an end. I imagined the *dreidl* as a pair of “red shoes,” inspired by Hans Christian Andersen’s story in which an enchanted pair of shoes pulls its wearer far and yonder to the point of exhaustion. Accordingly, my *dreidl* spins, dances and careens through many musical styles, before meeting its inevitable crash during the finale, in which the “Dies Irae” is invoked. The original “S’vivon” tune occurs in its purest form only in the coda, finally finding its “home” after experiencing its diverse musical adventures.

Swooping with the influences of Mahler, Strauss and Bartok, the mischievous *Fable* is structured as a *scherzo*. For the middle section, I was influenced by the chant of the Jewish “Kedushah” blessing (forerunner to the “Sanctus” of the liturgical Mass), which I envisioned uttered rather strangely by a Greek chorus of crows. I therefore present it through a heterophonic satire of tritones and major 7ths. The repetitive perfect authentic cadences that close the movement are a tongue-in-cheek allusion to Haydn’s “Joke” Quartet.

The fascinating text of *Kiddush ha-Levanah*, or “Sanctification of the Moon,” is intoned as part of a Jewish rite that takes place on the first Sabbath evening of each month, when all members of the congregation exit the synagogue, gaze skyward and address the moon. The customs associated with this tradition are comparatively pagan when compared to most others within the Jewish religion: one is encouraged to dress ceremoniously, to anoint one’s self with scents and oils, and even to dance before the Moon, which is referred to by its more feminine name, “Levanah,” meaning “the white one.” The very act of addressing an object is foreign within Judaism: unlike many religions, use of icons is prohibited, which makes this ceremony so uniquely fascinating.

The manner in which the text is structured is unpredictable, as the verses careen from hypnotic and séance-like chant to effusive love-song, then to moodiness and yearning and, finally, to a jubilant and frenzied didacticism. The text itself is gleaned from other well-known Biblical segments, quoting various portions of the Song of Songs and the Psalms, as well as including specific blessings in praise of the Moon and her Creator.

The very process of setting these words to music was of the rare and coveted type in which my structural and stylistic choices were dictated wholly by the text. While this piece marked a new direction in musical language for me, such was the compositional experience that my artistic choices were achieved only in response to what I felt the words demanded, as though I were but a servant—or ambassador—to the text.

Nizk’orah, for two theremins and piano, most overtly reconciles my capacities as composer, pianist and thereminist, as I performed and then overdubbed all of the parts on this recording. I played the theremin parts on two distinctive theremins: Clara Rockmore’s instrument can be heard as Theremin I, and Theremin II is played on Bob Moog’s one-and-only 91W, his replica of Clara’s theremin that he built for me in 1991. In doing so, a rare dialogue was enabled between these two one-of-a-kind theremin “siblings.” By playing the piano in addition to both theremin parts, I sought to pay homage not only to Clara but also her sister Nadia Reisenberg, who was her main accompanist during performances and recordings.

The piece, originally for theremin, cello and piano, was written for a memorial concert honoring Clara, which took place at Steinway Hall on March 22, 2001. I had known Clara for

much of my life, from when I was six years old until her death in May 1998. As both theremin teacher and friend, she continued to be one of the more potent inspirational figures in my life, both musically and personally.

There are a few meanings to the title. “Yizkor,” in Hebrew, literally means “He will remember,” and refers in this case to a part of the Jewish liturgy recited on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) when we recall those dear to us who have died. Substitute “n” for “y,” and the word becomes “We will remember”; add an “ah” as a suffix, and the meaning is “We will remember her.” As well, “Orah” could be seen as one of the possible Hebrew translations of Clara’s name, meaning “light” and “joy,” two terms that could appropriately be used to describe prominent elements of her personality. At a certain point in the piece, “Chiara,” the Italian version of her name, appears in musical form.

During the course of the work, I refer to some of Clara’s most well known recordings: one might recognize wisps of the “Vocalise” by Rachmaninoff, and “The Swan” by Saint-Saens. It is as though a continuation of Clara’s song is taking place, but one heard filtered through something of the beyond, over the River Styx.

—Dalit Hadass Warshaw, September 2010

THE PERFORMERS

Wendy Warner has become one of the leading cellists in the world, garnering international attention winning first-prize at the 1990 International Rostropovich Competition in Paris, and going on to perform at many of the world’s distinguished concert halls, including Carnegie (NY) and Walt Disney Hall (LA), Paris’ Salle Pleyel and Berlin’s Philharmonie.

Warner has collaborated with leading conductors and has performed with the Chicago, Boston, Dallas, San Francisco, London, Berlin, and Iceland Symphonies, the Minnesota and Philadelphia Orchestras, the St. Petersburg, Calgary and Hong Kong Philharmonics, Orchestre Symphonique de Quebec, the French Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and L’Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse. Recital engagements include performances at the Music Institute of Chicago, DC’s Phillips Collection and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston), as well as Milan and Tokyo.

In 2009, Warner released two recordings for the Cedille label. Past recordings include Warner's debut recording Hindemith, *Music for Cello and Piano* (Bridge Records), and a second disc featuring duos for cello and violin on Cedille Records. Most recently released is a Naxos recording of the Barber *Concerto* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Marin Alsop, conductor.

Warner's musical career began at age six under the tutelage of Nell Novak, until she joined Mstislav Rostropovich at the Curtis Institute, from which she graduated. An accomplished pianist as well, she studied with Emilio del Rosario at The Music Center. A recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, Warner teaches at Roosevelt University. (www.wendywarnercello.com)

The outstanding cello bow being used by Wendy Warner is by Francoix Xavier Tourte of Paris, c. 1815, the "De Lamare" on extended loan through the generous efforts of the Stradivari Society of Chicago. The Stradivari Society is a unique organization that supports the very highest level of string playing by assisting Patrons who own the most precious antique Italian instruments and French bows and choose to make them available to artists of exceptional talent and ability.

Described by *Time Out New York* as a "striking new music quartet," the **Momenta Quartet** has premiered more than 50 works since 2004, alongside classical, Renaissance and contemporary masterworks. In residence at Temple University for six years, Momenta has also performed and lectured at Cornell, Columbia and Yeshiva Universities; Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges; The Mannes School of Music and the Boston Conservatory; among others. The quartet has performed in England, Singapore and Indonesia and has received grants from the Koussevitzky Music Fund, Meet the Composer and the Aaron Copland Fund. (www.momentaquartet.com)

As described by *The New York Times* "... **Re'ut Ben-Ze'ev**... offered a bold, committed account... so deeply physical was her performance..." Re'ut Ben-Ze'ev has won critical acclaim for her "intense expression and pure voice" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), "impassioned" (*The New York Times*) interpretations and "emotionally and vocally masterful performance" (*New Music Connoisseur*.) She has performed standard operatic and concert repertoire as well as musical theater and cutting-edge collaborations, appearing throughout Canada, Europe, Israel, and the United States in venues such as Lincoln Center, Spoleto Festival, USA, Lucille Lortel Theater, Bayreuth Museum of Art, The American Academy in Berlin, the Israel Vocal Arts Institute, the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, Bowdoin International Music Festival, on NY Classical

station WQXR, Jerusalem Music Centre, Kol Hamusika and on TV internationally. Ben Ze'ev has collaborated with leading composers such as Pulitzer Prize winning composers Yehudi Wyner, David Del Tredici, and Samuel Adler, among many others. Ms. Ben-Ze'ev has appeared as a soloist with the Israel Chamber Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Chamber Orchestra, the Arcos Chamber Orchestra, Heidelberg Symphony, Germany, St. Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra, ProArte Symphony, CA, Israeli Defense Forces Orchestra and Israel Contemporary Ensemble, among others. Accompanied by composers John Musto and Yehudi Wyner, Ms. Ben-Ze'ev recorded multiple CDs for the Milken Archive of Jewish American Music on the Naxos Label. She has also recorded for Furious Artisans, and YIVO Labels.



Kiddush Ha-Levanah: Text and Translation

[taken from the monthly Jewish ritual, which is recited at the conclusion of the Sabbath]

Hareini muchanah u-mezumanah
Lekayem ha-mitzvah
Lekadesh ha-levanah
Le-shem yichud kudshah — brich hu —
U-schinteh al yedei ha-hu tamir
Ve-ne'elam beshem kol Yisrael!

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu melech ha-olam
Asher be-ma'amaro
Barah shechakim
U-ve-ruach piv
Kol tzva'am.
Chok u-zman natan lahem
She-lo yeshanu tafkidam.
Sasim u-smeichim
La-asot retzon konam
Poel emet
She-peulato emet
Ve-la-levanah amar
She-titchadesh ateret tiferet

La-amusei vaten.
She-hem atidim
Lehitchadesh le-yotzram
Asher kvodo malchuto.

Behold I am prepared and ready
To perform the commandment
Of sanctifying the moon.
In the name of the Holy One — blessed is He
And the Presence of the mysterious
And ineffable in the name of all Israel.

Blessed are You, Adonai
Our God, King of the Universe
Who, with His utterance
Created the Heavens
And with the breath of His mouth
All their legion.
A decree and a schedule did He give them
That they not alter their assigned task.
They are joyous and glad
To perform the will of their owner —
The Worker of Truth
Whose work is truth.
To the moon He said
That it should renew itself as a crown of splendor
For those borne from the womb,
Those who are destined
To renew themselves like it,
And to glorify their Molder
For the name of His glorious kingdom.

Baruch atah Adonai
Mechadesh chodashim.

Baruch yotzrech
Baruch osech
Baruch konech
Baruch bor'ech

Keshem she-ani rokedet ke-negdech
Ve-eini yecholah lingoa bach.

David melech Yisrael
Chai ve-kayam

Siman tov u-mazal tov
Yeheh lanu u-le-chol Yisrael

Shalom aleichem!
Aleichem shalom.

Kol dodi
Hineh zeh ba
Medaleg al he-harim
Mekapetz al ha-gevaot

Domeh dodi li-tzvi
O-le-ofer ha-ayalim
Hineh zeh
Omed achar katleinu

Blessed are You, Adonai
Who renews the months.

Blessed is your Molder;
Blessed is your Maker;
Blessed is your Owner;
Blessed is your Creator.

Just as I dance before you
But cannot touch you

David, King of Israel,
Is alive and enduring.

May there be a good sign and a good fortune
For us and for all Israel.

Peace be upon you —
Upon you, peace.

The voice of my beloved —
Behold! It came suddenly
Leaping over mountains
Skipping over hills.

My beloved is like a gazelle
Or a young hart.
Behold! He
Was standing behind our wall

Mashgiach min ha-chalonot
Metzitz min ha-charakim!

Shir ha-ma'a lot:
Esa einai el he-harim
Me-ayn yavo ezri
Ezri me'im Adonai
Oseh shamayim va-aretz

Al yiten la-mot raglecha
Al yanum shomrecha
Adonai yishmerecha
Mi-kol ra
Yishmor et nafshecha
Adonai yishmor tzetcha u-bo'echa

Me-atah ve-ad olam
Adonai tzilcha
Al yad yeminecha
Ve-yare'ach ba-laylah
Me-atah ve-ad olam!

Tanah dvei Rabbi Yishmael:
Ilmalei lo zachu Yisrael
Ela le-hakbil pnei avihem
She-ba-shamayim pa'am achat
Ba-chodesh dayam
Va-yehi or ha-levanah
Ke-or ha-chamah
U-le-or shiv'at yemei Bereshit

Observing through the windows,
Peering through the lattices.

A song to the ascents.
I raise my eyes to the mountains;
Whence will come my help?
My help is from Adonai,
Maker of heaven and earth

He will not allow your foot to falter
Your Guardian will not slumber.
Adonai will protect you
From every evil;
He will guard your soul.
Adonai will guard your departure and your arrival;
From this time and forever.
Adonai is your Shade
At your right hand
... the moon by night.
From this time and forever.

The Academy of Rabbi Yishmael taught:
Had Israel not been privileged
To greet the countenance of their Father
To Heaven except for once
A month — it would have sufficed them.
May the light of the moon
Be like the light of the sun
And like the light of the seven days of creation,

K'mo she-haitah
Kodem mi-utah!

Mi zor olah min ha-midbar
Mitrapeket al dodah?!
She-ne'emar
Et shnei ha-me'orot ha-g'dolim
Vi-yehi ratzon
Milfanecha Adonai
V'Elohei Avotai
Lemalet et pegimat ha-levanah!

Amen!

Elohim yechaneinu vi-yevarcheinu
Ya'er panav itanu,
Selah!

Lada'at ba-aretz darkecha
Be'chol goyim yeshuatecha
Yoducha amim Elohim
Yoducha Elohim kulam

Yismechu vi-y'ranenu le-umim
Ki tishpot amim mishor
U-le-umim ha-aretz tenachem,
Selah!

As it was
Before it was diminished ...

Who is this who rises from the desert
Clinging to her Beloved!
As it is said:
"The two great luminaries"
May it be Your will
Adonai
My God and the God of my forefathers,
To fill the flaw of the moon

Amen.

May God favor us and bless us,
May He luminate His countenance with us,
Selah.

To make known Your way on earth,
Among all the nations Your salvation.
The peoples will acknowledge You, O God,
The peoples will acknowledge You, all of them.
Nations will be glad and sing for joy,
Because You will judge the peoples fairly
And guide the nations on earth,
Selah.

Yoducha amim Elohim
Yoducha amim kulam!

Yevarcheinu Elohim Eloheinu
Yevarcheinu Elohim
Va-yire'u oto kol afsei aretz!

La-menatze'ach bi-neginot
Mizmor shir!!

Then peoples will acknowledge You, O God,
The peoples will acknowledge You, all of them.

... may God, our own God, bless us.
May God bless us
And may all the ends of the earth fear Him.

For the Conductor, upon Neginos,
A psalm, a song.

Translation of the first stanza:
Hilan Dov Warsaw

Translation for ensuing stanzas:
Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, ed.
The Complete ArtScroll Siddur.
Trans. Rabbi Nosson Scherman.
New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1989.

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CREDITS

Produced by Dalit Hadass Warshaw & John Weston

Recorded & mixed by John Weston

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Assisted by Justin Prymowicz and Todd Winmill

Mastered by John Weston at Futura Productions

All compositions are available directly from the composer.

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