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Kareem Roustom

Letters Home

2011

for Clarinet in B \flat and Cello

Duration: ca. 9 minutes

Premiered on Wednesday 6th July 2001 at LSO St Luke's in London
for the Inauguration of the Brunel Institute for Contemporary Middle-Eastern Music.
Max Baillie, viola and Ralph Lane, clarinet.

This is the first work in series of short pieces that are reflections on the ongoing conflict in Syria. The purpose of these series is to encourage a broader awareness to the conflict and the needs of the millions who have been displaced by it and who are desperately in need of aid. In lieu of a fee for sheet music rentals and sales I hope that performers might consider making a donation to an aid organization that is working to help Syrian refugees.

Letters Home is based on a Muwashshah, which is both a poetic form, whose provenance is attributed to a blind 10th century Arab Andalusian poet, and a song form based on these poems. Although the rather large repertoire of sung Muwashshahaat (pl. Muwashshah) is comprised of works from around the 18th century to the mid 20th century these songs evoke a sense of longing for a time long gone: the golden days of Al-Andalus. Some of the themes in these songs include wine, nature, love and conjure up imagery such as the secret rendezvous with the *beloved* away from the ever watchful eyes of the palace guards.

There is often much that is unsaid in these songs and the inferences can be interpreted in a number of ways. *Letters Home* is, on one hand, a short set of variations on a Muwashshah that is close to my heart (Ahwa Qamaran) and is based on the *maqam* Saba (D, E half-flat, F, G flat, A, B flat, C, D flat etc.). This *maqam* is very rich and complex and perhaps one that, to the initiated ear, drips heavily with the nectar of longing. "Letters Home" is also an expression of what I cannot say to my family and friends in Syria at this difficult juncture for they, like the distant *beloved* in the Muwashshahaat, are also under the ever watchful eyes and ears of the palace guards. "Letters Home" is dedicated to the Brunel Institute for Contemporary Middle-Eastern Music.

Kareem Roustom - June 14th, 2011

Letters Home

To the Brunel Institute for Contemporary Middle-Eastern Music

Kareem Roustom

With anger ♩ = 88

Clarinet in B♭

Violoncello

Measures 1-2: Clarinet in B♭ and Violoncello. Clarinet starts with a forte (f) dynamic, moving to sf, then p, then f, and ending with sfp. Violoncello starts with f, moving to sfp, then f, and ending with pizz. (pizzicato).

Measures 3-4: Clarinet in B♭ and Violoncello. Clarinet features triplets and sf dynamics. Violoncello includes arco (arco) and pizz. (pizzicato) markings.

Measures 5-6: Clarinet in B♭ and Violoncello. Clarinet includes mp sub. (mezzo-piano subito) and f dynamics. Violoncello includes f dynamics.

Poco rall. Pensive ♩ = 69

Measures 9-10: Clarinet in B♭ and Violoncello. Clarinet includes p (piano) and molto esp. (molto espressivo) markings. Violoncello includes dim. (diminuendo) marking.

accel.

Measures 13-14: Clarinet in B♭ and Violoncello. Clarinet includes cresc. (crescendo) and sfp dynamics. Violoncello includes p cresc. (piano crescendo) and sff (sforzando fortissimo) marking.

Explosive ♩ = 88

16 *ff* *dim. poco a poco*

19

23 *Calando* *p* *pp*

Largo ♩ = 54

26 *stacc.*

Lontano ♩ = 96
(3+2+2+3)

With a slow vibrato & breathy sound

30 *pizz.* *arco* *ppp*

33 *gliss.* *mf* *pizz. arco* *mf*

55 Allargando With conviction ♩ = 72

arco

mf *smf* *smf*

59

p *f* *mp sub.* *sf* *sf* *f*

pizz. *arco*

62

p *f* *sf* *sf* *pp* *f sub.*

pizz. *arco*

66 Maestoso

← ♩ = ♩ = 109 →

sf *ff* *ff*

pizante *pizz.* *arco*

72

pizz. *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco*

f *ff* *f* *ff*