

"Tha-Laas-Saaa They Shouted"

"Re-Maain-Aliiive"

For

Percussion Ensemble

(Xylophone, Triangle, Tambourine, Snare Drum, Cymbal, Tenor Drum, Bass Drum)

dedicated to

.

by

Ali Riza SARAL

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Please send a digital recording of your performance to the composer at
arsaral(AATT)yahoo.com

The piece is written to be used for good causes.

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Forword

My first idea related to this work was an MP3 file that I scribbled with a sound editing SW tool. Recently, there were some protests in Turkey, in which many people made sounds in the darkness by hitting utensils. The idea to simulate this phenomenon seemed very interesting at the beginning. I quickly recorded many samples hitting various utensils and wrote an aural sketch using the sound editing tool. It was an abstract protest song.

But there was something I didn't like; although these protests were part of a peaceful means of protest, they were also part of a general attitude where no positive contribution was made. It was mere critics, nothing more, nothing constructive or providing alternative proposals.

As in many of these futile critics, my sketch did not work out. Instead the sounds in the night gave me the idea of sounds coming from a distance. Instantly, I got obsessed with the sound of the 'ten thousands':

"On the fifth day they reached the mountain, the name of which was Theches. No sooner had the men in front ascended it and caught sight of the sea than a great cry arose, and Xenophon, in the rearguard, catching the sound of it, conjectured that another set of enemies must surely be attacking in front; for they were followed by the inhabitants of the country, which was all aflame;...

But as the shout became louder and nearer, and those who from time to time came up, began racing at the top of their speed towards the shouters, and the shouting continually recommenced with yet greater volume as the numbers increased, Xenophon settled in his mind that something extraordinary must have happened, so he mounted his horse, and taking with him Lycius and the cavalry, he galloped to the rescue. Presently they could hear the soldiers shouting and passing on the joyful word, "The sea! the sea!" (1)

Introduction

Xenophon's Anabasis(3) tells the story of 'ten thousands' who marched against the Perseus king under the command of Cyrus. Cyrus gets killed in the final war with the Perseus army. Afterwards, one more unlucky event happens. The Perseus men kills all the commanders of the remaining Hellen forces through a conspiracy. The Hellen forces choose Xenophon as commander for the rest of the journey. They decide to return back Home although passing through dangerous territories. They finally reach the Black Sea at Trabzon and shout "Thalassa! Thalassa!" at the first view of the sea. (2)

Notes:

1- Thalassa: The sea.

2- There is a short article, at the end of my work, explaining my reservations and the reason why I got obsessed with 'Tha-Laas-Saaa'.

3-The Project Gutenberg EBook of Anabasis, by Xenophon

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1170>

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Short Analysis Note and the Lyrics

This is a semi-naive work. There are strong connections with the elements of the ten thousand's story. The main motive has the rhythm of the word "Thalassa" as "Tha-Laas-Saaa". This comes many times at the Xylophone in the work. ThaLaasSaaa motive is repeated at other instruments also. There is a fugue entrance and a stretto using this motive at the end.

There is a motive of danger at the bass drum something like: ta-ta-taaa. This contrasts with the motive of ThaLaasSaaa. The motive of ThaLaasSaaa also symbolizes the sea in cooperation with cymbal which is used to imitate the sounds of the waves. The military march idea can be traced at the Snare Drum. The horse running can be heard on the Bass and Tenor drums. There exists also other elements to enable the listener develop an imaginative story in thier minds while listening.

Short Article

THE ONLY WAY

Some anarchists shout 'The only way is revolution'. This understanding has effected the whole left wing thinking unfortunately. In spite of producing positive critics and substantial alternative proposals, the left wing frequently foster confrontation, driving young people to tasks not related to the destinies of their own lives.

We are living in a period of time when putting on bombs and blowing off one's self is getting more and more common. Governments, police, military are taking precautions and trying to catch these fanatics.

I believe substantial effort must also be spent by universities and scholars to study where these persons have gone to school, their teachers, their family education, the books they have read, etc. These are not sporadic crazinesses. The systems, the society creates these persons. There must be long term corrections in the education system and overall besides taking short term, fire-extinguishing measures.

Thalassa is a commonly known very popular story. Many people know the end of it at least. But also one must appreciate that during that era in the history, pillaging, torture and killing was very common and it was the mighty who decided what is right or wrong. Xenophon and his army was no exception. Here are a few examples in Xenophon's words:

"When they had breakfasted and the march recommenced, the generals planted themselves a little to one side in a narrow place, and when they found any of the aforesaid slaves or other property still retained, they confiscated them."

"The two were brought up at once and questioned separately: "Did they know of any other road than the one visible?" The first said no; in spite of all sorts of terrors applied to extract a better answer-- "no," he persisted. When nothing could be got out of him, he was killed before the eyes of his fellow."

Then what is the reason that makes the ten thousands' story so charming? When they got defeated by Perseus forces they made a decision; not to join Perseus, not to fight against them again. But also they made the decision to return back to their Homes. They decided to live. They decided to survive by all means. And they did.

The ending rhythm of my piece is: "Tha-laas-saaa", the rhythm of the words of the men shouting "The sea! The sea!"

My piece repeats the rhythm as if shouting: "Re-maain-aliive! Re-maain-aliive!"

Ali R+ SARAL

About the Composer

Ali R+ SARAL has studied double majors and has two Master's degrees,
MSc and BSC from Istanbul Technical University and MM from Illinois State University.
He was accepted to the Istanbul State Conservatoire Composition and Theory Department and
studied harmony, counterpoint and others with Erivan SAYDAM,
composition with İlhan USMANBAŞ.

He was a student of Roque CORDERO and Arthur CORRA at USA.

He has attended courses at Stanford University CCRMA lab and Darmstad 1996.

He has written 23 works of close to 5 hours long.

You can find his compositions at Petrucci Library: http://imslp.org/wiki/Category:Saral,_Ali_Riza

He has served EUROCONTROL and German airspace as an air traffic control engineer 1992-1997.
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