

I am an example of a person who was picked by music

An Israeli composer Tsippi Fleischer wrote a children's opera Oasis which was performed in Bratislava by pupils of St. Cecilia Grammar School on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of its foundation.

We have not had the opportunity so far to hear your music in Slovakia. How come that your opera Oasis was performed by the children of St. Cecilia?

It happened thanks to my friend and colleague František Poul whom I have known for years and who had the idea to cooperate with the above mentioned grammar school.

Oasis was originally written in German, but in Bratislava we heard it in English...

Yes, the original version was written in German, but I almost immediately decided to prepare the English version of it. And I am not against translations into other language as well. Currently I am working on a Hebrew version. I thought English would be more accessible to children in Bratislava and that's why Gila Abrahamson was asked to write the English libretto.

Where did you draw your inspiration from?

It is an amazing story. The inspiration arose from the popular children's opera Brundibár which was performed in the concentration camp in Terezin during the 2nd World War. I asked an outstanding librettist and my friend Yael Medini to write the libretto for my opera. I worked extremely hard on the music, I even spent some time in the Sinai Desert where I got a lot of inspiration.

Apart from the children's opera we can find other, mostly chamber operas...

For contemporary composers it is not easy to gather the finance and get the opportunity to perform a big opera. But at the moment I am working on a project for a big ensemble which would take place in ancient Babylon. The project is planned for the year 2015.

I know that you did not study only music but also Hebrew and Arabic language, literature and history...

The region where I come from is my great inspiration, I am proud of my cultural background. I live in Israel which means I am a part of the Middle East. When composing I do not need to think too much, it all comes natural to me. I am surrounded by very inspiring world. At school I studied both Hebrew and Arabic and I found Arabic language much more interesting and exciting. I love the sound of it and I started to apply the elements of the language into my music. This happened to be quite shocking for some Israeli people as they looked down on Arabs and underestimated them. Most of the things I learned directly from Arabian villagers or from recordings of the native speakers and musicians. Sometimes it was a bit adventurous to visit these places, but I was never scared. I would say Cairo was one of the most inspiring places I have been to.

You combined these components with European musical elements...

My music is based on European principles of harmony, but the motifs, melodies and atmosphere emerge from the country of my origin. I find this combination very natural. In the world of contemporary music I am rather well-known, I have established my own specific handwriting.

You studied a lot of different subjects, why did you decide to devote yourself to composing?

I am an example of a person who did not choose music but was picked by it. I did not see any other option. I became completely absorbed in searching for my own authentic style and direction.

What about your pedagogical work?

I am very busy now so I do not teach any longer. But I have done a lot of research and have written several books which replace my pedagogical work. These days composing is my world and through it I live a very interesting and full life.