
Shulamit
RAN

**Birkat Haderekh –
Blessing for the Road**

for B \flat Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano



THEODORE
PRESSER
COMPANY

Commissioned by the Tanglewood Music Center in honor of its 75th Anniversary Season, with generous support from the Paul Jacobs Memorial Commissions Fund

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Accidentals carry through the bar and are not transferable at the octave. The above notwithstanding, many courtesy accidentals have been added.

batt. (as distinct from c.l. batt.) = battuto: bounce the bow on the string, in the upper half towards the tip, a kind of arco/pizz., always aiming for maximum pitch definition and resonance.

Harmonics, natural or artificial, may be executed at the player's discretion. Notated harmonics are only suggestions, and may be replaced to achieve better intonation.

The kind of tempo, dynamic, and expressive fluctuations considered acceptable in the performance of so-called traditional repertoire are to be applied to this music as well.

PROGRAM NOTES

BIRKAT HADEREKH (Hebrew for "Blessing for the Road") begins its journey as a spacious, gently inflected solo clarinet melody, slowly unfolding as it gathers the other members of this clarinet quartet around itself, carving out a distinctive musical "space."

Looking at this work in its totality, the opening phrase is, at some level, emblematic of the entire piece, as this single-movement composition of approximately 8 minutes can be heard as one extended, gradually evolving melody. At around the midpoint of the piece, though, where the clarinet assumes the solo line again, this melody takes something of a turn. With just a small melodic twist, the music takes on an imploring quality, almost in the spirit of an invocation, gradually increasing in urgency, thus becoming a form of prayer — its potential perhaps hinted at, but not necessarily self-evident, in the opening statement.

In my own mind while composing the piece, and no longer just thinking in the strictly musical terms of the formation and development of sound shaped in time, the piece became, for all of its modest proportions, a parable of one of life's journeys. I found myself thinking of the array of conflicting emotions associated with preparing for a voyage, destination uncertain, of someone precious. Anticipation, anxiousness, longing, hope — all mingled together. Perhaps it is a mother praying for her child's well-being; a small, private ritual that cuts across time and place, speaking to our common humanity.

—Shulamit Ran

Duration: c. 8'

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SHULAMIT RAN

4/4 With an air of fantasy ♩ = c. 56-60

Clarinet (B♭) *mp* *supple, with presence, subtle dynamic fluctuations encouraged* *pp*

Violin

Violoncello

4/4 With an air of fantasy ♩ = c. 56-60

Piano

Cl. *mp* *poco* *mp* *poco f* *p*

Vln. *p* *p*

Vc. *p* *p*

Pno. *p* *mf*

Ped. 4 5 6 7 8

Cl. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ *ten.*

Vln. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ *p* *mp espr.* *mp* *mf* *connect* *cantabile* *poco*

Vc. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ *p* *mp espr.* *ord.* *connect* *cantabile* *poco*

Pno. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ *mp* *l.h.* *pp* *mp* *p*

9 Ped. 10 Ped. 11 12 13 Ped.

Cl. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Vln. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Vc. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Pno. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *8va* *p mournful* *più espr.*

14 (Ped.) 15 Ped. 16 Ped. 17 Ped. Ped. 18

Very still, with "under-the-surface" expressivity

Cl. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Vln. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Vc. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Pno. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} = c. 60$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *mp legato* *Very still, with "under-the-surface" expressivity*

19 Ped. 20 Ped. 21 Ped. 22 Ped.

Very gradually gathering momentum

3/8

3/4

Cl. *mp* *mf*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf* *mf* soaring

Very gradually gathering momentum

3/8

3/4

Pno. *mp* *mf* insistent *mf* espr. *mf* declamatory

Ped. 23 24 25 26

poco sfz

Cl. *pp* *pp* *pp*

Vln. *p* molto espr. *mp* lyrical non trem.

Vc. *p* *p*

Pno. *p* *p* *l.h.* *3*

Ped. 27 28 29

3/4 = c. 76-80

Cl. *bring out, but with great delicacy*

Vln. *flautando* *p* with great delicacy *flautando* *p* with great delicacy

Vc. *p* with great delicacy

Pno. *3* *8va.* *3* *3/4 = c. 76-80* *p*

Ped. 30 31 32 33 34

Cl. *mp* *p* *poco* *p* *8va.....*

Vln. *ord.* *bring out, with great delicacy but also expressivity* *mp*

Vc. *ord.*

Pno. *pp*

35 36 Ped. 37 38 39

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 84$

Cl. *poco f* *ff*

Vln. *mf* *f* *mp* *molto* *ff* *f* *mp* *molto* *ff* *f* *mp* *molto* *ff*

Vc. *mf* *f* *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *molto* *ff*

Pno. *mf* *poco f* *sfz* *più f* *ff*

40 41 42 43

$\frac{3}{4} \text{♩} = \text{c. } 88$

Cl. *poco f* *8va.....* *ff* *mp*

Vln. *mf molto espr., soaring*

Vc. *f molto espr.* *assertive* *sfz mp sub.* *poco s.p.*

Pno. *f* *più f* *p sub.*

44 Ped. 45 46 47 48 Ped.

Cl. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ 6 p

Vln. \rightarrow ord. \rightarrow poco s.p. \rightarrow ord. p 8va.....

Vc. poco p

Pno. 49 50 51 52 mf like crystals mp warm Ped. Ped.

Cl. 6 3 6 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Vln.

Vc.

Pno. 8va... mf "crystals" mp "warm" mf mp 53 (Ped.) 54 55 Ped.

**Senza misura, quasi cadenza,
in the spirit of an invocation ♩ = 72**

Cl. 10 3 3 $poco f$ intense mp $poco f$ mp mf

Vln.

Vc.

**Senza misura, quasi cadenza,
in the spirit of an invocation ♩ = 72**

Pno.

56

Cl. *molto espr., "imploring"* **3/4**

Vln. *f* *poco f* *ten.* *f* **3/4**

Vc. **3/4**

Pno. **3/4**

(56)

Cl. **3/4** = c. 76 **4/4** **3/4** * **3/4**

Vln. *p* *mf* *n.v.* *mp like clockwork* *sul G*

Vc. *sul G (a)* *mp match with clarinet* *(y)* *p* *mf* *mp* *8va* *p always with presence*

Pno. **3/4** = c. 76 **4/4** **3/4** * **3/4**

mp like clockwork

57 58 59 60

Ped. (hold through m. 68) →

* Exact realization of measures that have boxed time signatures is somewhat free, with time values approximate.
Follow dotted arrows for coordination among instruments.

Cl. **3/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Vln. *p* *mf* *vib. ord.* *poco f* *f* **4/4**

Vc. *(y)* *mp* *mf* *f* **4/4**

Pno. *(8va)* **3/4** **3/4** **4/4**

61 (Ped.) → 62 63