



Alexander
RAHBARI

My Mother Persia
Symphonic Poems • 2
Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Mohammad Motamedi, Tenor

Antalya State
Symphony Orchestra

Alexander Rahbari



Alexander Rahbari (b. 1948)

My Mother Persia – Symphonic Poems Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Alexander Rahbari was born in Tehran, Iran. He studied violin and composition with Rahmatollah Badiie and Hossein Dehlavi at the Persian National Music Conservatory. From the age of 17, he was a violinist at the Fine Arts Administration Orchestra under the baton of Hossein Dehlavi. Soon after receiving his violin diploma from the National Conservatory, he won a scholarship from the Iran Ministry of Culture and Art to study composition and conducting in Vienna with Gottfried von Einem, Hans Swarowsky and Karl Österreicher.

In 1973, after his studies, he became director of the Persian National Music Conservatory and Tehran Conservatory succeeding Mostafa Kamal Pourtorab and Hossein Dehlavi. He held these positions for four years before he emigrated back to Europe. Within the same year, he won First Prize of the International Competition for Young Conductors of Besançon, France, and in 1978 received a Silver Medal at the Geneva International Conducting Competition. In the same year he recorded three albums entitled *Symphonische Dichtungen aus Persien* ('Symphonic Poems from Persia') with the Nürnberger Symphoniker in Germany, including six works by some of the greatest 20th-century Iranian composers. In 1979 Rahbari was invited to conduct the Berliner Philharmoniker, and in 1980 he became Herbert von Karajan's assistant. From 1988 to 1996 Rahbari was the principal conductor of the Flemish Radio Orchestra (now the Brussels Philharmonic), and subsequently became music director of the Zagreb Philharmonic.

Rahbari was only twelve when his talent for composition was discovered by Hossein Dehlavi. Besides playing classical violin and Iranian traditional music, Dehlavi, who was director of the Persian National Music Conservatory at the time, began teaching him harmony and counterpoint. In his youth, Rahbari was commissioned by the Iran Ministry of Culture to write a piece per month. As a student, he also wrote many pieces for the Eurasia Quartet, as well as vocal works and compositions featuring Persian mysticism. He became a

pupil of Gottfried von Einem, and began writing the most lauded pieces of his career. His works include *Persian Mysticism – A Symphonic Poem for Orchestra* (1968), music used in United Nation advertising performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra (1975), the soundtrack for a documentary by French director André Malraux (1977), *Beirut Symphonic Poem* (1985) originally written for nine flutes, *Halfmoon* (1984), a piece for orchestra and choir performed and commissioned by the National Youth Orchestra of South Africa, music written for the 154 sonnets of William Shakespeare (1990–2000) and *Fuerza Flamenca* (2000).

The eight symphonic poems of *My Mother Persia* are full of melodies, rhythms and improvisations in the styles of Persian traditional music. As a child growing up with this tradition, Rahbari had a chance to learn from the best and most influential Persian maestros.

The support of Hossein Dehlavi, and Gottfried von Einem (one of the most influential professors at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna) helped him to retain the style he had originally created. In 2015, after many years focussing on his conducting career, Rahbari decided to write and dedicate *My Mother Persia* to his Iranian colleagues and maestros such as Hossein Alizâdeh and Hossein Dehlavi.

Symphonic Poem No. 4 'The World Without Wars'

Dedicated to Hossein Dehlavi

All the elements of Iranian music have been used in this movement, such as different scales and modes used in traditional Iranian music as well as rhythms and authentic singing. The piece is based on a magnificent poem by Mohamad Farid Nasserî (b. 1982), and demonstrates how a simple popular rhythm can turn into a rhythm of war and hatred. The hymn of *Ey Iran* is used as motifs within the entire piece.

Symphonic Poem No. 5 'In Love With the World'

Dedicated to Rouhollah Khaleghi

This piece is based on a poem by the famous poet Sa'adi Shirazi from the 13th century. It is the first time that the unusual time signature of 13/8 has been written in an Iranian piece of music. At the beginning you can hear a common Iranian santoor sound which can be heard throughout as a counterpoint influenced by the hymn, *Ey Iran*.

Symphonic Poem No. 6 'The Hymn of My Mother Persia'

Dedicated to Mohammad Reza Shajarian

This piece, which is in fact based on a previous idea for a piece alongside a magnificent poem by Mohamad Farid Naserî, did not develop into a march as it could have, but instead was influenced by the motifs of an Iranian Maestro, Abolhasan Saba.

Symphonic Poem No. 7 'Antari'

Dedicated to street musicians

This short, virtuosic movement is a combination of different 'street music' – music which, in Iran, is considered very basic. This piece is based on a 7/8 time signature with different melodies from all of the symphonic poems in the cycle used as counterpoints. It was written to be performed as an encore at the end of the *My Mother Persia* cycle and therefore parts of the themes from all the pieces are heard throughout.

Symphonic Poem No. 8 'Arabization'

Dedicated to Mostafa Kamal Pourtorab

This work begins with *Ey Iran* hymnal motifs, and the brass instruments playing a fast rhythm evoking Arab folk dances. The interesting fact is that every time an addition is made to the number of brass instruments, increasing their power, the effect of Arabic rhythms and melodies gradually increase as well, until it reaches a fanfare battle climax.

Barbad Bayat

1 Symphonic Poem No. 4 'The World Without Wars'

Those who are looking for war are insane no doubt;
those who want peace own the creation and the world.
I know of no human who would want murder;
as only Satan wants to destroy peace.
War has no value – it is a nightmare and not a dream;
we must fear the day that humanity is destroyed.
As an Iranian who has tasted war we must do all we can
to 'give peace a chance' –
we must clearly say 'never again to war'.
We can become brothers with all races and cultures
at peace;
as the world without wars is not a false dream; it is the truth –
it is the truth that is full of soul and life.

Mohammad Farid Naseri (b. 1982)
Translation: Hassan Azarm

2 Symphonic Poem No. 5 'In Love With the World'

I find in nature my bliss, for in nature is the bliss of God.
I love the whole comely earth: the whole earth, this is of God.
Value, O friend, at the dawn, the Jesus-like breath
that blows,
stirring the slumbering heart – the zephyr's kiss of God.
Sweet would a bitter draught seem if God should offer
the cup.
Pain will I gladly bear, for medicines are remedies of God.
Who knows the heavens of God? What angel perceives
His will?
Only the spirit of man is an accomplice of God.
Monarch and minion alike are suppliants at his gate –
Humbly they bow before Him, and sing the praises of God.
Though the flood of decay demolishes the earthly abode
Be heartened! For there abides the eternal basis of God.

Sa'adi Shirazi (1210–1291)
Translation: Dr Mahmood Kavir

3 Symphonic Poem No. 6 'The Hymn of My Mother Persia'

Since the Creation
You have been in this world.
You the everlasting,
you the eternal.
You are my existence,
you are my life.
My homeland, my heartbeat,
my mother Iran, I live in the spirit of your name.
A beautiful song is flowing from the soul of your name –
it is the 'Song of Independence' from the peak of my heart.
Your memory is the flag in my heart wherever I go;
every breath in me is for shouting your glory.
I kiss your hands, my homeland, yours my mother Iran;
your soil is my honour that boils my sense of pride.
I offer my life to defend you from those who have designs
on you,
to bring you glory, until your flag is up in full swing.
On the highest peaks of the world your name shall
be eternal;
you the house of loving people, you the whole of my life
and soul.
You are my homeland and heartbeat;
as you are my mother Persia.

Mohammad Farid Naseri
Translation: Hassan Azarm

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Mohammad Motamedi



Photo: M. Hashemnasab

Born in 1978, Mohammad Motamedi was self-taught in singing and playing Ney from a very young age. From 1997, he began learning the singing style of Seyed Hossein Taherzadeh and Hamidreza Noorbakhsh, learning from the songs of eminent artists Taj Esfahani and Adib Khansari, and looking to them as role models. Motamedi has benefitted from the guidance of esteemed masters such as Hossein Omoumi and Aliasghar Shahzeidi. Motamedi has worked with many groups and individuals including the Calefax Reed Quintet, the Matangi Quartet, the Khorshid Ensemble, Majid Derakhshani and the Sun Ensemble, Hamnavazan-e Sheida and Mohammadreza Lotfi with the Sheyda Ensemble, Iran's National Orchestra with Farhad Fakhreddini, and Hamnavazan-e Mehr with the Mehr Symphony, which Motamedi co-founded with Hossein Alizadeh. He recently appeared in the performance and live recording of *My Mother Persia* with Alexander Rahbari and the Antalya State Symphony Orchestra in April 2018.

Antalya State Symphony Orchestra



The Antalya Chamber Orchestra, founded in 1995, changed its name to the Antalya State Symphony Orchestra (ASSO) upon the decision of the Council of Ministers in 1997. The orchestra has a special place in the cultural life of Antalya, and has played an important role in the promotion of the region. The orchestra regularly performs in the Aspendos Antique Theatre and various concert halls, as well as appearing at the Antalya Art Festival, the International Antalya Film Festival and the International Antalya Piano Festival. The orchestra has also toured within Turkey as well as South Korea, and plays a big role in the universities and educational life of Antalya. The ASSO has been led by İnci Özgül, Orhan Şalliel, Ender Sakpınar, Nezih Seçkin, Erol Erdinç, Antonio Pirolli, Marek Pijarowski, Vladimir Altschuler, Howard Griffiths, Leonard Slatkin, Theodore Kuchar and Alexander Rahbari. It has performed with soloists such as İdil Biret, Sun Kan, Verda Erman, Václav Hudeček, Liana Isakadze, Alexander Rudin, Jiří Barta, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Massimo Quarta, Michael Martin Kofler, Soyung Yoon and José Carreras.

Mohammad Farid Naseri



Mohammad Farid Naseri, born in Tehran in 1982, is an Iranian poet, lyricist and narrator. His professional career began after the release of his debut album, in which he narrated his own lyrics. The release garnered attention from pop music writers, and he has subsequently worked with numerous eminent Iranian singers and composers as a poet. He is mainly recognised through his work with the legendary composer and guitarist Babak Amini.

Alexander Rahbari



Persian-Austrian conductor and composer Alexander Rahbari studied in Vienna with Hans Swarovsky and Gottfried von Einem. At the age of 23 his violin concerto, *Nohe Khan*, received the special prize of the Academy of Music in Vienna and was performed in the Vienna Concert Hall. He wrote the following pieces in parallel with his conducting career: *Persian Mysticism*, *Music for Human Rights (Hunger in Africa)*, *Beirut* for nine flutes, *Half Moon*, *Musical Sister Angelica Extasy 1* and *Mr. Gianni Extasy 2*, 154 songs on the complete sonnets of Shakespeare, *La Fuerza Flamenca* (ten pieces for men's choir and orchestra) and *My Mother Persia*. He won the Gold Medal at the international conducting competition in Besançon in

1977 and a Silver Medal the following year in Geneva. This led to the start of his international career. Herbert von Karajan took note of the young artist and invited him to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic as guest conductor in 1979. It was to be the first of a series of such invitations. Rahbari has been music director of the Brussels, Málaga and Zagreb Philharmonic orchestras, Virtuosi di Praga and the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, and has worked with countless acclaimed soloists such as Mischa Maisky, Henryk Szeryng, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Radovan Vlatković, Leonid Kogan, Heinrich Schiff, Nigel Kennedy, Shlomo Mintz, Krystian Zimerman, Radu Lupu, Maurice André and Grace Bumbry.

My Mother Persia is a cycle of eight symphonic poems by the distinguished Iranian-born composer and conductor Alexander Rahbari (the first three poems are on 8.574064). Three of the works on this album set some of the finest Iranian poetry and are cast for the tenor voice employing traditional sung forms. Rahbari's music utilises the lavish sound world of the symphony orchestra but contains many of the essential elements – scales, rhythms and colours – of Iranian music.

Alexander
RAHBARI

(b. 1948)

My Mother Persia • 2

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| 1 | Symphonic Poem No. 4 'The World Without Wars' (2017)
<i>Text: Mohammad Farid Naseri (b. 1982)</i> | 27:14 |
| 2 | Symphonic Poem No. 5 'In Love With the World' (2017)
<i>Text: Sa'adi Shirazi (1210–1291)</i> | 10:37 |
| 3 | Symphonic Poem No. 6
'The Hymn of My Mother Persia' (2013–17)
<i>Text: Mohammad Farid Naseri</i> | 5:18 |
| 4 | Symphonic Poem No. 7 'Antari' (2017)
<i>Text: Mohammad Farid Naseri</i> | 6:20 |
| 5 | Symphonic Poem No. 8 'Arabization' (2017) | 8:19 |

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Mohammad Motamedi, Tenor 1–4

Antalya State Symphony Orchestra • Alexander Rahbari

Recorded live: 27 April 2018 at AKM Aspendos Salonu, Antalya, Turkey

Producer: Barbad Bayat • Mixing engineer and editor: Can Aykal

Mastering engineers: Heidi Boba, Martin Oberneder • Booklet notes: Barbad Bayat

English translations of the Farsi sung texts can be found inside the booklet,
and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/574065.htm

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