

Ben-Zion Orgad: The Composer of “Landscape Religion” or Something More?

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Abstract: This article engages with a deeply hidden internal personal conflict regarding one of the most prominent and successful Israeli composers—Ben-Zion Orgad (1926-2006). His career spanned over half a century: from the early days of the State of Israel in the late 1940s to the early 2000s. Outwardly appearing as a prosperous and creative powerful founder and builder of the young State and its culture, Orgad transmitted a pantheistic and idealistic delight in the ancient/new homeland for Jews and established his image as a composer of religious landscapes. One of his later compositions, however, *A Personal Place* (1995), marking the beginning of his valediction period, reveals another Orgad, torn by a deep and traumatic internal conflict caused by the clashing of his German cultural roots with his rejection of these, following both his personal and the general historical experience of the Holocaust. His realization of this conflict was reflected in Orgad’s memoirs and arose from the salutary influence of the writer Rivka Raz, his loyal friend and wife of the later period. His memoirs comprise a document in which his self-analysis represents a case-study of the eternal and unresolved psycho-socio-historical conflict of the dual identity that defines the European Jews who try to reconcile their love and loyalty for their non-Jewish birthplace and its culture with their deep realization of their Jewish otherness, in search of their true place in culture and in life.

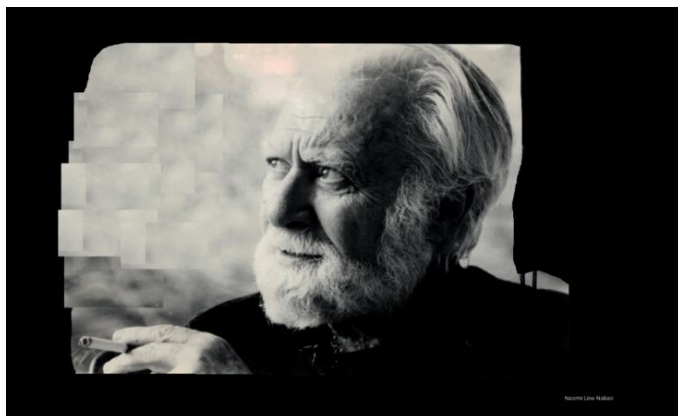
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In our times, there is no separation between the creator's personality and the creative work, in terms of the textual-conceptual explanation of the work, in terms of its psychological-emotional foundations and also in terms of its connection to a worldview and to a particular social environment.

Ben-Zion Orgad¹

Ben-Zion Orgad (Buschell, 1926-2006) was one of the most prominent Israeli composers, a poet, researcher of the Hebrew language, and a recipient of the Israel Prize (1977). In addition to his art of composition, he was famous as an educator, founder, and designer of musical education in Israel, and served as the head of music education in the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1975-1988.

¹ Ben Zion Orgad, “Should Strauss and Wagner be played?” *Dvar HaShavua*, Tamuz 26th 5713, July 9th, 1953, from the discussion regarding playing the music of Richard Wagner in Israel. This and other translations of the Hebrew sources were kindly done by Yocheved (Yochi) Robbins.



Ben-Zion Orgad. Photo courtesy of Rivka Raz.

Orgad’s musical legacy consists in more than a hundred opuses, including two dozen orchestral works, about twenty pieces of chamber music, compositions for soloists, vocal and choral music, incidental music, and more. His music was widely performed during his lifetime. Among those who conducted his works were Leonard Bernstein, Gary Bartini, Lukas Foss, Mendy Rodan, and others.

Born in Germany, 1926, Ben-Zion arrived in Israel at the age of six, and later studied at the Gymnasia Herzlia—the Herzlia high school in Tel Aviv. Between 1933 and 1940 he studied violin with Pesach Kinari and continued his studies of harmony, counterpoint, musical forms, and orchestration with Paul Ben-Haim; and his violin studies with Rudolf Bergman until 1945. Orgad was among the only composers of his generation, and winners of the Israel Prize for Art Music, who had grown up in Israel from early childhood and carried out his national service in the Israeli Army (the Givati combat Brigade) during the War of Independence; and even earlier, in 1944, in the Hagana and Palmach. In 1947 Orgad traveled to Europe to assist Holocaust refugees, while also studying composition with Joseph Tal at the Jerusalem Academy of Music.

In 1949, the young composer won a scholarship from the ESCO Foundation and went to the United States to study composition with Aaron Copeland in Tanglewood. Over the course of three decades, from the 1950s to the 1980s, he developed an extensive career as a pedagogical instructor while acquiring an MA at Brandeis University in Boston and serving as Chair of the Israel Composers Association and as the national head of music education in the Ministry of Education and Culture. In 1977 he received the Israel Prize for Music as a composer. Orgad’s highly productive and successful career, however, was not reflected without turmoil in his inner life. Even if he personally had not been a victim of the Holocaust horrors, the memories of his harsh childhood experiences in Nazi Germany, the loss of his close relatives who had perished in the concentration camps, his encounters with the surviving victims, whom he led to the pre-State Land of Israel—all these cast a heavy shadow on his inner world. Like many other people with a similar divided world, Ben-Zion Orgad denied his German past, was not prepared to face the issue of the

Holocaust, and devoted himself entirely to Zionism². It seems that Zionism was perceived by Orgad as an expression of a mission of absolute spiritual essence, similar to Achad Ha’Am and the school of “Spiritual Zionism.”³

The Hebrew language and the Israeli way of thinking became his second nature. As an artist Orgad found his main sources of inspiration in the Bible, medieval poetry, and the new Israeli poetry. He saw the Land of Israel as a symbol of multiplicity: “The diversity of that small space in which we live is charming ... A state for me is a being but not necessarily a framework. When I go for a walk in the Judean Desert, I feel at home and I don't care where the political borderline passes.”⁴

Orgad’s creative work has been investigated in Israeli musicological studies, and his spiritual duality has not escaped scholars’ perception. They have noted his characteristics as a “yekkeh” (a nickname given to all German-born Jews, from the words *Yehudi koshi havana* [a Jew with difficulty of understanding/difficult to understand] but eventually relating to their attention to punctuality and to details) versus his “Israeliness” and his love for the Land of Israel and the Hebrew language, and for the history of the Land of Israel from medieval times until the establishment of the State of Israel (an approach hereafter referred to by the term “Landscape Religion” *דת הנופים*).⁵

Among the most interesting attempts to uncover Orgad’s hidden messages in his music is that by Eliyahu Schleifer, who described the complexity of the composer’s style in his introduction to Orgad’s work *Hallel* (for symphony orchestra, 1979):

But since *Hallel* is an orchestral work without words, it is more difficult to explain all its meanings. A veil of fog created by the sounds that open the work protects it, apparently, from attempts to interpret it in a simplistic way, but this veil actually stimulates us to go in and look at what is happening behind the screen⁶.

² Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the definition of Zionism has undergone constant transformation. As the prominent Israeli writer A.B. Yehoshua noted, “being a Zionist is not a medal of honor, it does not depend on the existence of the State nor is it relative to the area of the State. The release of the concept ‘Zionist’ of all unnecessary attachments and additions can clarify all ideological and political debates. A Zionist is a person who seeks or supports the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, that will turn in the future to be the State of the Jewish People, this is also according to Herzl who stated: ‘In Basel I established the Jewish State’.” (A.B. Yehoshua, “Who is a Zionist,” in Ha’Aretz, May 14, 2013).

³ The unique element in the Zionist thinking of Achad Ha’Am is the development of a secular-national Jewish identity which complies with the definition “Cultural nationalism” or “Cultural-spiritual Zionism,” while undergoing a slow process of cultural spiritual creation in the Land of Israel, which should be spread all over the nation. From Achad Ha’Am (Asher Ginzburg) (1856-1927). See: Yossi Goldstein, *Achad Ha’Am ve Hertsel: hamaavak al ofieya hapoliti ve hatarbuti shel haZionut betsel parashat Altnoiland* [Achad Ha’Am and Hertzal: The struggle over the political and cultural character of Zionism in the shadow of the *Altnoiland affair*] (Jerusalem: The Shazar Center for Jewish History and the Dinur Center for Research in Jewish History, 2011) p. 54.

⁴ “Music and Tradition”, the panel debate with Zvi Avni, Ben-Zion Orgad, Zachariah Plavin, Yossi Peles and the researchers Nir Keidar (Bar-Ilan University) and Gideon Katz (The Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), June 24, 2003, Tel Aviv. Quoted from *Iunim betumat Israel* [Studies of Israel Revival], Vol. 14, 2004, p. 16.

⁵ Joseph Peles, “The Many Faces of Israeli Music,” *IMI News* no. 2 (2002), pp. 4-12; *Ben-Zion Orgad* (Israeli Music Institute, 2009); Nathan Mishuri, Introduction to *Musica BeIsrael* (CD recording, 1993); Zachariah Plavin, “Listening to Orgad” (ms, Jerusalem, 2009).

⁶ Eliyahu Schleifer, annotation to *Hallel* by Ben-Zion Orgad (*Musica BeIsrael*, CD recording, 1993).

Indeed, it appears that the work engages with what the mystics themselves call “behind the screen.” Inspired by the study of Kabbalah, Schleifer compares Orgad’s musical interpretation of the theme to the *Song of Songs* that also appears in *Dialogues on the First Megillah* (1975) and in *Hallel* (1979) as

a symbol of the yearning of modern man who is not necessarily religious—to the divine essence which is wrapped in fog of mysticism and being purified while coming out of it, but perhaps it is nothing but our soul that has inner fights and comes out purified while struggling its doubts?⁷

Natan Mishori’s view corresponded with Schleifer’s on the mysticism and engages with the tangible and the intangible, as well as the magic-symbolic component of Orgad’s music:

Orgad said of the work *Mizmorim* [hymns] that the work is “a meeting between thinking in tangible and intangible images” and mentioned the connection between the reality of the sixty-four bells that were on the garments of the High Priest and the divine magical being; between worship and inner intention.⁸

Mishori considered that Orgad, who was perceived according to the well-known patterns of the War of Independence as “a typical Israeli,” believed in the existence of a higher power, and was convinced that his treatment—as a composer—of biblical subjects, e.g. in his compositions *The Story of the Spies* (1968-1966), *Vision of Isaiah* (1953), and *Mizmorim* (1966-1968) stemmed from the need to approach this heavenly power.

Ronit Seter was the first to report the harsh childhood experiences of the composer following her interview with him in 1998, three years after he had written the work *A Personal Place* and two years after he had written his autobiographical essay *Between Worlds* (1996), in which he returns to his early childhood in Germany and examines this, on his path to dealing with his feelings of guilt, self-acceptance, and reconciliation with the past.

Seter was able to open a window into the real character of Ben-Zion Orgad and to reflect upon the expression of possible hidden meanings in his music. It is difficult to argue with a composer who defines himself as a composer of the “Landscape Religion” and talks about the music he has written as an expression of the landscapes of Israel as he perceives them with his own eyes. Apparently, after a long emotional process, Orgad was prepared to reveal to Seter what was in his heart, stating that in his eyes landscape is not only the sights of nature, but also a human and social fabric: “And this landscape is also people—the composer tells me painfully today.”⁹ Seter speculates that this worldview had been

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Natan Mishori, *20 Years of Music in Israel* (Jerusalem: Prime Minister’s Office—Government Information Center, 1968), p. 13.

⁹ Ronit Seter, *Yuvalim be-Yisrael: Meheva la-musica ha-omanutit be-Israel 1948-1998* [Homage to Israeli art music, 1948-1998] (Jerusalem: The Public Council for Culture and Art, 1998), p. 62.

repressed by Orgad for many years, and she reveals her discovery of “two Orgads” in the personality of the composer. The first Orgad, according to Seter, is Buschell, an Israeli Bar Mitzvah boy who “used to put on Tefillin [phylacteries] every morning, while in the background, Dad listened to the news broadcast of the war from Germany, in German”. The “second Orgad” is the repressed one, who also saw in the landscape a human and social fabric, and was a clear Zionist, lover of the Land of Israel, and speaker of fluent Hebrew.

Encountering Rivka Raz and beginning the internal quest for self

Scholars would probably have long conjectured about Orgad’s internal conflict if not for his encounter with Rivka Raz in 1991, when he visited New York for the performance of his string quartet *Filigrees* No. 1 (1990) at the Manes School of Music.

Rivka Raz, a writer and poet, was Orgad’s wife from 1991 until his death in 2006. Raz was born and raised in Hod Hasharon (formerly Ramatayim). Her Polish immigrant mother and Russian immigrant father were Halutzim (pioneers) who had immigrated to Israel from Zionist motives. Rivka Raz lives in both Tel Aviv and New York, teaches creative writing workshops in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and teaches English literature at Pace University in New York. Her books and articles on art, literature, and theater have been published in Israel, the United States, Spain, Switzerland, Holland, and Norway. She has exhibited her “Sculpture in Books” in solo exhibitions in Tel Aviv, New York, and Amsterdam; won the Prime Minister’s Award for 2011, and twice the ECC Prize for Anonymous Writer, in 1995 and 2009.

With her tact and loving care, understanding, supportive and cooperative relationship, Raz undoubtedly encouraged Orgad to open up to himself as a man and a composer. She wrote later: “There was no separation between his personal life and the life of his music. The personal life was musical life and music was his personal life. He was ‘One Whole’.”¹⁰

This introspective journey to previously suppressed memories came to fruition five years later, when, in 1996, Orgad wrote his testimonies in both music and words. He concurrently composed his unique chamber piece *A Personal Place*, which featured the quintessence of his hidden symbolism, and his memoirs, a series of essays under the general title *Between Worlds*.¹¹ This autobiographical document offers a kind of self-study, describing the haunting scenes of his early childhood in Nazi Germany, his family history of the nineteenth century, and their immigration to Israel, and revealing the range of his life experiences—from childhood traumas to descriptions of the ways in which certain events had influenced his writing.

¹⁰ The author’s e-mail correspondence with Rivka Raz, June 12, 2014.

¹¹ Ben Zion Orgad מבין עולמות (*Between Worlds* or *Out of Between Worlds* (both Rivka and Orgad mentioned this title differently)).

Orgad chose to open *Between Worlds* with one of Paul Celan’s poems translated into Hebrew by himself.¹²

You too, talk / Paul Celan

*You too, talk
One last thing,
Say your word.
Talk -
Without separating the No from the Yes
To your word also give the meaning:
Give it the shadow.*

Indeed, as the poet put it, Orgad spoke, unfolding before himself and making public all the great challenges that he had faced. Paradoxically perhaps, he focused less on the horrors of the time and mostly on *his own guilt* for his childish attraction to the *Hitlerjugend* march songs and to their accessories. For more than sixty years he could not forgive himself for having loved to listen to his mother’s singing in German more than in Yiddish, for missing Germany when in Israel, and more: “like the sounds-of-guilt, which now join the multi-dimensional shadow being, which is present on the one-dimension plane, in space, in time and in the various modes of sensation and feeling, a tangle of sounds that get a hold of me.”¹³ As Rivka Raz later commented, “Orgad’s memories of Germany *are good memories—and that’s what drove him crazy.*”¹⁴

The childhood years in Germany

Ben-Zion Buschell was born in Gelsenkirchen, Münster, north Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, and spent his early childhood in Essen, Düsseldorf north Rhine-Westphalia, the city his parents had moved to shortly after he was born. Ben-Zion’s father, David Buschell, was a gynecologist, and his mother, Miriam-Manya Zuckermann, a housewife. In Essen, in 1930, his mentally-handicapped little sister Regina Buschell was born.

Ben-Zion grew up in the little Buschell household surrounded by love and care from his nanny Maria and his beloved mother’s sister, whom he always described as “extremely beautiful” (her picture hung from the wall of his home in Tel Aviv) and with whose same-age son, his cousin Mootz, he had played for as long as he could remember. What implanted a certain mystical element in his worldview was the family legend that he was born to the sound of the church bells. This knowledge added happiness to his brief period of life in Germany each time anew, like the lake and the forest near the house, the sweet sounds of the tin drum, and his mother’s voice from the kitchen. Little Ben-Zion

¹² Orgad’s original of translation does not indicate the year of the poem’s creation.

¹³ Ben-Zion Orgad, *Between Worlds*, p. 27.

¹⁴ From an interview with Rivka Raz (Tel Aviv, August 16, 2016).

especially enjoyed walking with a group of boys, drumming to the sounds of the fascinating marching songs, and enjoying those sharp-sounding words sung in German. The children of the orchestra allegedly initially accepted him as their drummer, but later, after escorting him back to his home, they began to humiliate and curse him with anti-Semitic names.

From here on, the happy world of a Jewish child in Nazi Germany collapsed. His father, who was serving as chairman of the Jewish community of their town, was arrested, and after his release the family were able to flee to Palestine. His cousin Mootz’s parents were less fortunate and were transferred to the Jewish ghetto, where they did not survive. However, they were able to send Mootz on the last train of the Kinder Transport that brought Jewish children from Germany to England, where he remained in London.

There were some things that Orgad probably was not able to write in *Between Worlds*, but told to Rivka. A few years after his passing, she wrote an emotional literary work of love—“I’m going to die he said”—in his memory. The book presents an eternal love story and relates to all the emotional and intimate layers of Orgad’s life. There is one remarkable episode in which Raz describes his yearning for a certain personal precious place that had accompanied him throughout his life. The dialogue reflects the harsh story of the child Ben-Zion Buschell retold by the old man Ben-Zion Orgad. It happened at the climactic moment in his life: his innermost psychical composition, *A Personal Place*, was to be performed in Berlin, where he, once expelled, now returned as a honored guest. Moreover, in 1998 he would receive an honorary citizenship from the town where he had been born, and would perform there a piece that he had written.¹⁵

Like certain other Israeli composers of German origin, Paul Ben-Haim for example, their visiting post-war and post-Holocaust Germany was an event of extreme emotion and of mixed feelings. Clearly, anticipation of this trip evoked in Orgad his childhood emotions. The circle was approaching its closure:

*I plan to go to Berlin
I'd be so glad if you joined me.
Will you come?
I know you miss Germany,
You've always missed Germany. All that green-green of your childhood, the thick
forest where you loved to go
And to get lost, the thin stream twisting like a snake,
The hidden bench, “your bench”, where you engraved your name -
And at the same time, a sense of guilt haunted those longings
That although you tried, you could not silence it.
Will you come with me?
Only two years ago, and maybe already three, we went to a small village,
Somewhere near Essen, to look for the footsteps of your childhood.
We found the house located on the edge of the forest, which
You had to abandon when you fled in the middle of the night,
And you, only six years old, did not understand why you had to part with all that green.*

¹⁵ His reflections regarding the entire event are described in his personal diary.

*We looked into your room on the second floor where you slept with Maria, the maid,
Who was, so you claimed, your first love.
We even discovered the hook in the ceiling to which was tied
Your swing. Then we went out into the garden, and as if sixty-five years had not
passed,
You led us through the hole in the fence that was still there,
Into the heart of the city, which was then, on that sunny October day,
Glowing yellow and gold, lots of gold, where you used to, only five years old,
Wander alone, without a watchful eye, enacting figures
From the stories of brothers Grimm that Maria used to tell you before you fell asleep.
Here is the tree, branches of which have fallen to the ground, and among them you
used to hide
And listen to the symphony of the forest sounds, and you would join
Them with the little tin drum your father bought you
So he could locate you in the forest.
Like a shadow I followed you, your hair and your beard all silver,
While you try to hold on to the child that you were.
Here's the bench!
You shout gleefully
Is it really the same bench?
I wonder.
Sure! I know it! Look at the long line here on the seat,
I scratched it!
We sit on your bench, listening
To the edge of the forest. A playful breeze shakes the branches of the trees,
Flinging a handful of golden leaves, fluttering butterflies
In the fairyland forest.*

*You look for - and find - beyond sixty-five years -
The stone bridge over which the railroad have passed, and still passes.
We go up the stairs;
Here's the station, exactly the same station! And here is the kiosk!
It's still there, just as it was,
You shout with joy, your breath almost stops.
Here I bought the lollipop for a coin
That I had stolen from Maria, the lollipop with the prize I so desperately desired:
A swastika pin! And how happy-
Until Mother tore the pin off the shirt,
Slapped me with all her strength, and locked me, screaming, in my room.*

*Would you agree, could you, join me on a trip to Berlin?
No? Are you sure? ¹⁶*

¹⁶ Rivka Raz, *I am Going to Die, He Said* (Bnei Brak: HaKibbutz HaMeuchad Publishers, 2011), pp. 70-72.

Valediction

Following his liberation at last from his hidden self-torture with memories and guilt, Orgad spent a tranquil period of valediction and reconciliation of the “two Orgads.” until his death about 10 years later, in 2006.

In the early 2000s, he decided to collect his best forty-two recorded compositions and release the cycle in ten CDs, in just a few copies for some libraries and friends, as he had done with his *Between Worlds*. Initially not intending to explain his music verbally, he, after a long period of negation, eventually surrendered to Rivka’s opinion that he should accompany them with short author’s notes.

He now needed to face the dilemma of “the true Orgad”. On the one hand, for decades he had positioned and publicized himself as a “composer of the landscape religion”. On the other hand, his soul-destroying testimonies had revealed another person. He had either to choose one of his images, or to reconcile them, or to find a third way. Indeed, the comparison between Orgad’s notes in the booklets to these CDs and his testimonies in the various sources, especially in his writings in his later years, when he was already ill, confers a new perspective upon his portrait as an Israeli composer.

What Orgad chose was indeed to merge the first and the last options. Avoiding any emotional attachment to his compositions, he dispassionately tested their belonging to the Israeli culture. Leaving aside his subtexts and inner duality, he continued to declare his “religion of landscapes” approach to his music. Those who had not read his testimonies would not find anything new in these annotations, but those who had read his confessions, written several years earlier, would be bewildered to say the least and run to uncover the symbolism in his music, as the present author did. The question arises: How can his pantheistic delight and epical meditations inspired by the newly reclaimed Holy Land, for which he had personally battled as a man of arms, convey the eternal pain of a childhood trauma that reflected the entire trauma of German Holocaust survivors? His testimonies can provide the solution. We can learn from them that Orgad’s key hidden symbols were those of his mother’s voice, which can be recognized in the viola, horn, or clarinet solos in his orchestral works; bells as the omen under which he was born to this world; tin drumming, with its both innocent and ominous ambivalent attraction, and more.¹⁷

While his public annotations to the CD collection and his personal annotations in his testimonies drastically contrast one another in their presentation of the same musical compositions, Orgad found a way to reconcile his German and Israeli selves using the basic concept of landscape. He superimposed one landscape upon another, invariably incorporating bells and a sense of space in his unique reconciling interpretation of the Judeo-Christian tradition; explaining this as the natural development of Israeli music as a kind of integration between European musical achievements and the various sound

¹⁷ Beatrice Bar, “Ben-Zion Orgad and his Creative Work: Mission, Zionism and the Personal Place” (Ph.D. Thesis, Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2017), chapter “Orgad’s Lab: Voices.” p. 57.

formulas emanating from the Middle East, and which are “organized in an impressionist way”.¹⁸

Raz and Orgad traveled extensively in Israel, and as befits a composer of “The Landscape Religion” he liked to walk for long hours along Israel’s paths. Rivka Raz recalls:

Often, Bentzi and I used to travel in the Galilee landscapes. When Bentzi was walking in the landscape of the Galilee, he would hear inner music. We would drive by car or walk without speaking, in a lingering silence, each of us immersed in own world, savored by the loneliness that is within the togetherness. And I would see the fist of his right hand move as if to a hidden music or as if he were conducting an orchestra. As I watched the dancing fist, I could feel, if not hear, the piece that was playing at the time in his imagination. His dream was to “give back”—return the music he received from the Galilee landscapes—back to the Galilee. One day his beloved cousin had arrived from London, he was the son of his mother’s sister who was murdered in Auschwitz—her only son, named Mootz, who was saved with the help of the famous Kinder Transport. That same day Mootz arrived in Israel with a large American state-of-the-art car. Bentzi planned for the three of us to tour the Galilee. We slept in the Rimonim Hotel in Safed, and the next day we continued north in that big American car of Mootz, with Bentzi—who knew every road and path—as the guide. Somewhere in the forest uphill on the way leading to Amuka, not far from the Bat-Ya’ar farm, Bentzi, all excited, ordered Mootz to turn left, go down the road, enter into a dirt road inside the forest and stop at a mound of dirt. We went down. Mootz installed the big car’s speakers, Bentzi handed him a pre-prepared recording of the First Seven. It was already sunset and the sky was covered with soft red-purple when the sounds of the Seven began to spread in the forest and Galilee. Each of us three retired to another corner in the landscape, and we listened. Something miraculous happened. The branches of the trees and the tall weeds began to sway as if dancing to the sounds of the music! I swear I saw them moving to the rhythm of the notes. When the music blended so much with the landscape and became one with the trees and the grass and the wind, all the questions about the difficulty of understanding and communicating with the music were irrelevant. The music was the landscape that stretched before our eyes, and the landscape was the music.¹⁹

But Orgad recalls too:

The current concentration in the voice of Father’s glance brings closer to me the sounds of tapping on an invisible tin drum, the tapping that by its multicolor—paints its improvised ornaments of rhythms—the constant pulse of ringing of bells... the emotional poetry, the rustle of my childhood forest ... now when lying in my bed it comes back and powerfully bursts out of my throat, It shifts from continuous sounds in various heights to a low humming, in which at its depth my voice joins the sequence of sounds of the bells which rang on the minute when I was born, Sounds that I make real through open syllables and diphthongal expressions that are typical to the German.

¹⁸ Seter, *Yuvalim BeIsrael*, p. 23.

¹⁹ E-mail correspondence with Rivka Raz, June 12, 2014.

The language of my childhood takes over me like then ... I hear my mother’s reproachful voice, demanding of me to shift to the Hebrew pronunciation, I respond to her and hear my voice go from the penultimate accent of “Tohu VaVohu” to the ultimate accent of “Bereshit Bara” and “Hayta” when I drag the open-accented syllables as far as my breath allows me. As I sing, I continue to feel Father’s gaze following me from there to here and expect that now, like then, it will provide me with a system that, with the bangs of its little bells, I will compensate myself for the inability to mimic through drumming on the brick railing of the balcony (in Tel Aviv) the tapping of the tin drum, an expectation that, having no purpose, it is absorbed together with the totality of sounds, into a hum.²⁰

This constant interlacing of past and present, the purely notional guilts invented by his imagination, and his real participation in building a new life in the new homeland, his suppressed pain and the self-deception of the riddance of these pains through his mission of Zionism—all this web of contrasts made him an organic Israeli composer with a European cultural background, in which the Holocaust was an inseverable part. Ben-Zion Orgad, belonging to the generation of Abba Kovner and Paul Celan, to both of whom he was strongly attached emotionally, was both the composer of Landscape Religion of the Land of Israel and the composer of the Holocaust.

Postscript: Ben-Zion Orgad donated all his later writings—*Testimonies* (1995), *Multi-Vocal Monologue* (1996), *Blessed Memories* (1997), *Collage-Montage of Voices and Speaking* (1998), *Memoirs Clinging to Headlines* (1999) *Maftir on the Threshold* (2006) to the Institute of Israeli Music; to the National Library; to friends and family members. This was done out of the great hope that, from reading and learning about him, they would be able to understand the truth.

About the Author

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²⁰ Ben Zion Orgad, epilogue to *Memoirs Clinging to Headlines* (Tel Aviv: self-publishing, 2006).