



Paul BEN-HAIM

String Quintet
in E minor

String Quartet
No. 1, Op. 21

Carmel Quartet
Shuli Waterman, viola

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDING

FROM MUNICH TO TEL AVIV: PAUL FRANKENBURGER/BEN-HAIM'S QUEST FOR INTIMACY, 1919–37

by Jehoash Hirshberg

I was privileged to conduct several personal interviews with the composer Paul Ben-Haim while writing the original (Hebrew) version of my monograph *Paul ben-Haim: His Life and Works*.¹ The old, ailing musician was confined to a wheelchair after a terrible car-accident in Munich in 1972, but his memory was as fresh as ever. The settings of his apartment in Tel Aviv – where he had lived since just after his immigration in 1933 – was ideal for turning to his German period: the heavy, old furniture, the black, German grand piano, and the bookshelves loaded with books in German and lots of piano music and scores.

Paul Ben-Haim was always far removed from extravagance, self-dramatisation and revolutionary aspirations. He was born to a well-organised family of a respected and well-established jurist and law professor. For him, music in general, and composition in particular, was a profession, a consistent way of life, devoid of sudden shifts and turns. It was history that plunged him into a whirlpool of events which transformed the modest *Kapellmeister* into one of the chief architects of emerging Israeli music. Arriving in Palestine in 1933, he left behind him 36 years of life in Germany during one of the most turbulent periods in the history of that country. It was a period which saw the collapse of the old order with its social and cultural conventions; a world war which changed the face of Europe; a tottering democracy struggling for survival in the throes of economic crisis and social upheaval, and the rapid deterioration that led to the Holocaust.

Paul Frankenburger graduated from the Munich Music Academy in June 1920, both from the Department of Piano and the Department of Composition and Conducting. Munich was the heart of the influence of Richard Strauss as composer and conductor, completely removed from the avant-garde of Berlin and Vienna. In my interviews Ben-Haim stated that for him Johann Sebastian Bach was the greatest composer who ever lived – not only for his musical style and authority but also his systematic discipline. The later composers he liked were Debussy and Ravel. When he turned to symphonic writing he took Gustav Mahler as his model.²

¹ 2nd edn., ed. Paul Landau, Israel Music Institute, Tel Aviv, 2005.

² *Ibid.*, p. 140. Debussy was widely admired in 1920s Germany.

Frankenburger's main focus of composition from the age of twelve was *Lieder*, begun in his family circle: his sister Dora was a fine singer. Paul was an avid reader of German poetry, old and new, and he was easily inspired to set verses to music. In 1916 he had two small sets of his Hofmannsthal *Lieder* published by the Wunderhorn Verlag in Munich, but his many other *Lieder* have remained in manuscript.³ Composing *Lieder* continued to be his daily occupation. His overall output, including the Hebrew art-songs composed in Israel, contains more than 150 *Lieder*.

With the monumental String Quintet of 1919 he entered the realm of large-scale chamber music. The Quintet was directly followed by the Piano Quartet (August 1920), which is dominated by intimacy and meditation.⁴ The Quartet is strongly influenced by Brahms' magnificent corpus of chamber music, especially echoing his Piano Quartet in the same key, C minor, Op. 60 (1875). The three movements of Frankenburger's half-hour Piano Quartet reveal most of the hallmarks of late-Romantic music: extensive thematic transformations of the first subject, tuneful lyricism of the second subject, and cyclic return of the first subject in the finale, which is dominated by extreme thematic diversity.

Frankenburger soon revealed his most distinctive trait as composer: a tendency to embark on in several parallel tracks at the same time. At that early stage of his compositional career this parallelism saw him expand the number of genres in which he was composing. In September 1922 he completed the large-scale setting of Psalm XXII, *Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen*, for four soloists, chorus and large orchestra. The choice of the most painful words of the Passion must have expressed Frankenburger's emotions after the First World War, in which he lost his older brother, Ernst, killed at Verdun, and his mother, who could not bear the pain and died shortly after. Frankenburger declared his admiration for Bach through the main theme of the work, a variant of B–A–C–H (B flat–A–C–B natural): E–D sharp–F–E in Frankenburger's version, which preserved the melodic contour but changed the intervals. Bach's influence is expressed both in the dense contrapuntal writing and in the treatment of the biblical text. Nevertheless, Frankenburger's Psalm XXII is not a 'neo-Bachian' work in the Neoclassical style then becoming fashionable but a synthesis of Bach's technical devices and Romantic inspiration. At the many climactic points of the first section, the heavy orchestration for horns, trumpets and trombones reminds one of Mahler's symphonies.⁵

After a short period as an assistant to conductor Bruno Walter in Munich, in 1924 he was appointed *Kapellmeister* of the Augsburg opera where, until 1931, he conducted 41 operas, ten of them first local performances of new operas, such as Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*.⁶ His intensive work at the opera naturally slowed down his compositional work. In 1927 he returned to the genre of chamber music with a string trio. The

³ They are held at the Ben-Haim Archive in the National Library, Jerusalem. A selection of eight German *Lieder* was recorded by soprano Varda Kotler and pianist Jeff Cohen on Arion ARN 68643 (2002).

⁴ Like the Quintet, the Piano Quartet suffered an entire century of neglect but was finally recorded by the Toronto-based ARC Ensemble and released by Chandos Records in 2013 (CHAN 10769).

⁵ This large-scale, powerful work still awaits the chorus and conductor who would undertake the challenge of first performance.

⁶ Cf. Hirschberg, *Life and Works, op. cit.*, p. 47, for the full list.

lush, warm sound of the Quintet and of the Piano Quartet was here replaced by powerful, dramatic chromaticism, linear writing and new influences such as American jazz in the finale.

In 1928 Frankenburger, under the strong influence of the Jewish composer and organist Heinrich Schalit, ten years his senior, turned to an intensive period of composing choral works on biblical texts for large a *cappella* choruses (six to eight voices), which climaxed with the powerful Psalm 126 for eight-part male-voice choir, premiered with success at the *Nürnberger Sängerverein* in July 1931. Early in 1933 Frankenburger inaugurated a rich seam of orchestral writing with his *Concerto Grosso*, the last work of his to be performed in Nazi Germany: Hitler had taken power one month earlier.

The new, Nazi, manager of the Augsburg opera had terminated Frankenburger's contract at the end of the 1931. An ill wind that blew some good, the dismissal allowed Frankenburger peace for the four intensive months during which he composed his monumental masterpiece, the oratorio *Joram*, to a text by Rudolf Borchardt. *Joram* was completed one month after Hitler's take-over, which meant that there was no chance of a performance in Germany.

Frankenburger's immigration to Palestine⁷ forced on him a temporary break in his compositional work during which he took care of the conversion to Judaism and immigration of his wife, Hely, from Austria, the birth of his only son, Joram, in 1935, an unsuccessful attempt to settle his old father in Palestine, and efforts to secure a modest income as teacher at the Music School and as a piano accompanist. In 1936, now as Paul Ben-Haim he composed a Piano Suite for his own use in his new country. The Suite contains a 'Nocturno', a true Romantic pearl from the realm of Schumann and Chopin⁸ which is frequently performed as an independent composition. Then he renewed the ties with his past with the String Quartet recorded here, which is directly related to the previous four chamber works. It was soon followed by his magnificent Clarinet Quintet (1941) which marked the collaboration with outstanding ethnic singer Bracha Zefira and the beginning of a new phase in his life.

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⁷ Cf. Hirshberg, *Life and Works*, *op. cit.*, chapters 6 and 7.

⁸ Gila Goldstein has recorded all of Ben-Haim's piano works on two discs (CRC 2506 and CRC 2766) from Centaur Records, released in 2001 and 2005.

TWO SIDES OF A STYLISTIC DIVIDE

by Yoel Greenberg

The two works featured on this CD are Ben-Haim's only full-length chamber-music pieces for strings.¹ They are also the first works he composed at the start of the two major parts of his career: the first, as the young German-born composer, Paul Frankenburger, seeking fresh expression within established western musical traditions; and then as Paul Ben-Haim, by now a celebrated composer who spearheaded the creation of a fresh, young Israeli tradition.

Frankenburger's earliest compositions consisted overwhelmingly of songs in the German Romantic tradition. Throughout his life he was obsessed with song, both directly, composing hundreds of songs, and indirectly, in the lyrical qualities of his music and his predilection for quoting songs in instrumental works. During World War I, whenever on leave from his anti-aircraft unit in France and Belgium, he would spend much of his time composing songs. On one such occasion, on leave following the death of his mother, Frankenburger turned to the lyrical and romantic poems of Christian Morgenstern, setting two of them before returning to the front, and adding an additional three on his return at the end of the war. Germany's collapse at the end of 1918 found Frankenburger in Belgium, penniless and suffering from dysentery, forced to trudge the 700-kilometre journey back to Munich on foot.

One can only imagine his state of mind on his return following these experiences. Nevertheless, he recommenced his studies, and began work on the remaining Morgenstern Lieder as well as on two instrumental works: a Violin Sonata and the String Quintet. As its composer was himself aware, the Sonata was a flawed work, and he discouraged any further performances after the premiere in 1920. The Quintet, on the other hand, is written with an assured hand, conceived on a grand scale and displays a wide array of influences, particularly Mahler and Strauss, but also Brahms, Liszt and Franck. In the years to follow, the Quintet was to serve the young composer as his entry pass to the German musical world. Many years later, when the now Israeli composer turned his back upon much of his German *œuvre*, forbidding its performance in an early version of his will, the Quintet featured in a short list of works he still desired to be performed. It proved an important milestone for him, earning him praise, forging important personal connections and establishing his reputation as a skilled composer.

The Quintet was performed a number of times in the years following its completion and, with the exception of some minor reservations regarding its length and the eclecticism of its materials, it was very well received. After a performance at the Bavarian Composers' Week in May 1927, the critic of the *Bayerische Staatszeitung* wrote that 'Paul Frankenburger has hit the mark,' adding the caveat: 'The work is organised on a very grand

¹ His Second String Quartet, *Kaddish*, of 1973 and the 1927 String Trio are both of a duration of less than 20 minutes; there is also a *Langsamer Satz* from 1915 which is around seven minutes in length.

scale, and in such dimensions does not reveal a uniform standard'. In a curious sequence of events, the Quintet was also reviewed favourably by as illustrious a critic as Alfred Einstein. The critic of the *Rheinischer Musik und Theater-Zeitung*, Wolfgang Bartels, published a review of the work as 'well-constructed, revealing confidence in its formal organisation, despite its hodge-podge of styles', but referred to it as a trio, rather than a quintet.² After Frankenburger wrote to correct the error, Bartels admitted that he had not been present at the concert, and had asked his better-known colleague Alfred Einstein to review it for him. The last performance of the work before its recent revival in Israel by the Carmel Quartet took place in the Bavarian Composers' Week in May 1930.

As noted by its first critics and later writers alike, Frankenburger's String Quintet is extensive in scope and eclectic in content. But the result is a felicitous and consistently engaging work of considerable charm and unwavering freshness, coupled with an assured handling of musical materials and textures. All five instruments receive a rewarding role, with special prominence given to first violin and first viola, which introduce the majority of the themes in the work. As was Frankenburger's habit, the manuscript is beautifully copied, with dates of composition specified as July to December 1919, dedicated 'to my teacher Gottfried Closner in grateful admiration'. Not to be confused with Frankenburger's better known teacher, Friedrich Klose, Closner was his first teacher of composition, teaching also violin and viola in the Munich Academy.³

The longest and most ambitious of the movements is the first, *Leidenschaftlich bewegt* [5], which, as indicated in the score, was composed between July and September 1919. The movement is in sonata form in the manner of César Franck, with an emphasis on thematic transformation, based on three main themes with unconventional tonal relationships (E minor, E flat major and G minor respectively). The first, a confident dotted-rhythm theme in E minor, which provides thematic material for most other themes in the movement, is presented by the top three voices over brusque chords in the bottom two (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1

² Quoted in Hirschberg, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³ Cf. August von Mueller, *Geschichtliche Entwicklung der Königlichen Bayerischen Pagerie von 1514 bis zur Gegenwart*, J. Lindauer, Munich, 1901, p. 102; Carl Böck, *Gottfried Closner: Ein Münchener Künstler und Komponist*, G. F. Manz, Regensburg and Vienna, 1922; Joseph Koegel, *Geschichte der St. Kajetans-Hofkirche, der Theatiner und des Königl. Hof- und Kollegiatstiftes in München*, Herder, Munich, 1899, p. 206.

Its initially resolute presentation notwithstanding, this theme will later appear in a variety of guises, ranging from lyrical (in the violas in bar 17), through a flippant *leggiero grazioso* above *pizzicato* accompaniment (in the first violin in bar 21), to a profound and ethereal augmented *pianissimo* version (without the cello, in bars 117 and 143). The second theme in E flat major (it enters in bar 36) is marked *dolce espressivo*, and is the result of the recombination of motifs from the opening theme (Ex. 2).

Ex. 2



The third theme in the exposition is a march theme (Ex. 3), reflecting the popularity of this device with the *fin de siècle* composers such as Mahler who influenced Frankenburger, but also perhaps a souvenir from his recent experiences on the battlefield. This theme is somewhat open-ended, leading seamlessly into the development section, a formal ambiguity that Frankenburger exploits by recapitulating the theme only briefly and in the form of a coda-like episode at the end of the movement.

Ex. 3



The second movement, marked *Sehr langsam, mit tiefster Empfindung* [6], was composed in September and October 1919. The movement is written in A flat minor, and yet the opening impression is of E flat minor, with a convincing cadence in A flat arriving only at bar 39. The final thirteen bars of the movement do precisely the reverse, beginning in A flat major but ending in E flat minor. The hushed first theme (Ex. 4), presented by the first viola and the cello with a throbbing syncopated pedal-point accompaniment on the second violin and viola, is of transparent simplicity, serving as a showcase for some astonishingly inventive harmonic ideas throughout the movement.

Ex. 4

A musical score for three parts: Violin 1 (Vla. 1, Vcl.), Violin 2 (VI. 2), and Viola 2 (Vla. 2). The key signature is E-flat major, and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo marking is *ppp sempre*. The Violin 1 and Cello/Viola parts consist of a series of quarter notes: G-flat, A-flat, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, and a quarter rest. The Violin 2 and Viola 2 parts consist of a series of eighth notes: G-flat, A-flat, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, and a quarter rest. The piece concludes with a quarter note G-flat. The dynamic marking is *ppp sempre*.

The second theme, presented by the first viola (Ex. 5), is a beautifully naïve melody, a quote from Frankenburger's fifth Morgenstern song, 'Verse beim Erwachen' ('Verses upon Awakening'), a text published in 1910 in Morgenstern's collection *Einkehr* (meaning both 'contemplation' and 'entry to a hospitable place'). The song was completed on 19 July 1919, immediately before the composition of the Quintet.

Ex. 5

Etwas fließender

As was to become his habit when quoting songs within instrumental works, Frankenburger 'frames' the quotation, emphasising its external source by setting it in a typical song-like way, and refraining from subjecting it to considerable thematic manipulation. Thus, in a work where thematic reworking is the name of the game, the simplicity, transparency and immediacy of expression of the song stand out prominently, giving this episode an other-worldly effect. The text of the song, which deals with the relationship between art and 'the alien, dark power dwelling in the depths below', perhaps gives some insight into the escapist role of art for the young soldier-composer, recently returned from the horrors of war:⁴

Verse beim Erwachen

*An dieser Verse kleinen Gliedern hängt
noch Tau der Nacht.*

*Ich hab' sie aus dem stummen Born, darin
der Morgen seine Pferde trinkt, heraufgebracht.
Sie frösteln noch, als eben erst erwacht.*

*Ihr Auge flackert noch, als ohne Sinn,
Denn den der fremden, dunklen Macht,
Die drunten in der Tiefe wohnt...*

Verses on Awakening

The night's dew still clings
To the small limbs of these verses.

I drew them up out of the mute wellspring
Where Morning waters his horses.
Just now awake, they shiver yet.

Unaware, eyes still flickering,
Of the alien, dark Power,
Dwelling in the depths below...

⁴ Many thanks to Scott Burnham for his translation of these lines.

There is much else in this movement that presages Ben-Haim's later chamber music. In particular, the accompaniment of the Morgenstern theme, with its fluid parallel motion in the accompanying instruments, foreshadows similar moments in the slow variation-movement in the Op. 21 String Quartet.

The third movement, Finale: Rondo (*Energisch bewegt*) [7], composed in the last two months of 1919, departs from the late-Romantic style of the two earlier movements in favour of a Neo-Baroque rondo of considerable contrapuntal complexity, heralding Frankenburger's Neo-Baroque works of the late 1920s and early 1930s such as the String Trio Op. 10 (1927), the *Three Motets*, Op. 11 (1928), and *Concerto Grosso* (1931).

The refrain begins with a bold unison statement of the E minor theme (Ex. 6), which draws fugal responses from the three lower strings. Thereafter the fugal texture ceases, yielding to an almost brutal theme (Ex. 7) played *marcato* by the two violins above an accompaniment consisting mainly of open intervals in the lower instruments. There is much variety of material in this movement, but most worthy of mention is the Mahleresque *alla Marcia* episode beginning in bar 54 (Ex. 8). Would it be too fanciful to associate this march theme (and that in the first movement) with Ben-Haim's 700-kilometre trudge back from the Belgian front only a few months before? March themes are particularly abundant, appearing prominently in both fast movements, and the poignant image of the young composer conjuring up medleys of march themes to keep himself going becomes particularly suggestive when the march theme

The image shows the final page of a handwritten musical score for a Quintet. The score is written on multiple staves, with various annotations and markings. At the top, there is a handwritten note: "Chorus bracia u. bei Polle / Morgenstern". Below this, the score is divided into sections with headings: "Chorus bracia", "Fugue bracia", "Molto ritardando", and "Fugue bracia". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. At the bottom of the page, there is a handwritten note: "A original in November 1919" and "A copy for me made by 24. 2. 1919". There is also a circular stamp at the bottom center of the page.

The last page of the score of the Quintet

returns in a fatigued version towards the end of the movement marked *Langsames Marschtempo* ('in the tempo of a slow march'). The change in the accompaniment supports this idea, with the tripping rhythm in the exposition of the theme replaced by a simple plodding one in the reprise. Another war-related link is the sound of a military band, invoked in bar 117, with all instruments sounding out a somewhat crass, mock-triumphant hymn-like passage in rhythmic unison (marked *fortissimo, Sehr Kräftig* ('very powerful')). The popular orientation of these gestures belies Frankenburger's sophisticated handling of thematic material within this movement. The first two themes are combined and recombined throughout the movement with dazzling freshness of invention, culminating in a virtuosic contrapuntal juxtaposition of both (in the tradition of the finale of Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony) in the extended fugal episode beginning in bar 201 (Ex. 9).

Frankenburger's Quintet is a highly accomplished work, one which deserves a honoured place in the chamber-music repertoire, particularly in view of the paucity of twentieth-century string quintets. That it was forgotten after its last performance in 1930 owes nothing to the quality of the work itself: with Ben-Haim's move to Israel and subsequent turn to a new style, there was no one to promote further performances in Germany; even if there had been, it would doubtless have been banned by the Nazis. Although the Quintet was one of his few German works that he never rejected, it was only recently revived by the Carmel Quartet and violist Yael Patish-Comforty in 2011, after I chanced upon the manuscript of the score in the Ben Haim archive in the Hebrew National Library. I hope this recording will rectify this neglect, and restore this beautiful, attractive and vibrant work to pride of place among Ben-Haim's chamber music works.

With the ascent to power of the Nazi Party in 1933, only two years after the last performance of the Quintet, Frankenburger realised that he must seek his fortune outside Germany. Undecided where to go, he first undertook an exploratory journey to Palestine. As chance would have it, he shared a cabin with one Simon Bakman, the principal violinist of an orchestra in Geneva, who offered him the opportunity to perform during his visit. Travelling on a tourist visa, Frankenburger had been forbidden to undertake employment of any kind, and yet he was reluctant to refuse. Bakman's agent in Israel, Moshe Hopenko, found a way around it:

'Very simple,' he declared. 'Change your name!' 'But how?' I asked. 'What is your father's name?' he queried. 'Heinrich, I replied, 'Haim in Hebrew.' 'Well then,' said Hopenko, 'you'll be called *Ben-Haim!*'⁵

So the change of name to Ben-Haim was triggered not by Zionism but by purely practical considerations. Nevertheless, Ben-Haim's music was to be markedly different from that of Frankenburger. Although relying on much of his German compositional craft, Ben-Haim realised that new times require new measures, and that in his new surroundings many of the influences of yore were no longer relevant. His first four years in Palestine

⁵ Quoted in Hirshberg, *op. cit.*, p. 105. 'Ben-Haim' is Hebrew for 'the son of Haim'.

Ex. 6

Energisch bewegt

f marcato non leggiero

Ex. 7

f marcato

Ex. 8

Violin I *sf > pp sempre e staccato*

Violin II *pp sempre e staccato*

Viola 1 *pizz.*

Viola 2 *pizz.*

Cello *pp sempre e staccato*

Ex. 9

pp molto leggiero

pp molto leggiero

were dedicated to absorption of his new cultural surroundings and to the attainment of financial stability, and he composed virtually nothing new, instead performing extensively throughout the country, and coming into contact with the variety of musical traditions that had assembled there. It might have been the founding of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra by Bronislaw Huberman in 1936, with the resultant influx of excellent European musicians to Palestine, that brought Ben-Haim back to instrumental composition, with the String Quartet, Op. 21, in 1937 (dedicated to two members of the newly formed orchestra, the brothers violinist Andreas and cellist Joseph Weissgerber). He had yet to meet the woman who was to become the most significant influence on his 'Israeli style', the Yemenite singer Bracha Zefira, a pioneer of Israeli song whose orphanhood at age three and subsequent spells of fostering under families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds made her a 'walking anthology' of Israeli folk-music. But even without the ability to quote directly from Israeli folk-tunes, as he would later do, the Quartet bows towards contemporary Palestinian cultural influences and departs from the overwhelmingly German influence evident in the String Quintet. The Quartet had to wait nearly two years before receiving its first performance, in 1939 in a series of concerts of Jewish music, organised by Joachim Stutschevsky, but its second performance, in January 1940 by the Kaminsky Quartet, was more significant in that it emancipated it from its status as a Jewish work, incorporating it as a valid repertoire choice within a regular concert series, not dedicated specifically to Jewish composers. David Rosolio, the critic of the leading daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* (and later director of the Israeli civil service), recognised the historic importance of the work and Ben-Haim's new national identity, noting that 'for the first time, the museum's concert series featured the work of an Israeli composer'.⁶ The work has since become one of the most popular pieces of Israeli chamber music.

Ben-Haim's rejection of the German tradition within which he had grown up manifested itself even before he wrote his first note: in the titles of the movements. Unlike his earlier works (with the exception of the Neo-Baroque ones), where performance directions were mostly in German, here they are in Italian. The compositional influences are likewise no longer predominantly German, but rather Ravel and Debussy: Ben-Haim's quartet shares not only elements of style and structure with their quartets but also the cyclic return of opening themes in the closing movement.

The broad, evocative theme of the sonata-form first movement, *Con moto sereno* [1], is presented by the viola, heralding the central role that instrument plays within the work (Ex. 10). The restless second theme, presented by the second violin above an ostinato cello accompaniment and semiquaver figurations in the viola, places the serene first theme in relief (Ex. 11). Its opening motif, including a stepwise rising major third, followed by its minor variant, provide the thematic material for the opening theme of the second movement [2], presented by the viola (Ex. 12). This movement harks back to the puckish scherzos of Mendelssohn and Mahler as well as to the second movements of Debussy's and Ravel's quartets with its extensive use of *pizzicato*. The trio section, *più tranquillo*, is a wistfully lyrical dissonant ländler with a *perpetuum mobile* quaver accompaniment (Ex. 13).

⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 150.

In the third movement, a slow-paced theme and variations [3], Ben-Haim presents an orientally flavoured theme with an archaic, modal quality achieved through the use of a flattened seventh (Ex. 14). In each of the three variations the theme is presented by a different instrument: the viola, the first violin and the cello, before dissolving into a hushed *pianississimo* at the close of the movement.

It is in the fourth movement, a rondo-finale marked *Allegro comodo* [4], that local oriental influences come to the fore. The simple yet seductive refrain theme has a distinctive Jewish flavour to it, though it is hard to pin down its origin: is it Eastern European? Oriental? Or perhaps an innocent mixture of identities (Ex. 15)? The hypnotic effect of this lilting melody is interrupted violently by the first episode, a turbulent, primitivist dance of swords, played in rhythmic unison by all four instruments, and using a variety of techniques, among them *pizzicato* and *col legno* (Ex. 16). After an ornate return of the refrain, the second episode alternates between moments of lush lyricism and high excitement, climactic near-orchestral outbursts and nostalgic reminiscences of the opening theme of the quartet. The episode as a whole carries a sense of impending disaster, which continues into the refrain, culminating in a return to the sword-dance of the second episode. Gradually, the energy dissolves, with the swordsmen disappearing into the distance, leaving only the lamenting viola to play a heart rending improvisatory (*rubato e fantastico*) and cantorial cadenza, accompanied by low trills on the cello. This unusual and arresting coda, suffused with augmented thirds and other Jewish elements, builds up to a final anguished scream, after which the entire quartet brings the work to a violently energetic ending.

The shift from a liltingly sad Jewish dance at the beginning of the movement to a sense of extreme catastrophe at its end evokes the finale of Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio, composed seven years later, as a response to the atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews in the Holocaust. Ben-Haim's movement was composed before the Holocaust but well after the Nazi rise to power. According to the composer Michael Wolpe,⁷ Ben-Zion Orgad (1926–2006), a student of Ben-Haim, claimed that Ben-Haim proposed an interpretation of the movement as a prophetic lament over the future of European Jewry. The simple melody thus represents the *stetl*, the small Jewish community found throughout Europe, the first episode depicting the violent fate these villages met, ending in a heart-rending lament, full of grief and anguish. Throughout the movement, the opening theme of the quartet, which one can regard as representing the composer himself, can do little but observe from a distance, involved and sympathetic, yet remote and helpless. This interpretation is hearsay, but it offers a powerfully autobiographical reading, not only of the finale, but of the Quartet in its entirety, its mixture between serenity and anxiety, between bustling energy and poignant nostalgia, between traditional German classicism and oriental fantasy, reflecting Ben-Haim's own mental state at the time: having turned his back on the havens of his youth, standing on a threshold, facing a new, unknown, yet exciting future, in which he was ultimately to make an everlasting mark as the father of Israeli classical music.

⁷ In personal interview.

Ex. 10

Ex. 10 is a musical score for four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The piece begins with a 6/4 time signature, which changes to 3/4 and then back to 6/4. The dynamics are marked *p dolce* throughout. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together and others held as half notes.

Ex. 11

a tempo (un poco mosso)

Ex. 11 is a musical score for four staves, marked *a tempo (un poco mosso)*. The piece is divided into two systems. The first system starts with a *p subito* marking in the bass staff. The second system is marked *(B)* and includes *p espressivo* and *mf* markings. The score features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are also some unusual markings, such as a 't' with a dotted line above it, possibly indicating a trill or a specific articulation. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Ex. 12

Molto vivace ($\text{♩} = 168$)

Musical score for the first system of Ex. 12. The score is in 2/4 time and consists of three staves: Piano (top), Violin (middle), and Cello/Bass (bottom). The tempo is *Molto vivace* with a quarter note equal to 168 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

The Piano part begins with a *pizz.* (pizzicato) instruction and a dynamic of *f*. The dynamics progress through *f*, *f*, *f*, *mf*, *mf*, and *mp*. The Violin part also starts with *pizz.* and *f*, following a similar dynamic path to the piano. The Cello/Bass part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, with dynamics *f*, *f*, *f*, *dim.*, and *p*.

Musical score for the second system of Ex. 12. The Piano and Violin parts continue with eighth-note patterns. The Piano part includes a *sfz* (sforzando) dynamic marking. The Violin part includes a *sfz* dynamic marking. The Cello/Bass part continues with eighth-note accompaniment, including a *sfz* dynamic marking.

Ex. 13

Più tranquillo ($\text{♩}=\text{♩}$) $(\text{♩}=\text{♩})$

Musical score for Ex. 13, titled "Più tranquillo" with a tempo marking of $(\text{♩}=\text{♩})$. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system includes a vocal line (treble clef) marked *pp espr.*, a piano line (treble clef) marked *pp*, and a bass line (bass clef) marked *pp (senza espressione)*. The second system includes a vocal line (treble clef), a piano line (treble clef), and a bass line (bass clef) marked *pp (senza espressione)*. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Ex. 14

Largo e molto sostenuto ($\text{♩}=\text{♩}$)

Musical score for Ex. 14, titled "Largo e molto sostenuto" with a tempo marking of $(\text{♩}=\text{♩})$. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of a single system of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line (treble clef) marked *sotto voce, espr.*. The second staff is another vocal line (treble clef) marked *sotto voce, espr.*. The third staff is a piano line (bass clef) marked *sotto voce, espr.*. The bottom staff is a bass line (bass clef) marked *sotto voce, espr.*. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score concludes with a double bar line.

Ex. 15

Allegro comodo (♩=84)

First system of musical notation. It consists of four staves: Treble Clef (top), Treble Clef (second), Bass Clef (third), and Bass Clef (bottom). The top staff begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on the second measure with a dynamic marking of *p cantabile*. The second staff is empty. The third staff is empty. The bottom staff contains a bass line with a *pizz.* marking and a dynamic marking of *p*. The music is in 4/4 time.

Second system of musical notation. It consists of four staves: Treble Clef (top), Treble Clef (second), Bass Clef (third), and Bass Clef (bottom). The top staff continues the melodic line from the first system. The second staff is empty until the fourth measure, where it begins with a sustained note and a dynamic marking of *p*. The third staff is empty. The bottom staff continues the bass line with a dynamic marking of *p*. The music is in 4/4 time.

Third system of musical notation. It consists of four staves: Treble Clef (top), Treble Clef (second), Bass Clef (third), and Bass Clef (bottom). The top staff continues the melodic line. The second staff continues with a melodic line. The third staff is empty. The bottom staff continues the bass line. A dynamic marking of *p* is present in the bottom staff. The tempo marking *poco rit. . . a tempo* is located above the second staff. The music is in 4/4 time.

Ex. 16

piu mosso ($\text{♩}=120$)

Yoel Greenberg is a lecturer in the Department of Music at Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv and violist with the Carmel Quartet. He has published articles on Haydn in *The Journal of Musicology*, on Ben-Haim in the Israeli musicological journal *Min-Ad*, and his article on Schullhoff's quartets will shortly be published in *Music and Letters*.

The **Carmel Quartet** is one of Israel's longest-standing and most successful chamber-music ensembles. Established in 1999, the Quartet has won numerous prizes, including first prize in the 2001 'Prague-Vienna-Budapest' competition in Reichenau, Austria, and first prizes in the 2004 Aviv competitions. The Carmel Quartet performs regularly in Israel and abroad, with recent and upcoming engagements in Croatia, China and Germany. The Carmel Quartet's 2004 performance in the Weill Auditorium at Carnegie Hall was reviewed in *The New York Times* as 'a shapely and passionate performance, with a sizzling, visceral quality that was hard to resist'.

The Quartet studied with the members of the Alban Berg Quartet in Cologne, with Walter Levin of the LaSalle Quartet and in Israel with Chaim Taub. The group has performed with such internationally renowned musicians as violinists Gidon Kremer, Nikolai Znaider and Guy Braunstein, violist Tabea Zimmerman, pianists Ian Fountain and Penina Salzman, guitarist Emanuele Segre and Cantor Alberto Mizrahi. The concerts of the Carmel Quartet have been broadcast in America (WQXR and WOSU), Israel ('Voice of Music'), Canada and Austria.

The Carmel Quartet is also dedicated to musical education and has inaugurated a series of Explained Concerts in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and Zichron Yaakov. Critical acclaim for this series has been unanimous, with critics naming it as 'one of Israel's most enriching cultural events'.

Shuli Waterman studied viola with Gad Lewertoff in Tel Aviv and with John White at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she won first prize in the Theodore Holland viola competition. She returned to Israel to complete her studies with Yuri Gandelisman at Tel Aviv University where she was awarded the Daniel Binyamini viola scholarship. Shuli was the violist of the Aviv Quartet, winner of the Melbourne international chamber-music competition, winner of the top prize of the Bordeaux string-quartet competition and second prize of the Schubert competition in Graz. She is principal violist of the Tel Aviv Soloists, and teaches chamber music at youth festivals in Israel and abroad. She performed regularly with the Ysaÿe Quartet, with whom she recorded the Beethoven Quintets (Ysaÿe Records/Harmonia Mundi).





Recorded on 7–12 July 2013 in the auditorium of the Department of Music, Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv
Recording engineer: Ben Bernfeld

Booklet essays: Jehoash Hirshberg and Yoel Greenberg
Music examples set by Yoel Greenberg and Stephen Lam
Design and layout: Paul Brooks, paulmbrooks@virginmedia.com

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TOCC 0214

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The score of Ben Haim's Quartet published by the Israeli Institute of Music includes a grateful acknowledgement of 'a contribution towards the costs of this score made by the LaSalle Quartet'. The first violinist of the LaSalle, Walter Levin, was one of our most influential teachers. Before our first American tour, during which we performed Ben-Haim's Quartet, we spent a study session in France with Walter, and had the opportunity to play him the piece. Walter categorically refused to teach any work he had not played, so this performance landed up being a rare privilege of playing Walter a quartet while being 'spared the rod'. Nevertheless, we feel that his influence permeates our approach to all music, and we therefore wish to complement the dedication on the score by dedicating this recording to Walter Levin.

Carmel Quartet

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The Israeli composer Paul Ben-Haim (1897–1984) was born Paul Frankenburger and made his early career in his native Munich. Reading the danger signs earlier than most, he emigrated to Palestine in 1933 and soon became one of the leading figures in the musical culture of the emerging Jewish state. His music mirrors this change of circumstance: the early String Quartet (1919) taps a vein of rich late Romanticism influenced by Richard Strauss, but the rhapsodic First String Quartet (1937) is coloured by middle-Eastern melisma and folk-rhythms.

PAUL BEN-HAIM Chamber Music for Strings

String Quartet No. 1, Op. 21 (1937)	28:41	String Quintet in E minor (1919)*	32:56
1 I <i>Con moto sereno</i>	7:34	5 I <i>Leidenschaftlich bewegt</i>	12:10
2 II <i>Molto vivace</i>	5:29	6 II <i>Sehr langsam, mit tiefster Empfindung</i>	10:20
3 III <i>Largo e molto sostenuto</i>	5:50	7 III <i>Finale: Rondo (Energisch bewegt)</i>	10:26
4 IV <i>Rondo – Finale (Allegro commodo)</i>	9:48		

Carmel Quartet

Rachel Ringelstein and Liah Raikhlin, violins;
Yoel Greenberg, viola; Tami Waterman, cello

Shuli Waterman, viola 5 – 7

TT 61:37
***FIRST RECORDING**

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