

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3360

Piano Music of the Middle East

Kalomiri Ben-Haim Mimaroglu Hossein Fuleihan Rigai

Amiram Rigai



FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3360

Greece

MANOLIS KALOMIRI

Prelude to "Magic Herbs"

Iran

ANDRE AMINE HOSSEIN

Prelude No. 1

Légende Persane

Israel

PAUL BEN-HAIM

Sonatina, Op. 38

AMIRAM RIGAI

Israeli Rhapsody

Lebanon

ANIS FULEIHAN

From The Aegean

Turkey

ILHAN MIMAROGLU

Pièces Sentimentales

AMIRAM RIGAI, *Pianist*

AMIRAM RIGAI, the distinguished young Israeli pianist, appeared in many recitals and with orchestras since his 1947 debut in Tel-Aviv. In 1952 he won first prize at a contest held by the University of California, and in 1957 made his New York debut at a Town Hall recital, the year of his graduation from the Los Angeles and San Francisco conservatories following studies with Egon Petri, Mark Gunzburg, L. Kestenberg, and Clarence Adler. In November, 1963, he made his Carnegie Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski, at which time he performed the Ben-Haim Piano Concerto in its American premiere.

His playing was described by the San Francisco Call-Bulletin as "...Horowitz and Rubinstein combined with Brailowsky"; by Alfred Frankenstein as that of a "...very brilliant and forceful interpreter," and Harold Schonberg of the New York Times commented about the "...healthy, romantic outlook and basic musicianship" of his performance, "...brilliantly in command of the technical aspects."

©1978 FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORP.
43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

Piano Music of the Middle East Amiram Rigai

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3360

PIANO MUSIC OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Amiram Rigai

Side One

1. PRELUDE TO "MAGIC HERBS" (Time: 2'20")
By MANOLIS KALOMIRI
2. SONATINA, Op. 38 (Time: 11'25")
By PAUL BEN-HAIM
 - a. Allegretto grazioso
 - b. Improvisazione - Andantino liberamente
 - c. Molto vivo
3. PIECES SENTIMENTALES (Time: 8'25")
By ILHAN MIMAROGLU
 - a. Andante, poco rubato
 - b. Molto allegro
 - c. Moderato - tempo aperto
 - d. Adagio - tempo perduto

Side Two

1. PRELUDE No. 1 (Time: 5'15")
By ANDRE AMINE HOSSEIN
2. LEGENDE PERSANE (Time: 3'45")
By ANDRE AMINE HOSSEIN
3. FROM THE AEGEAN (Time: 7'10")
By ANIS FULEIHAN
 - a. Serenade
 - b. Tango
 - c. Sicilienne
 - d. Greek Dance
4. ISRAELI RHAPSODY (Time: 5'26")
by AMIRAM RIGAI

AMIRAM RIGAI, Pianist

In the countries of the Middle East, as in any other country where occidental culture is adoptive, musical composition modeled after its occidental counterpart came into being out of an intellectual necessity: that of finding a substitute for a traditional music which, under the dictate of its very essence, resisted evolution and was consequently in decay.

It was logical, as far as both the ideals and the basic methods of this process of substitution were concerned, that the fashioning be done after the examples of the national schools of the late nineteenth-century Europe. The first stream of the westernized Middle Eastern music was therefore romantic (or post-romantic, or impressionist) in its overall gesture. Regardless of the composition date of each individual opus, all of the works recorded here fall into this category: music inspired by national traditions (musical, or other), displaying at least that intangible called "national character" whenever a national element is not evident, but employing a language and a medium belonging to western music.

GREECE

KALOMIRI: Prelude to "Magic Herbs"

Manolis Kalomiri was born in 1883 in Izmir (Turkey) where he began his musical studies at an early age. He was taught privately in Istanbul and Athens before completing his studies at the Vienna Music Academy. His career as a composer was complemented by his activities as an educator. He taught piano at the Obolensky Conservatory in Kharkov, and in 1926 was appointed Director of the National Conservatory of Athens. He functioned as a member of the Academy of Athens, and the President of the Union of Greek Composers. His life-long dedication has been the creation of a national Greek music based on legends, traditions, and folklore. Kalomiri died in Athens in 1962.

The Prelude, recorded here, opens the second part (entitled Magic Herbs) of *Iambs and Anapaests* for voice and orchestra, a work of the mid-20s. The piece sometimes figures in recital programs as an individual composition in Kalomiri's authorized version for the pianoforte. In

its short span it progresses with amazing psychological consequence from the stately and the processional to the lyric, the passionate, and the dramatic.

ISRAEL

BEN-HAIN: Sonatina, Op. 38

Regarded by many as the chief representative in Israel of the Eastern Mediterranean School, Paul Ben-Haim (Frankenburger) was born in Munich in 1897. After receiving his musical education at the Munich Academy of Music, and leading a career in Europe as a conductor and composer, he settled in Palestine in 1933 where he also was active as a teacher, mainly in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, and later as President of the Israeli Composers Association.

The majority of Ben-Haim's compositions are greatly influenced by the folklore of Palestine. They particularly reflect its pastoral elements, which once again formed a source of inspiration for the Sonatina, Op. 38, composed in 1946. The first of the work's three movements, an Allegretto grazioso, opens with a lighthearted theme of a dancing character, a downward octave leap and delicate ornamentation being its salient features. The secondary idea of the movement is of a calmer and more lyrical nature. Even in the complex pages of the development, the music does not lose its airiness and transparency. The improvisatory second movement brings to mind a shepherd blowing his pipe, giving free rein to his feelings. The middle section of the movement has a processional quality, evocative of a distant past. The third movement, a Toccata, reaches its climax in a rural dance patterned after the rhythms of a national Hora.

RIGAI: Israeli Rhapsody

Amiram Rigai wrote his Israeli Rhapsody, a work dating from his early youth, especially for the occasion of the Declaration of the State of Israel. Although the melodic ideas he employed are all original, the influence of the Jewish folklore is evident. "Jews returning to their homeland and helping to establish the new state of Israel" is its programmatic intent. The Rhapsody opens with dramatic chords, leading to an Israeli dance. The following section contains two melodies, one Hasidic, which is prayer-like, and the other Israeli, reminiscent of a shepherd's

song. The work comes to a close with a rural dance full of excitement.

TURKEY

MIMAROGLU: Pieces sentimentales

Born in Istanbul (1926), Ilhan Mimaroglu established his residence in New York in 1959 to devote himself to the study and composition of electronic music. Many of his electronic compositions are commercially recorded, including Tract and To Kill a Sunrise (on Folkways FTS 33441 and FTQ 33951 respectively) which reflect his recent orientation to socio-political themes with an extreme left radical persuasion. He rejects musical nationalism characterized by the use of folk themes, and condemns it as "a perverse sort of robinhoodery—stealing from the poor to give to the rich." He also disowns some of his earlier compositions, including a few dating from the mid-1960s, for "echoing the clatter of the academic fossils," but regards his Pieces sentimentales as "closer in spirit, if not in style and content, to my electronic works which tell me more about myself than means other than music do."

This set of four pieces grouped under an unabashed title are, indeed, the farthest among his works from an avant-garde vocabulary. Rich in bitter-sweet melody, permeated with an atmosphere of despair and resignation, not sparing of touches of sarcasm now and then, these pieces give a reminder of their date of composition (1957) only when a brusque transition from tonal to atonal melody, an unexpected chord, or a relinquished statement agitate a seemingly old-world climate.

IRAN

HOSSEIN: Prelude No. 1; Persian Legend

Andre Amine Hossein was born in Ashkehabad, Iran (now in the Soviet Union), in 1905. To realize his childhood dream of becoming a composer, he went to Germany in 1921, after completing high school, and devoted himself completely to musical studies. Four years later he decided to make his home in Paris where he furthered his musical education. In 1935 he began his career as a composer, during the course of which he was particularly active composing for the motion pictures.

His pianistic language, as evidenced by the

present compositions, is predominantly Lisztian, although combined with an oriental allusion, namely the rhythmic and coloristic effects obtainable on the kanun, the Turkist psaltery. The local color in both Prelude No. 1 and Persian Legend are further enhanced through the utilization of modal resources.

Prelude No. 1 is composed as an homage to the great Persian poet, Omar Khayyam. As to the Persian Legend, the composer drew his inspiration from the tales of ancient Persia, where the marvelous alternates with the fantastic.

LEBANON

FULEIHAN: "From the Aegean"

Although Anis Fuleihan was born on the Island of Cyprus (in 1901) of Lebanese parents, he would be best described as a citizen of the Mediterranean. His awareness of the area's cultural heritage started to develop after he came to the United States when he was fifteen. In New York he studied piano under Alberto Jonas, thereafter establishing a career both in America and abroad as a recitalist, conductor, composer, lecturer, and educator. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Fulbright Scholarship, served for eight years as President of the Conservatory in Beirut, and was instrumental in the founding of the Baalbek Festival. Among other academic positions, he has been on the faculty of Indiana University's music department. Fuleihan died in Stanford, California, in 1970.

His music received Greek, Arabic and Turkish influences, garbed in the attire of French impressionism combined with neo-classicism. With the exception of Greek Dance, the forms he utilized in his suite From the Aegean are not habitually associated with the coastlines and the islands of that arm of the Mediterranean between Greece and Turkey. Still, the Italian Sicilienne and Serenade are as much a part of the common

Mediterranean heritage as the hora, which is not exclusively Greek, but belongs to Turkey and Israel as well, or as the Tango, which is in the possession of any country in the area, if only through adoption.



Amiram Rigai

AMIRAM RIGAI, the distinguished young Israeli pianist, appeared in many recitals and with orchestras since his 1947 debut in Tel-Aviv. In 1952 he won first prize at a contest held by the University of California, and in 1957 made his New York debut at a Town Hall recital, the year of his graduation from the Los Angeles and San Francisco conservatories following studies with Egon Petri, Mark Gunzburg, L. Kestenberg, and Clarence Adler. In November, 1963, he made his Carnegie Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski, at which time he performed the Ben-Haim Piano Concerto in its American premiere.

His playing was described by the San Francisco Call-Bulletin as "...Horowitz and Rubinstein combined with Brailowsky;" by Alfred Frankenstein as that of a "...very brilliant and forceful interpreter," and Harold Schonberg of the New York Times commented about the "...healthy, romantic outlook and basic musicianship" of his performance, "...brilliantly in command of the technical aspects."

For Additional Information About
FOLKWAYS RELEASES

of Interest

write to



**Folkways Records
and Service Corp.**

43 WEST 61 ST STREET NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023

