

Suite for Mother and Child



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Jennifer

Daniel ben Avram

Moderato

Piano

(Jen-ni-fer, Jen-ni-fer)

5

7

10

(Jen - ni - fer)

The piece on the preceding page came to me the day after Christmas, 2000. I had taken a telephone message, and had mis-remembered the name as Jennifer as I was noodling on the piano. Somehow it became the name of the song.

The original ending was conventionally consonant, not containing the bitter-sweet triplet figure in the soprano voice. I wondered why it came to me and wanted to stay. Then I heard that the notes were singing “Jennifer,” and finally knew why it had named itself.

When I heard of Jessi’s death, I cannot say why that song came back to me. After all, her name, I first heard, was Jessica. Then I read in a newspaper that, though she was called Jessi, her real name was Jennifer.

SUITE FOR MOTHER AND CHILD

A WORK FOR SPOKEN WORD, PIANO,
RECORDED SONG AND SOLO VOICE
BY DANIEL ZWICKEL BEN AVRĀM

Empire can be defined as “the theft of a nation’s sovereignty, the subjugation and exploitation of people and the rape and pillage of its land.” In such an empire grew a radical Palestinian revolutionary, who challenged empire and for his effrontery was tortured and killed. His name was Yeshua of Nazareth. He refused to bow to empire and so was crucified for his sin of prophesy.

Did you think I was speaking of today?

Well, I am.

We live in empire, bereft of our sovereignty which we willingly abrogate by both our action and our inaction. We live in a caldron of violence and what is our response? Is it violence redoubled?

That Palestinian revolutionary advocated a different response. He commanded us to love our neighbor, our enemy, and to respect the dignity of the least and the most despised among us. He commanded us, like the prophets Micah and Isaiah, to “do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly” with our God. A latter day prophet, Leonard Bernstein, when confronted with the death of his friend Jack Kennedy, responded, “This will be my reply to violence, to make music more beautifully, more intensely, more devotedly than ever before.” What is *our* response? How do we confront empire in our own community? We fight proclaiming the Gospel of Yeshua of Nazareth, of Mahatma Gandhi of India

and of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Junior with the words of Leonard Bernstein, "This ... this will be our response to violence."

"ELLA'S SONG" (recording played)

*We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes
Until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons
Is as important as the killing of white men, white mothers' sons.*

*We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes
That which touches me most is that I had a chance to work with people
Passing onto others that which was passed onto me.*

*To me young people come first, they have the courage where we fail
And if I can but shed some light as they carry us through the gale.
The older I get the better I know that the secret of my going on
Is when the reins are in the hands of the young, who dare to run against the
storm.*

*Not needing to clutch for power, not needing the light just to shine on me
I need to be one in the number as we stand against tyranny
Struggling myself don't mean a whole lot, I've come to realize
That teaching others to stand up and fight is the only way our struggle
survives.*

*I'm a woman who speaks in a voice and I must be heard
At times I can be quite difficult, I'll bow to no man's word.
We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.*

We fight for justice with mercy, with forgiveness and with compassion.
We, who believe in freedom will not rest. We, who believe in freedom
know the fight has just begun. We, who believe in freedom will not rest.
We, who believe in freedom will not rest until it's won.

This is *my* reply. It is called Suite for Mother and Child. It begins with Prelude and Introit:

“in the stillness of the morning”

In the stillness of the morning,
In the shadows of my of my soul I perceive the Divine.
And so I say, “Namaste, my brothers and sisters.”
Namaste, blessed be. Amen.

“GYMNOPIÉDIES I AND II”

“THE ROOM IS QUIET”

The Room is quiet;
Peace has descended here.
We raise up our voice in prayer.
Let compassion banish despair.

From deep within us
The still, small voice we hear,
Offering balm to our wounds.

Inward we turn,
Stilling our mind, emptying all.

Our eyes close; stillness.
Peace fills our consciousness.
Ego vanished.
The room is quiet.

In January of 2013 I learned of the brutal slaying of the 27-year-old daughter of a friend of mine, Jennifer Kingeter. I recalled a piano composition of mine I had recently come across. Jennifer had been called Jessie, and I thought the name of the piece was Jessica.

Well, the piece, a simple eleven-bar phrase came to me the day after Christmas, 2000. I had taken a telephone message, and I mis-remembered the name as Jennifer and as I was noodling on the piano somehow, “Jennifer” became

the name of the song. The original ending was conventionally consonant, not containing that bitter-sweet triplet figure in the soprano voice. I wondered why that figure came to me and wanted to stay, then I heard that the notes were singing “Jennifer”, and finally knew why it had named itself.

When I heard of Jessi's death, I cannot say why that song came to mind back to me. After all, her name, I first heard, was Jessica. Then I read that her full name was Jennifer Jessica Jean Kingeter.

“JENNIFER – TWO VARIATIONS ON A THEME”

“THREE MINIATURES: CAT’S PLAY, CAT ’N MOUSE AND CAT NAP”

“MUSIC BOX”

“LULLABY FOR JESSI”

Sleep, little one, sleep, my darling
Floating upon the gentle stream.
Through the forest, cool and green,
Sleep, my darling, sleep.

Sleep, little one, sleep, my darling
Rising through fleecy clouds so grand,
Gazing upon the peaceful land,
Sleep, my darling, sleep.

Close your pretty eyes,
And before you realize
Into a dreamland you’ll fly,
Changed in the wink of an eye
Into a fairy princess, fairy princess ...

Sleep, little one, sleep, my darling
Resting within the hand of God,
Safely within His warm embrace.
Sleep, my darling sleep.

Suite for Mother and Child concludes with a closing song, a meditation and an anthem.

“NOW HAS COME THE TIME FOR HEALING”

“IT IS HEALING THAT I SEEK”

Here is my hand; lend me your own
Now has come the time for healing.

Here is my heart; lend me your own.
Now has come the time for healing.

I am in pain; hold me.
Here is my love
Had you told me I'd have tried much harder,
Been bolder.

Here is forgiveness; lend me your own.
Now has come the time for healing, healing.

For it is healing that I seek, in all I say and do.
And with healing in my heart, I find wholeness in you.

For it is wholeness that I seek ...
... I find compassion in you.

For it is compassion that I seek ...
... I find mercy in you.

For it is mercy that I seek ...
... I find forgiveness in you.

And with forgiveness in my heart
I find healing in you.

“IN THE QUIET OF THE DAY”

In the quiet of the day,
The call of our passion we obey.
Look within in contemplation of the divine.

In the quiet of the day
Let the light of compassion lead the way,
Look within in contemplation. Namaste.

“IT SEEMS TO ME”

It seems to me that you and I could change the world together
We could make it better by being truly who we are.
It seems to me, together, we could learn to love a stranger,
Nullify the danger that confronts us near and far.

It seems to me, if we could see the wounds that must be healed,
We'd move our hearts to yield the compassion that they bear.
It seem to me the earth could be a garden filled with laughter,
To blossom ever after with a beauty all could share.

At night I dream, and in my dream above the hills I'm flying;
Tears of joy I'm crying from the depth of love I feel.

As I descend a hand I lend to one whose fingers fashion
Understanding and compassion, with a touch that surely heals.

Yes, in the end I find, my friend, `tis you, my sister/brother.
We find in each other strength we need to carry on.
For in your eyes I realize the joy I find in living.
Now, in wonder and thanksgiving I arise to greet the dawn!

Peace and love be with you all;
Grace divine bestow upon you
As you go forth to live and to serve in truth.

"iMAGINE / SING TO THE HEART!"

Imagine ... imagine ...

Imagine in our darkness shines a light with which we see
A hope and promise of a world where we can truly be.
Imagine living in a world where justice will prevail.
And working with compassion in our hearts we cannot fail.

Imagine creating a world where people live as one;
Imagine now, my friends, our transformation's just begun.

[Sing to the center of the universe.]

Sing it out loud and clear, so that everyone can hear.

[Imagine people feeling that they're no longer apart.]

Sing to the Heart — Sing to the Heart!

Baruch ata Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha'olam;
Halo lechol shirayich ani kinor.
Baruch ata Adonai!

Now sing!

Sing to the center of the universe;
Sing it out loud and clear, so that everyone can hear.
Sing to the Heart!

Assalamu `alaikum
Wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.
Namaste, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.
Baruch ata, asalaam, blessed be!

Now sing!

Sing to the center of the universe;
Sing it out loud and clear, so that everyone can hear.
Sing to the Heart!