





MÜNIR NURETTIN BEKEN

GALLIPOLI SYMPHONIC POEM

FOR SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA







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BEKEN'S GALLIPOLI

BEKEN is my life's intellectual guest, a brother whom I have had the luxury of choosing, an extraordinary composer with a consciousness of an Ottoman tradition, and a Turkish gentleman who, with his pen, depicts musically the feel of my city, Istanbul... He is a friend with a universal intellectual identity, emanating multiple dimensions of learning from every single note he has ever written, nearly all of which I have conducted.

GALLIPOLI is an account of the two lost generations: one summoned for an impossible crusade, to die thousands of kilometers away, and to lie on the ground so young together with another lost generation who battled to protect the only motherland they have ever known. It is an epic struggle of the highest gallantry – imagine even giving a hand to the enemy to carry his dead and wounded at the end of each day.

Gallipoli, as one of the most important political events in history, marks the beginning of a war of independence and foretells its end. It does not alter the course of the WWI but perhaps it touches upon the already simmering WWII.

BEKEN'S GALLIPOLI is a theatrical stage on which Beken cultivates Gallipoli with a gripping magnetism. As the woodwinds start the poem with a local folksong, a touch of heterophony gradually spreads into the rest of the orchestral pallet. Already overtaken by the orient, Anzacs hum "Waltzing Matilda" and feel a strange sense of disorientation and longing for their homeland. The battle starts again... in the midst of the terror, through the technique of word painting, the music shifts into a sanctuary, a place for escape, a sweet Anatolian breeze loaded with emotions and memories of peace. But the war does not end... By the sudden end of the day the souls of the martyrs are above the fields. Their tranquil yet mysterious singing by the high-pitched winds and strings is bonded with the cellos and doublebasses, whispering "Gallipoli." A member of the orchestra creates a deafening effect by quietly singing alternatively three verses from either Turkish "Canakkale" or Anzac "Waltzing Matilda." A powerful enchanted silence concludes the epic history.

(Hakan Sensoy)

In 1934 Atatürk wrote a tribute to the Anzacs killed at Gallipoli:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours ... You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

Çanakkale Symphonic Poem to Sabahattin Ergin



