

Hadavar (The Word) Version II – Dániel Péter Biró

For Countertenor, Piano, Resonant Gongs and Live Electronics (2011). Electronics realized at the Experimental Studio and the University of Victoria. Performed at the Fromm Concerts at Harvard University April 2, 2019.

The Text for this composition was based on the Book of Jeremiah Chapter 34:8-12:

The word which came to Jeremiah from G'd after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim a release among them 9 that everyone should set free his Hebrew slaves, both male and female, and that no one should keep his fellow Judean enslaved. Everyone, officials and people, who had entered into the covenant agreed to set their male and female slaves free and not keep them enslaved any longer; they complied and let them go. But afterward they turned about and brought back the men and women they had set free, and forced them into slavery again. Then it was that the word of G'd came to Jeremiah from G'd.

The rhythmic, formal and sonorous structures of the piece are based on numbers derived from the gematria (number symbolism) of the Hebrew text. In addition electronic spatialization and processing is calculated via gematria. The melodic gestures, based on those of Ashkenazi Haftorah melodies, move in canon while the phonetic pronunciation and micro-tonality are inspired by the Indonesian Qur'an recitation of Hajjah Maria Ulfa.

The electronics for the piece were completed at the Experimental Studio in Freiburg Germany and at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. I am grateful to Detlef Heusinger Reinhold Braig, and the members of the Experimental Studio and to Kirk McNally at the University of Victoria for their assistance in working on the electronic part of the piece. I am also very grateful to Noa Frenkel for her hard work and inspiration during the creation of the composition. This composition was awarded a Gigahertz Production Prize from the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany and the Experimentalstudio in Freiburg, Germany in 2010 and a prize in the Vocal Music Competition of the ISCM – Austrian Section in 2011.