AHARON HARLAP'S DAVID AND GOLIATH A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE AND MUSICAL ANALYSIS

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in

Conducting

School of Music

University of South Carolina

2014

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my very great appreciation to all those who made it possible for me to complete this journey. I found the USC campus in Columbia South Carolina inviting, professional, challenging and rewarding. I could not have asked for a better program. While there are many who have assisted me, I particularly would like to thank the following:

My colleague and friend, Maya Shavit who literally made all this possible; she is to me as to many others, an inspiration;

Aharon Harlap for graciously offering all his time and assistance which were invaluable for this research;

My committee members, Dr. Larry Wyatt, Dr. Alicia Walker, Dr. Andrew Gowan and Dr. Samuel Douglas who not only have been helpful throughout this process but also from whom I have learned a lot.

My Major Professor, Dr. Larry Wyatt, whose professionalism, kindness, humor and endless thirst for knowledge inspires everyone around him.

I am particularly grateful to the following, who showed my family and me the meaning of Southern Hospitality:
Michal Rubin and David Reisman, who opened their home to us and took upon themselves to be both our fostering parents and close friends. My family and I will always cherish their friendship;

Alon Segal, whose warm friendship was so encouraging, and whose musicianship is inspiring;

Rabbi John Case, who is a great man and spiritual guide. His support and belief in me is highly appreciated;

My special thanks are extended to the entire Jewish congregation of Beth Shalom, who always made my family and I feel wanted and at home;

The dearest Sara Beardsley, my South Carolina Mother, who has recently discovered that she is three percent Jewish. Her TLC was most comforting and she will forever have a place in my heart.

Finally, I wish to thank my mother, Sandra Hesseg, who has been for me a guiding rod and constant inspiration all my life. If it wasn't for her support I would never have been able to pursue my dreams.

And lastly but most importantly, my wonderful wife, Dikla, whose love, support and encouragement are the backbone of my self-confidence. And my two children who are such a joy and make everything worthwhile.

To all those, I would like to say: Thanks for a dream come true!
ABSTRACT

Aharon Harlap (b. 1941) is one of Israel’s most prominent and well-known composers and conductors. He was born in Canada and immigrated to Israel in 1964 where his compositions have won numerous awards. His musical output is in a variety of genres: cantatas, oratorios, a capella, chamber and orchestral. Harlap’s compositions have been performed in Israel, Canada, the United States, and South Africa, and he has appeared as guest conductor with the major orchestras in Israel, including the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Haifa Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Sinfonietta Beer Sheva, the Kibbutzim Chamber Orchestra, the Israel Chamber Orchestra and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. Harlap’s religious beliefs have often drawn him to set his choral works to Biblical texts. *David and Goliath* is a cantata on the Hebrew text of Samuel I chapter 17, orchestrated for tenor or mezzo-soprano, baritone and bass soloists, SATB mixed choir, flute, harp and strings. The composition was originally scored for soloists, mixed chorus and piano and was later orchestrated. Even though *David and Goliath* was commissioned by the N.Y. Zamir Chorale it was never performed by them. The piano version is dedicated to Matthew Lazzar and the Zamir Chorale, but was premiered by Yuval Ben Ozer and the New Vocal Ensemble on March 27, 2009 at the Tel-Aviv Museum Auditorium. The orchestrated version of the piece was premiered on March 24, 2010 with the composer conducting the Ashdod Symphony Orchestra, and the Kfar Sava Chamber Choir. The purpose of this study is to bring to light a wonderful, but
relatively unknown, choral piece and provide a complete analysis along with biographical information on this highly acclaimed composer.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Brief Layout

_David and Goliath_ by Aharon Harlap (b. 1941) is a twenty-minute cantata on the Hebrew text of Samuel I chapter 17, orchestrated for tenor or mezzo-soprano, baritone and bass soloists, SATB mixed choir, flute, harp and strings. The composition was originally scored for soloists, mixed chorus and piano, and was later orchestrated. The focus of this study will be on the orchestrated version, providing a musical analysis with a guide to the composer’s techniques and use of leitmotivs. Harlap’s compositions include orchestral and chamber pieces as well as choral works that have been performed in Israel, Europe, Canada, The United States and South Africa.¹ Unlike his other Biblical compositions, _The Binding of Isaac_, and _Jephthah's Daughter_, for example, Harlap did not choose to set this text because he initially found it to be "too militant and full of blood."² The idea for the piece, however, was initiated and commissioned by Alan Septimus, and the Zamir Choir New York, to whom the piece is dedicated.³

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³ Ibid.
Harlap structured the piece like the Greek Drama. The roles of David, Saul, and Goliath are sung by tenor (or mezzo-soprano), baritone and bass soloists respectively, while the choir functions as the narrator. Some of the text from Samuel I, chapter 17 is omitted in order to maintain the fluency of the drama. It was important to Harlap to end the piece "with the strength of belief and not with the persecution of the Philistines." In order to achieve this, the composer chose to end the work with Psalm 23; V.4: *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.* Psalm 23 was chosen because of its association with King David, and the idea that it proclaims the strength given to the believer.

The instrumentation is also strongly associated with King David. The flute symbolizes David's youth as a shepherd, and the harp is the instrument most often associated with David.

**Need for Study**

In his book *Shirat Hamakhela* (Choir Singing), Israeli choral conductor Henri Klaussner referred to Aharon Harlap as one of the most famous and leading conductors in Israel. Harlap conducted all the leading Israeli orchestras, including the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as orchestras in the United States, Europe, South Africa and Canada. His compositions have been performed around the world, awarding Harlap numerous prestigious awards. In 2008, he won the Association of Composers, Authors and Publishers of Music in Israel (ACUM) Prize for Lifetime Achievement, for his

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4 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
6 Henry Klaussner, *Shirat Hamakhela* (Tel-Aviv: Maya Rotem, 2010), 98.
compositions, achievements, contribution to music education, and accomplishments as a choral conductor. Judges Ron Wiedberg, Nahum Amir and Ami Maayani wrote that Harlap is a "multi-talented and fruitful composer whose compositions achieve both harmonic and structural completeness. His orchestration possesses tremendous precision and subtle taste."7

It is surprising that very little has been written about such an acclaimed composer as Aharon Harlap. Because of this, this study emphasizes the composer's musical background, his compositional tools, provides a musical analysis of the work, and includes a conductor's guide to *David and Goliath*.

**Delimitations of Study**

The included biography of the composer and his influences helps to place *David and Goliath* in the context of his output. For an understanding of the composer’s technique and style, this paper lists and explains the compositional tools that are used in the piece, together with examples from the composer's other choral works. The musical analysis provides overview and emphasizes the composer's use of leitmotivs and their implications.

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7 Meirav Yudilovich, "Lifetime Achievement Award for the Composer Aharon Harlap". *Ynet*. January 1, 2008. [http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3489142,00.html](http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3489142,00.html) (accessed on April 1, 2013).
Organization

Chapter One presents the proposal for study, Delimitations, Organization, and Literature Review.

Chapter Two provides a biography of the composer, including his composition and conducting teachers. The chapter also includes his professional associations and awards. Harlap studied composition under Peter Racine Fricker at London’s Royal College of Music and under Oedoen Partosh at the Tel Aviv Academy of Music. He also studied conducting with Sir Adrian Boult in London, Hans Swarowsky in Vienna and Gary Bertini in Israel. He is the recipient of numerous awards and is a senior lecturer for Choral and Orchestral Conducting at the Jerusalem Academy of Music. He is also the Music Director and Conductor of the Kfar Sava Chamber Choir since 1997.8

Chapter Three provides a musical analysis together with a list of the composing tools and techniques used in the piece. Harlap associated each of the leading characters (David, Saul and Goliath) with a leitmotiv. Interestingly the "ultimate belief in God," was also given a motive.9 At the end of the piece, the choir turns from being the narrator to being the hero, when given the prayer-like chorale with the text of Psalm 23: V.4.10

Chapter Four consists of a transcription of a recorded interview with the composer in which he elaborates on his general compositional process, orchestration choices and a discussion of the work. In this chapter Harlap also elaborates on the conducting demands for David and Goliath since he conducted the premiere of the orchestrated version on

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8 Un-published program notes, courtesy of the composer.
9 Ibid
March 24, 2010 with the Ashdod Symphony Orchestra and the Kfar Sava Chamber Choir.\textsuperscript{11} Originally Vag Papian was scheduled to conduct the premiere as was advertised in the programs (see appendix B), but at the very last minute he invited Harlap to do so.\textsuperscript{12} Harlap also elaborates on the connection to the Zamir Chorale in New York and Alan Septimus who commissioned the work, and conductor Yuval Ben Ozer and the New Vocal Ensemble who premiered the piano version of the piece on March 27, 2009 at the Tel-Aviv Museum Auditorium.

Chapter Five provides a summary and conclusion of the research. The goal of this paper is to bring the piece and its composer to a larger audience, leading to more performances of it. This chapter presents a discussion of the composition and orchestration elements in \textit{David and Goliath}, as well as performance considerations from the conductor’s point of view.

\textbf{Review of Literature}

Aharon Harlap’s contribution to the musical scenery in Israel is highly appreciated. He has an active international conducting career and his works have been performed in the United States, Europe, Canada and South Africa. He is the recipient of numerous prizes, including the ACUM Prize for Life Time Achievement (2008). This prize was awarded to him for his compositional achievements and contributions to music education in Israel, as well as his accomplishments as a choral conductor. The judges

\textsuperscript{11} “David and Goliath, Part One.” \textit{YouTube}. \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXY5NqxxRsk} (accessed on April 1, 2013).
\textsuperscript{12} Courtesy of the composer.
wrote that Harlap is a "multi-talented and fruitful composer whose compositions achieve both harmonic and structural completeness. His orchestration is done with tremendous precision and subtle taste."\textsuperscript{13} Despite the long lasting acclaim that the composer achieves with his work, very little has been written about him in scholarly publications. It is one of the goals of this research to gather information on the composer and this Biblical cantata. This study bases the information on literature, media coverage, concert programs, and an extensive interview with the composer, in which he elaborates on his musical influences and compositional process. This interview updates one from 1986 which was conducted and published by Robert Fleisher in his book: \textit{Twenty Israeli Composers; Voice of a Culture}.

\textbf{Methodology}

It is the intention of this paper to bring awareness of Aharon Harlap to a larger audience. Since very little has been written about Harlap’s compositions, this paper seeks to provide a window to the composer’s process through a musical analysis of \textit{David and Goliath}. The analysis is divided into three elements:

\begin{itemize}
  \item An overall harmonic structure – Shows Harlap’s harmonic language and the way he stretches tonality.
  \item A list of the tools and techniques that are used in the piece, together with explanations and examples from this and other works by the composer.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{13} Meirav Yudilovich, “Lifetime Achievement Award for the Composer Aharon Harlap”. \textit{Ynet}. January 1, 2008. \url{http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3489142,00.html} (accessed on April 1, 2013).
• Leitmotiv mapping – Mapping all the leitmotivs and their variations in order to better understand the unifying features of the piece.

In addition, a historical background on the composer is given in order to place *David and Goliath* in the context of Harlap’s output.
CHAPTER II: AHARON HARLAP'S BIOGRAPHY

Aharon Harlap is one of Israel’s foremost and well-known composers and conductors. He was born in Canada, where he began his musical career as a pianist, and completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Manitoba in 1963, majoring in Music and Mathematics. He then immigrated to Israel in 1964.\(^\text{14}\)

He studied composition under Peter Racine Fricker at London’s Royal College of Music and under Oedoen Partos at the Tel Aviv Academy of Music. He also studied conducting with Sir Adrian Boult in London, Hans Swarowsky in Vienna and Gary Bertini in Israel.\(^\text{15}\)

Harlap is well known as a choral, operatic, and orchestral conductor and has been guest conductor in Canada, the United States, Europe, and South Africa. In Israel he has appeared as guest conductor with most of the major orchestras, including the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Haifa Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Sinfonietta Beer Sheva, the Kibbutzim Chamber Orchestra, the Israel Chamber Orchestra and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra.\(^\text{16}\) Harlap composes in a variety of genres (cantatas,

\(^{16}\) Un-published biography, courtesy of the composer
oratorios, motets, chamber and orchestral\textsuperscript{17}) and has had his compositions performed in all the countries mentioned above.\textsuperscript{18}

Harlap received numerous prizes for his compositions. In 1979, he was awarded a prize for his oratorio \textit{The Fire and the Mountains} in an international competition on the subject of the “\textit{Holocaust and Rebirth}” (text: Israel Eliraz).\textsuperscript{19} In 1983, he received the ACUM Prize for Composition for his “Three songs for mezzo-soprano and symphony orchestra”\textsuperscript{20} set to poems by Leah Goldberg and Yehuda Amichai, and he won again in 1997 for his Clarinet Concerto.\textsuperscript{21} In 1993, he won the Mark Lavry Prize for Composition, awarded by the Haifa Municipality, for his choral-orchestral work, \textit{For Dust You Art, and to Dust You Shall Return}” (Genesis 3:19).\textsuperscript{22} In 1997, Harlap’s opera \textit{Thérèse Raquin}, based on the Emile Zola novel of the same name with libretto by Dana Gur, on a prize sponsored by the New Israel Opera.\textsuperscript{23} The same opera was later performed in May 2005 at the annual Israel Festival and received public and critical acclaim.\textsuperscript{24} In 1999 he received the highly prestigious Prime Minister’s Prize for composition\textsuperscript{25} and in 2004 the ACUM Prize again, this time for his Bassoon Concerto.\textsuperscript{26}

A CD released in 1997 by the Haifa Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Stanley Sperber, included Harlap’s Symphony No. 2, \textit{L’Oiseau de la Guerre (Bird of War)}, which was inspired by the painting of the same name by Dutch artist Hans Hogendoorn. The

\textsuperscript{17} Herzliya Chamber Orchestra. \textit{Thirteenth Season} (concert program) March, 1994.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{World Youth Choir Program}. July 4-24, 2003.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{World Youth Choir Program}. July 4-24, 2003.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} The Israel Sinfonietta Beer-Sheva. “\textit{Maestro}” Series (concert program). December, 2003.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{World Youth Choir Program}. July 4-24, 2003.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} The Israel Sinfonietta Beer-Sheva. “\textit{Maestro}” Series (concert program). December, 2003.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{World Youth Choir Program}. July 4-24, 2003.
world premiere of *The Divine Image* by the Illinois Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Kenneth Kiesler in 2002. The work is written for soprano, mezzo soprano, and baritone soloists, choir and symphony orchestra, and is based on texts from William Blake, *Psalms* and *Isaiah*. Other Harlap works performed by Kenneth Kiesler and the Illinois Symphony Orchestra include the overture "Anniversary" and an orchestral suite based on Hanukah songs entitled *Music for the Festival of Lights*. These works have also been performed many times by other orchestras in Israel as well as those in the United States.

In 2001, Harlap was invited to Hungary to conduct the Dohnanyi Symphony Orchestra in Budapest. Among other works, the program included Harlap’s Clarinet Concerto and *Pictures from the Private Collection of God*, a song cycle for soprano, oboe and strings, composed to texts by Yaakov Barzilai, a Holocaust survivor originally from Hungary. The work met with great success and in 2003 and 2004, Harlap was again invited to conduct the Solti Chamber Orchestra, which again performed the song cycle as well as another Harlap work based on texts from *Psalms* – a song cycle for soprano solo, clarinet and strings. Recently Hungary’s MAV orchestra performed another song cycle by Harlap, *My Father will no Longer Bless the Bread*, also set to poems by Yaakov Barzilai and conducted by the Israeli conductor Yaron Gottfried.

In 2004, the Donau Orchestra (Budapest) performed the third song cycle *Letters Weeping in Fire* set to texts by Yaakov Barzilai, with conductor Harvey Bordowitz and the Hungarian mezzo soprano Maria Therese Uribe. Harlap’s opera *Wings*, composed under the auspices of *Mifal Hapayis* (the national lottery) and based on the writings of Gibran Khalil Gibran, received its world premiere performance by the Israel Chamber Orchestra at the end of January 2005 under Harlap's musical direction.
In the 2005 season, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra performed the world premiere of the Bassoon Concerto, which received the ACUM prize in 2004. The work was composed for the orchestra’s principal bassoon player, Uzi Shalev, who performed it.

In July 2006, Harlap represented Israel as an international choral judge at the World Choir Games held in Xiamen, China. In 2004, the Games were held in Bremen, Germany and the one before that (2002) in Busan, Korea. Both in Xiamen and Bremen, Harlap represented Israel as a judge.

In 2007, Harlap completed his viola concerto dedicated to the international violist Rivka Golani. The work received its premier performance in Budapest, Hungary on May 20, 2007 with the Dohnanyi – Budafok Orchestra, Budapest under the direction of the orchestra's director Gabor Hollerung. The Israeli premier was performed on Sept. 17, 2007 in Haifa, Israel with the Haifa Symphony Orchestra. The soloist was once again Rivka Golani, and the performance was conducted by the composer.

Harlap's second piano concerto was premiered at the "Sounds of the Desert" Festival at Sde Boker in Israel on December 21, 2008 by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Omer Wellber. The piano soloist was Nimrod David Pfeffer.

On October 17, 2009 Harlap's song cycle for soprano solo and chamber orchestra "Out of the Depths Have I Cried unto Thee O Lord" received its world premiere with the Israel Sinfonietta Beer-Sheva in Beer-Sheva, Israel. The soprano soloist was Sharon Rostorf-Zamir and the performance was conducted by the Orchestra's Music Director and Principal Conductor Doron Salomon.
On December 6, 2009 Harlap performed his "Psalms" with the soprano soloist Sharon Rostorf-Zamir and the George Solti Chamber Orchestra in Budapest, Hungary.

In November 2010, The Israel Camerata under the baton of their musical director Prof. Avner Biron, performed the world premiere of "Sinfonia Breve" in eight performances throughout Israel.

In January 14, 2012 his “Concerto for Orchestra” received its world premiere by the Dohnanyi-Budafok Symphony Orchestra in Budapest, conducted by the orchestra’s director Gabor Hollerung.

His recently composed Cello concerto (2012) was dedicated to the memory of his cousin “Babs” Asper, wife of Izzy Asper, in whose memory the second piano concerto was dedicated. The work was performed at Mishkenot Shaananim, Jerusalem, in June 2013 by students of the Jerusalem Academy of Music.

Harlap is a senior lecturer in choral and orchestral conducting at the Jerusalem Academy of Music. He is also Music Director and Conductor of the Kfar Savva Chamber Choir since 1997.27 Aharon Harlap received the "Life Time Achievement Award" in 2008 from ACUM for his life’s contribution to music in Israel as a composer.

In February, 2012 Harlap received an award from Mifal Hapayis (national lottery) for his Musical play “King Solomon and the Bee”, scored for soprano, mezzo soprano, and baritone soloists, narrator, SATB mixed chorus, piccolo and string orchestra.

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CHAPTER III: HARMONIC LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE

HARMONIC CENTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Biblical story</th>
<th>Psalm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm. 1-314</td>
<td>mm. 315-342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G minor $\rightarrow$ C# minor $\rightarrow$ F# major
(tritone) (m. 295)

CHARACTERS AND TEXT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Biblical story</th>
<th>Psalms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Psalm 23: 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goliath</td>
<td>Psalm 131: 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>David and Saul</td>
<td>mm. 20-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David and Goliath</td>
<td>mm. 20-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David and Goliath</td>
<td>mm. 191-293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israelites and the Philistines</td>
<td>mm. 294-314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 80-190</td>
<td>mm. 315-326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 191-293</td>
<td>mm. 327-342</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

David and Goliath is a twenty minute cantata, orchestrated for mixed choir, strings, flute, harp and solo tenor or mezzo-soprano, baritone and bass, for the roles of David, Saul and Goliath (respectively). The choir plays the role of a narrator, a concept Harlap borrowed from the Greek drama.  

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segments, matching chronological sections of the Biblical text of Samuel I, Chapter 17, although the composer omitted some of the text in order to maintain fluency. Each textual unit has an associated texture regarding orchestration, harmonic language, tempo, and melodic figurations, that function as leitmotifs with the reappearance of the characters in the text. At the end of the piece, the choir turns from being the narrator to the hero when given the prayer-like chorale with the text from Psalm 131; V.3. The change in the choir's status appears even earlier in m. 323 (Ex 3.1) when the choir identifies with David and sings with him the word "Shivtekh" (your staff). Furthermore, the choir's identification with David happens earlier in mm. 170-177 (Ex. 3.9). Therefore, it retroactively becomes a leitmotif for the belief in God, as elaborated later in the chapter.

Example 3.1 David and Goliath, mm.323-325
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Harlap's harmonic color in the piece is a mixture of dissonance and tertian harmonies. He uses common modes and major/minor chords but releases them from the expected tonal pull of tension and resolution. The harmonies and the harmonic centers in the piece therefore wander freely, and the structure is derived from the textual units instead of the harmonic progression. However, there is one important overall harmonic progression that is derived not from harmonic thinking, but from a compositional overview. The table in the beginning of the chapter shows how the key area in m. 295 is a
tritone from the opening key area of the work (G minor). The tritone is probably the most important interval in the piece and is associated with Goliath (as elaborated later on in the chapter). The tritone is more impactful in m. 295 because it is the moment Goliath is beheaded. It is the climax and the remainder functions as a reflective closer. Harlap ends the piece with the two Psalm verses thus reinforcing the belief in God rather than ending the piece with death and war.

**Harmonic language**

The harmonic language in the piece is very dissonant but not atonal. Harlap writes in well-known modes and scales but does not succumb to their implied and traditional note hierarchy of stable and unstable notes. His melodies are free from any pull, and flow freely in the scale. Example 3.2 shows how the piece begins on an implied G minor. However, the choir begins on a unison D, and in m. 4 ends the section on the notes A, E-flat, and C-sharp on a pedal of G plus D in the low strings. None of the choir ending notes are stable in G minor and they are left unresolved as the next section in m. 5 starts on F-sharp minor. Harlap uses the same harmonic idea throughout the piece as he moves from one key area to another.

By using key areas and contrasting dissonance textures with parallel tertian harmony, Harlap gives the piece a somewhat obscure tonal feeling. He creates a very effective and unique dramatic effect by alternating a chromatic texture, as in m. 4, with a more spacious tertian one in m. 5 (Ex. 3.2). Examples 3.3 and 3.3a show that Harlap uses this same contrast in some of his other choral works.
Example 3.2 David and Goliath, mm.1-5
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Example 3.3 Jephtha's Daughter, rehearsal mark H
Copyright 1981 by the composer
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It is important to note that Harlap uses different key areas that share common notes to help establish continuity and a sense of harmonic flow in a non-tonal piece. The opening of the piece is clearly in G minor, which is the strongest and most dominant key area in the piece. The notes B-flat, E-flat, and F-sharp all are structural in G minor and are used numerous times throughout the piece, as is the pedal on G in the low strings.

Harlap achieves dissonance by adding the raised 4th scale-degree to the minor scale. He then either alternates between the raised 4 and the 5, or uses the two notes together with the flat 6, thus creating a dissonant clash of semi-tones with an additional tritone between an upper voice and the bass. Example 3.4 shows the opening of the piece which quickly turns into a cluster of C-sharp, D, and E-flat over a G in the bass. Example 3.5 illustrates how Harlap uses the same scale degrees in another key this time in a more
open position and with the key area in D minor the chord notes are G-sharp, A, and B-flat over a D in the Celli and Double Bass.

Example 3.4 *David and Goliath*, m.1
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Example 3.5 *David and Goliath*, m. 235
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Another form of chromatic dissonance happens throughout the piece when Harlap creates a simultaneous clash of semi-tones between the raised \( \hat{7} \) and the \( \hat{8} \) (or the \( \hat{1} \)).

Example 3.6 shows the use of the two forms of dissonance discussed above (the \( \#4, \hat{5} \),...
flat and the raised 7 together with 1) in a G minor-area. The chord on the down-beat has C-sharp, D, and E-flat over a G in the Celli Vln. 2 then adds an accented F-sharp.

Example 3.6 *David and Goliath*, m. 229
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Harmonic motion: minor thirds and tritone

Example 3.7 shows the most prominent harmonic motion in the piece, which is a movement of minor triads that outline an ascending diminished chord in the bass-line. This harmonic motion reoccurs throughout, especially through the middle section (mm. 58-257).

It is important to point out that the outlining of the diminished chords also outlines the tritone interval, which is very prominent in the piece. It reoccurs throughout, either as an ostinato bass line, or harmonic/melodic intervals. In addition, the tritone interval also functions as a leitmotif for Goliath.

Example 3.7 also shows how Harlap frequently resolves the diminished motion by outlining of the tritone resolving downwards by half a step. Here the E flat in the bass resolves downwards to D in the following measure:
Use of tertian harmony

The harmonic texture in the piece contrasts dissonant voice leading with parallel major or minor triads. As mentioned before, Harlap's choral output is often dissonant but not atonal, and he often writes parallel triads for the choir. In *David & Goliath* Harlap mainly writes minor triads but does incorporate major sonorities when the text justifies it. In many of the ascending diminished sequences that reoccur frequently throughout the piece, Harlap writes parallel minor chords, as seen in the following example 3.8.

Harlap also writes parallel major chords in second inversion to describe the great size of Goliath (Ex. 3.17).
Examples 3.9 and 3.10 show a parallel motion which contrasts major and minor.

While example 3.9 contrasts major and minor chords, example 3.10 contrasts major and minor sonorities. The upper string parts consist of major chords and the lower strings outline an ascending harmonic-minor scale.
COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES

Leitmotifs and associated intervals and textures

Harlap manages to create a feeling of unity throughout the piece by assigning leitmotifs to all three of the leading characters: David, Saul and Goliath. The first leitmotif is the ostinato bass line of a descending tritone from E-flat to A, as seen in example 3.11. This ostinato line continues from measures 20 to 56 and represents the presence of Goliath and his heavy walk. The *senza rall.,* in m. 53 is inspired from the text. Since the tritone indicates Goliath's walk, Harlap did not want to stop the tritone-motif until the word "vayaamod" ([Goliath] *stood*) in m. 57. The tritone as previously stated is associated with Goliath, not only as the original ostinato, but also as an interval.

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29 Interview with the composer
30 Ibid.
Example 3.12 shows how in m.65 the last interval of Goliath's solo is a descending tritone from D to A-flat on the word "elai" (to me), thus contributing to the association of the tritone to himself. In m. 142 David ends the story about killing the bear with a descending tritone from C to F-sharp. The tritone interval, which by then is strongly associated with Goliath, insinuates that as David killed the bear, he will also kill Goliath.

Example 3.11 David and Goliath, mm. 20-21
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Example 3.12 David and Goliath, mm. 63-64
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The second leitmotif is an orchestration color which appears in m. 81 with the entrance of the harp and flute, instrumentation that is Biblically associated with David. Harlap distinguishes between Goliath and David not only by orchestration but also by tempi, as seen in examples 3.11 and 3.13 which represent Goliath and David respectively. Goliath's great size influenced Harlap to represent him with a slower tempo (half-note equals 60) than David's tempo in quarter note equals 90.
Saul's presence is often presented by orchestration involving a static string-accompaniment in minor. Since Saul's presence in the Biblical story is negligible, so is his leitmotif in the piece.

Example 3.13 *David and Goliath*, mm. 81-82
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Both David and Goliath's leitmotifs are very prominent throughout the piece and they reoccur either in full or as varied fragments. In example 3.13a the violas in mm. 123-124 predict David's entrance by playing a variation of the flute line from m. 120 which is associated with David (example 3.13b).
The binding of the raised 4 together with the 5 and the flat 6, creates a cluster of two half-step intervals. Their reappearance in the piece is connected with death and the beheading of Goliath. Example 3.14 ends on a cluster of B, C, and D-flat (in an F minor area) with the text "rosho" (his head). These are the same intervals that open the piece, thus foreshadowing Goliath's beheading (example 3.4). The half-step interval is also associated with death in m. 318 where David sings the word "mavet" (death) on a descending line from A to G-sharp.
Interestingly the "ultimate belief in God," is also given a motive at the end of the piece. In mm. 315-322 (ex. 316) David sings text from Psalm 23: V.4: "Gam ki elekh begei tzalmavet lo ira rah kiata imadi" (though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me). The melody in these bars is an augmentation of the melody in mm. 170-177 (ex. 315), where David refers to the Lord as his savior from the bear and the lion. Measures 170-177 are also important because this is the first time that the choir sings the text with the main character – David. By doing so, Harlap binds the choir with David's belief in God (as seen in example 3.9).

Harlap uses inversion of the triads to help differentiate between the characters. In example 3.17 the choir sings parallel major chords in second inversion. This inversion is associated in the piece almost exclusively with Goliath, perhaps harnessing the texture to help describe Goliath's incredible height, as in comparison to root position and first inversion each interval is bigger in the second inversion (perfect 4th and a major 6th).

Example 3.15 David and Goliath, mm. 170-177
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31 Un-published program notes, courtesy of the composer.
Ostinato

This repetitive bass figuration is one of the more extensively used techniques in the piece. It is commonly used with a tritone that functions as a leitmotif for Goliath, as in example 3.11. Harlap also uses an ostinato motion in shorter fragments to either outline broken diminished chords, or as a static bass line creating an effect similar to pedal point.
Melody

The melodies in the piece are often disjunct and chromatic. Harlap uses a few main intervals tritone, fourth/fifth, and whole and half-steps. Each interval is derived from his association in the piece: tritone with Goliath, half-step with death, and forth/fifth with David. Sometimes Harlap uses the above intervals also as an outline. Example 3.18 shows a descending line sung by David which outlines a perfect 4th from E-flat to A-sharp (enharmonic to B-flat).

Example 3.18 David and Goliath, mm. 88-91
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Melody over a static harmony

This technique is very effective in setting a dramatic mood. The technique is manifested as Harlap sets a dark harmonic sound that remains static and repetitive in the lower voices, while the upper voices are given a much more figurative and dramatic melody. The harmonic texture of the first four bars (as seen in example 3.2) was not arbitrarily chosen. In retrospect, the harmonic texture anticipates the beheading of Goliath, as the same texture returns in mm. 294 after the words: "Vayikhrot et rosho" (and cut off his head).

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32 Harlap, interview with the composer
Rhythmic patterns

Some of the rhythmic patterns that Harlap uses are very dramatic and become associated with his style. For example the triplet with a dotted quarter, as in example 3.19, helps bring out the militant nature of the scene. This rhythmic pattern reappears several times in the piece. The same rhythmic pattern is also prominent in Harlap’s setting of Bat Yftach (Jephthah’s Daughter), where it opens the piece in the horn’s statement and occurs several times later in the piece.33

Example 3.19 David and Goliath, m. 57
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Word painting

Harlap harnesses this well-known technique to help bring out the text. He mostly uses the technique in its typical manner as in m. 65 where the descending line is derived from the text: "Vayered elai" (and let him come down to me). A similar example is David's text in m. 257 "leoff hashamayim" (the fowls of the air) ends on a high F-sharp while the text "ulekhayot haaretz" (and to the wild beasts of the earth) ends on a low E-flat. However, Harlap also uses the technique in a more complex and hidden way, as illustrated in example 3.20; the text is divided as follows:

33 Harlap, interview with the composer
Altos: "uPlishtim omdim el hahar mizeh" (and the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side).

Sopranos: "veYisrael omdim el hahar mizeh" (and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side).

Tenors and Basses: "vehaguy beinehem" (and there was a valley between them)

Representing one side of the mountain is the note F-sharp (Altos), and the other side is represented by C (Sopranos). The basses and tenors end their line on A, which is exactly between the two prior notes F-sharp and C, thus Harlap's music illustrates the two armies and the valley between them. The interval of the tritone helps bring out the dramatic tension of the scene.

Example 3.20 David and Goliath, m. 19
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In example 3.21 the sopranos and altos are given a prolongation of the word "elohim" (God) when it accompanies the soloist (David) who sings from verse 46:

"Vayedu kol haaretz ki yeish Elohim le Yisrael" (all the earth may know that there is a
God in Israel). Thus the meaning of the text comes out in the music, which implies a recognition of the presence of God by a large group.

Example 3.21 *David and Goliath*, mm. 258-264  
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Harlap also uses word painting in the orchestra. The grace notes in the violas in example 3.11 represent Goliath's deep and arrogant laugh.  

**Tempo changes**

Harlap's tempi are derived from the characters in the text. The tempi vary throughout the piece; however, they generally can be summarized accordingly:

**Narrator** – slow and heavy tempo, half note equals 50-60

**Recitative** – quarter equals 50-60

**Characters** – according to the nature and dramatic weight of the character;

- **Goliath** – half note equals 55-60, heavy, marked as *pesante*
- **David** – quarter equals 72-90, light, marked as *Andante con moto e agitare*
- **Saul** – quarter equals 55, marked as *Lento sostenuto*

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[34](#) Harlap, interview with the composer
The basic differences between the character's tempi (light vs. heavy, slow vs. a little faster) are maintained throughout the piece.

**Homophonic vs. polyphonic texture**

The choral texture is mainly homophonic throughout the piece, excluding a few areas, which are slightly more imitative and polyphonic. The reason lies in the text given to the choir, which is of a narrative nature, and the construction of the piece as a Greek drama. For those reasons, a homophonic texture helps bring out the text clearly while maintaining the choir's status as a narrator, which does not take over the drama.

The first time Harlap uses a more polyphonic texture is to help bring out tension before the battle in mm 194-225. However, even here the texture is not extremely polyphonic but mostly a division of the choir into tenors and sopranos versus altos and bass.

Harlap achieves a very strong dramatic effect in mm. 295-297 (Ex. 3.22) when he chooses a polyphonic moment to describe the terror among the Philistines and their fleeing. In mm. 300-303 he chooses a similar texture to describe the Israelites' pursuit of the Philistines, thus connecting the two dramatic moments.
Orchestration

The composition was originally scored for soloists, mixed chorus and piano, and was later orchestrated for strings, flute and a harp.\(^{35}\) The choice of flute and harp is Biblically associated with David. The flute symbolizes David's youth as a shepherd: "...he keepeth the sheep" (King James Bible, Book of Samuel 1 16:11). The harp is the instrument most often associated with King David; "...David took an harp and played with his hand" (King James Bible, Book of Samuel 1 16:23).

\(^{35}\) Harlap, interview with the composer
The orchestration seldom doubles the choir and rarely doubles the soloists. It mostly supplies harmonic support and the dramatic mood. Harlap chooses to double the choir when the choir sings polyphonic texture, in order to emphasize the text.
CHAPTER IV: INTERVIEW WITH AHARON HARLAP

Recorded on December 11th 2013

Tommer: I’d like to start with the commission for the piece. I know that *David and Goliath* was commissioned by New York’s Zamir Choral, but it was never performed by them. I noticed that the piano version is dedicated to Mathew Lazzar and the Zamir Choral but it was actually premiered by Yuval Ben Ozer and the New Vocal Ensemble. I was wondering if you could please elaborate on that.

Aharon: Okay. I’m going to take it step by step. It was commissioned by the Zamir, but the reason it was not performed by them is because they found it too difficult.

And so, the piece was just sitting there, doing nothing. I hadn’t thought about doing it with my choir (the Kfar Sava Chamber Choir) yet. I thought it might be a little bit too difficult for them as well. Then Yuval gave me a call. He was looking for a piece. And I said well, I’ve got this thing hanging around. I want you to come and listen to it. He came and I played it for him, and he liked it. So, he decided to do the premier with piano.

Tommer: That’s when you decided to orchestrate it?
Aharon: I don’t remember exactly when I decided to orchestrate it. It just came to me in a flash, you know, because of the flute and the harp I thought it would probably sound very good. Yes, I orchestrated later, after Yuval had done the premier with the piano. He didn’t do the orchestrated version, at all, just the piano one. I did the piano after him – the piano version. And then I decided to orchestrate it.

Tommer: Is there a reason, why? Why you didn’t decide to orchestrate it right from the start?

Aharon: Because Zamir originally asked for it to be with piano. So that’s the reason I wrote it for the piano, which is a good thing because, after that I could orchestrate it without any problem; straight from the piano into flute harp and strings is no problem. There’s no comparison. Have you heard the piano version? There’s no comparison.

Tommer: I agree.

Aharon: You need that string sound. The strings can carry the sound on… that is very lacking on the piano version where you play a note and that’s it.

Tommer: Besides the flute and the harp, which represent David, any particular reason for this particular orchestration?

Aharon: You mean with strings?

Tommer: I mean just string and not like, for example, percussions.

Aharon: Oh, no, I didn’t think it was necessary for me to make it too bombastic. First of all, I’ve been very practical also, because [it is difficult] in Israel to get a whole orchestra to play this work. Also the forces available, and
my choir for example has only thirty-five people, and I didn't want them to be covered. You know the reality in Israel, to get an orchestra like that together…and where do you get the money to pay for it? In the end, it’s written in the program: "the piece is performed with the support of the 'Music Department in the Ministry of Culture and Sports'" (translated from Hebrew.) And how did it come about? We somehow got to Ashdod [Symphonic Orchestra] and asked them if they were interested in doing the composition. Papian, the conductor, said "okay, we’ll do that." He listened to the piano version that had already been recorded. Actually, that is when I orchestrated it, because I knew I had something to orchestrate for. So, it was a practical thing, I had a 'purpose' (translated from Hebrew). It was then that I thought about the flute and harp, and strings. I didn't want anything more than that [which would] cover the flute and the harp, and also to get a good balance between the flute and the harp; they’re very delicate instruments and to put in something bombastic, it wouldn’t work orchestrally. That’s why I chose only the strings.

**Tommer:** I was wondering if you could share with me your composing process. Do you sit at the piano?

**Aharon:** I think in my case, it’s like, maybe once in a blue moon I have this great idea or this idea that pops into my head in the middle of the night and I write it down but that usually doesn’t happen. I sit down at the piano and I start. First of all, I have to know what I want to do; what I want to write. Do I want to write a piece for a flute or do I want to write a symphony or
an opera? If I have a text, for instance, let's [talk about] *David and Goliath*. I read the text and I go through commentaries to make sure that I know exactly what's happening in the text and the side text, the subtext, so that I can get my musical ideas from that, like in *Akeidat Yitzchak* (The Binding of Isaac) or *Bat Yftach* (Jephthah's Daughter). I want to know all the things that are involved with the text and commentaries, then the musical ideas pop up from the text. For instance, [plays the beginning of *Bat Yftach*], that’s a leitmotif which occurs throughout the piece. I then had to find out what would exemplify, for instance, the tremendous sorrow of the father, when he finds out that his daughter comes to greet him.

**Tommer:** You are talking about Jephthah's Daughter?

**Aharon:** Yes. Just to give you an example. So that dissonance creates that (the sorrow) and I use it when he (Jephthah) makes his vow. Do you know the piece?

**Tommer:** Yes, I sang it.

**Aharon:** The leitmotif combines the sorrow with her tremendous belief in God and positive intensity knowing that he has already made the vow and has to go through with it. She is a very strong and aristocratic type. That’s why I use a horn for instance, and that rhythmic motif together with that intervallic motif are repeated throughout the piece. Now here in *David and Goliath* - and you hit the nail right on the head with what you talked [in your analysis] about modes. It is actually a minor scale. It’s a harmonic minor scale moving up, with the C-sharp, the tritone, to give it more dissonance.
So the basic chord is the G, with a C-sharp, which doesn’t belong to the scale…

**Tommer:** And also clashes with E flat?

**Aharon:** Yes, so I tried to get as much dissonance as possible, but one that makes sense. The opening motive is repeated in many other situations, like when David is fighting the bear or whenever Goliath is mentioned. The minor and major seconds are also intervallic motives, which I use throughout the piece. So that’s how I started. Because of the word "Vayaasfu" (gathered), there had to be some kind of movement so you could see how they gather. Something is moving there, and not static. Okay? So that’s how I began.

Here, for instance, this motive is on the word "milkhama" (war).

**Tommer:** Are you talking about measure four?

**Aharon:** Yes, on the word "milkhama" (war) you know I used that 16th note to show the word "milkhama" – war - which is very intense and needs some kind of rhythmic vitality to give the meaning to the text. So if you ask what is my composition, or how I go about it, the text brings me to that.

Now [in your analysis] you're talking about the minor and the major chords, and how I moved from one to another; measure five is all in minor chords that are moving up by minor thirds. That becomes a motif too which I also used in the bass afterwards as a harmonic progression. The whole beginning is minor in its concept because of the war. It’s not a happy time, and so everything is minorized. Then again I bring in the Philistine motif with the orchestra, and in bar thirteen we have the minor
chord which also becomes a motif that I use in various places throughout the piece.

Tommer: It also outlines diminished chords.

Aharon: Yes, because you go from C-sharp to G, which gives the tritone. And you asked me before about parallel motion… yes, I do that a lot. Why do I do that? I just like it.

Tommer: I like it too. That's why I asked about it.

Aharon: You also asked me do I know if anybody else has done that. No. I don’t. In bar thirteen, again the word "milkhama" (war) is on triplets and not on ordinary rhythm. Earlier it was a dotted eighth with the sixteenth, and here it’s a triplet, which brings up the word "milkhama" which needs that intensity. Anything associated with the war or the Philistines gets that rhythmic motif. In your analysis you wrote that in bar nineteen there's one group on one side, and another group on the other side, with the valley in the middle. I didn’t think about that.

Tommer: You must be kidding; I thought it was so beautiful.

Aharon: I once read about someone who introduced a novelist, saying how great the novel was with the use of metaphors, juxtapositions, etc. Later, when the author of the novel came up to speak he said: "I didn’t know I was so clever." So, in bar 19 it is nice what you said, but I just wanted the contrast with sound, that’s all. I didn’t think of one group here, another group there and the valley in the middle. It is just a contrast with the sound because
they are in three different places. They are on one side and then in the middle is the valley.

**Tommer:** It worked very well, that’s exactly in the middle; between F-sharp and C, you got A. F-sharp is the ending note for the Altos and C is the ending note for the Sopranos, right in the middle you’ve got A.

**Aharon:** I never thought of that, but it’s a lower A. It sounds below the F-sharp.

**Tommer:** Well, that also works very well with the word painting, because it actually is lower; it’s between the two tops of the mountains.

**Aharon:** I didn’t think about that either, but if you want to use it, that's okay with me.

One of the composition problems is how to go on? So I take a note that’s there, for instance, the A at the end of bar 19, and I go up a tritone in the next bar, because this is the motive for Goliath. It’s like pedal point. I imagined what he would look like? He is a big man, and that’s also where I got the tempo from. When we hear that tritone-pedal, it’s kind of word painting. The fast grace notes represent him laughing at everyone; he is very arrogant, so that’s why I used that. It is not there just out of whim. I remember thinking, how do I describe this Goliath? It was all a joke to him, especially when he saw David with just a slingshot. That’s why I used this embellishment there, just to give that effect. The melody in bar 20 has minor and major seconds that I use a lot. We got B-flat and C to B, which are major and minor seconds. On the words "Goliat Shmo" (named
Goliath) I used the tritone together with a major-second dissonance between E-flat and C-sharp.

Now, in your analysis you mentioned something about moving up the scale….

**Tommer:** Before that, can I ask you about the whole tone scale in bar thirty?

**Aharon:** Why did I do that? I need to think about that?

**Tommer:** Don't worry I’ll come up with a very creative explanation [laughs].

**Aharon:** I think I did it for a contrast, not to always stay within the same scale. It is only a description and has nothing to do with the war. I even wondered whether I should have the text in or not, because it has nothing to do with the plot. The description of what kind of armor he was using is a little bit irrelevant. I mean, we know that he was very well prepared for the battle with David. So I left it. Why did I choose a whole tone scale? Let me see…

**Tommer:** Well, to me it works, because it sounds big; the intervals are bigger.

**Aharon:** Maybe that’s what I was thinking at the time, I don’t remember. It does make sense, so, yes it could be.

**Tommer:** That brings me to measure 37; in my analysis I assumed that you chose a second inversion to show the great size of Goliath, because in second inversion each interval is bigger than other inversions.

**Aharon:** Yes.

**Tommer:** I will just say for the record that you’re nodding.
Aharon: I think it’s just because I wanted a more open sound there. I just like the sound, but you could use your explanation if you want… Do you know my Shiru L’Adonay (Sing unto the Lord)?

Tommer: Yes.

Aharon: Somebody did an analysis of that. He wrote that the dissonance signifies an impending doom in the Middle East [laughs]. I never thought about that, but okay you are welcome to use it. I once asked Yehezkel Braun about Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs) that he wrote and he said, “I wrote it.” He didn't remember why he did so and so. With me, I guess I just liked the sound of the major sixth but it is a good interpretation relating to his size, and if you want to use it, that’s fine.

Tommer: I will. Thanks [laughs].

Aharon: Okay, but did you notice that the ostinato remains with the same intensity all the way through? Why do you think I kept the ostinato going?

Tommer: Well, I thought because of the text; it’s all the same section. It’s all about Goliath.

Aharon: It is because he is still walking. Do you know where he stops? Only on the word "vayaamod (stood) so until that place, he’s walking all the time.

Okay, and I continue. In bar 46, here I changed the chords…

Tommer: Again that’s that whole tone scale?

Aharon: Again, I just wanted a contrast and more intensity. More intensity as he was progressing towards David. Okay, and when he gets there, we have a couple of laughs before he comes to a stand. It’s like… I imagined what
happens when he sees David. Do you know why I wrote *senza rall* in bar 53?

**Tommer:** Because he is still walking.

**Aharon:** I imagined him walking; so he walks, looks at David, laughs and he stands. So, it’s kind of word painting, you can call it, okay? I then stay on the A. It’s at that moment where he stops and he looks. There we have the dissonance of minor seconds again followed by the tritone. The rhythmic motif of the triplet with the sixteenth note at the end is the same as I used in *Bat Yftach* (Jephthah's Daughter). Here, in bar 57, it brings out the intensity of what he’s saying, the arrogance.

Okay. I’m sorry if I don’t have all the answers that you’re expecting.

**Tommer:** You’re doing very well.

**Aharon:** Okay.

**Tommer:** I think you’ll be getting an A at the end.

**Aharon:** In bar 59 we have the same motif as we had at the beginning, okay? It’s inserted all the time. Here, it is the inversion of it. So, I’m playing around with that material and here I also juxtapose two elements at the same time: the half step (in the upper voice) plus the original motif (in the lower voices) as in the beginning. That rhythmic motif that we talked about is repeated all the time to show Goliath's arrogance and the haughtiness, except here there is a diminution of the motif but it’s always there; it’s hard to tell that it’s there but it is.

**Tommer:** That’s all in the strings, right?
Aharon: That’s in the strings, but you see how the text brings me to all this. I mean it’s a little bit more difficult when you’re writing a symphony; it’s a different composition-technique completely, because you don’t have a text. It therefore must be invented somehow. I work as kind of a serial technique with nothing conventional in the harmonies. I never use conventional harmonies. I start in one key and I end in another. Here I’m starting in a…

Tommer: …in G-minor.

Aharon: And I ended in F-sharp major. I mean there’s absolutely no relationship between the two.

Tommer: I did notice though that the keys that you go through in the piece are sort of related. Obviously F-sharp major is very remote from G minor, but you do use the notes B-flat and E-flat a lot, even F-sharp and C-sharp are also structured notes in G minor.

Aharon: Well, I must say I did think about that. I don’t think in tonalities at all, although it sounds very tonal.

Tommer: Yes, I mentioned that in my paper.

Aharon: I don’t, because there’s nothing conventional about what I’m doing here. You can’t say, “Oh, he’s got one-four or two-five-one or second inversion of the dominant, or secondary dominant of the seventh degree. I don’t use those. I stay away from it as much as possible and the reason is because it has been done before and done well. I have to find my own kind of language and so that’s how I found it; through this kind of process. I don’t
know if you know any of my orchestral works, but they have a completely different language than my Biblical works. I was able to work on these kinds of motifs with all the Biblical pieces because it lent itself to that; to using modes and motifs that repeat themselves. In orchestral pieces you have to deal with form, which I do.

**Tommer:** Well, just one question if I may: you’re talking about your Biblical works and I wanted to know if there’s any particular reason why you choose to compose Biblical texts? Is it from religious reasons?

**Aharon:** My dad was a 'Mohel' (circumciser) a Hebrew teacher and a 'Hasid' (religious Jew). My son is now a 'Breslav Hassidic Jew' and I believe in God. Every Friday night we light the candles and when I do go to synagogue I always feel… in another sphere, and it has a lot to do with my father and my association with him - mostly going to Schul (synagogue) with him. It’s kind of a throwback into my roots and to my family roots, because the Harlaps have a long line of religious rabbis and cantors, so it’s there. It’s in my blood, and I thought as a musician, that’s the best way I could bring that feeling out, especially in dramatic works. That’s where I’m at home as you know. That’s why I choose these things because dramatically, it’s something that I feel at home with. It doesn’t necessarily have to be tragic, but dramatic, and that’s the reason I chose Biblical themes, because of that whole thing I just described to you. I feel I am at home with the texts of the Bible and as a kid I used to read, and I didn’t know what I was reading, because I didn’t know Hebrew that well until I
came to Israel, and then it just attracted me here. I just felt that this is what I should be doing. I’ve composed to non-religious literature as well, but I was able to find out my kind of musical language with these pieces.

**Tommer:** That brings me to the ending of the piece. You chose to end it with two Psalm verses and I was wondering what made you choose those exact ones?

**Aharon:** Take a look. What is the reason David has won the battle? Belief, belief in god. "Gam ki elekh begei tzalmavet lo ira rah kiata imadi" (Psalm 23; V.4: though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me). "Valley," that’s where the battle took place, in Ayalon Valley, so the verse fits perfectly. That’s by chance. It didn’t have to be this way. It’s metaphoric. But it is because of David's great belief in God that he won in the battle against Goliath. I could have ended it with the chasing and killing of the Philistines, but the way I ended it came to me as a stroke of luck. The reason that they (the Israelites) won the battle, is given in bar 258 with verse 46 (Samuel I, chapter 17) "Vayedu kol haaretz ki yesh elohim leIsrael" (and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel). The chords that I used here, I repeat in the final chorale. All of a sudden we go from the minor to major. It becomes positive energy. It starts off minor and immediately goes into major in bar 259. By the way, in bar 261 I go into minor but it sounds major because of the G-sharp. It wouldn’t sound right on a plain major chord.
The high C-sharp in bar 262 is because of the word "elohim" (God). I always do that; whenever I mention the word “God” the line always goes up. So that's another example of word painting. In addition, the leaning on the C-sharp, then going back to the B, gives it a positive effect.

Tommer: Because of your contrast…well, switching from major to minor. It surprised me that on the word "elohim" (God), the chord is minor. I expected it to be major.

Aharon: It’s a special chord because it doesn't sound like minor; it sounds like something you can’t define. In major it sounds terrible, so I changed it; by using the G-sharp you can’t define the chord. It’s a half-diminished G-sharp chord. It’s just the perfect sound that I wanted there. You know, there are some pieces that are very sad and that end in major without you realizing it. They still sound sad. It depends on the surrounding – what’s coming before and what’s coming after.

I didn’t finish telling you….you asked me about why I used the two Psalm verses

Tommer: Oh, right.

Aharon: And the first verse is clear. It’s the same chord that I used every time David mentioned God. I don’t know if you’ve noticed that.

Tommer: And it is the same melody as in bar 258…

Aharon: That’s right. This time, I changed it because the text does not have the word "elohim" (God) in it, so it's different now. What did I do there? It’s a minor chord but I treated it differently. The A gives it more dissonance. I
I don’t know if I mentioned this but in bar 320 on the word "ra" (evil) the embellishment going from A to D-sharp is that impending evil that lurks; it was there when David fought the bear, or with Goliath. So, the Psalm verse may sound positive, but there is an ever-lurking evil there, always intimidating. Without it, it also sounds very nice but it lacks any kind of… foreboding, is what I was looking for.

You’ve listened to it right, and do you remember that effect? Did you think about it at the time?

**Tommer:** I didn’t associate it with evil, as you said.

**Aharon:** Yes. It's all positive, but he is reminding us of the time that he fought with the bear and the lion. With Goliath it's the same thing. So there is always that impending doom in the background, even though God is with us, there is always something….

**Tommer:** What about the second Psalm verse?

**Aharon:** I wanted to bring in the whole chorus for the final chorale, praising God – hope in Israel. "Vayachil Israel el Adonay" (Psalm 131; V.3: Israel, put your hope in the Lord). Okay? Because he – God - is the one responsible for David overcoming the evil. David himself sings it accompanied by the harp, as he was known to have played the harp.

**Aharon:** The chorus comes in in one other place before; in bar 170 they are a part of David, of what he sings: "Adonay asher hitzilani" (The LORD who rescued me). For the first time until that point, the chorus is not a narrator anymore but sings together with David… The second time is at the end;
there, they represent the people of Israel, together with David. "Vayachil Israel el Adonay" (Psalm 131; V.3: Israel, put your hope in the Lord). It was a good way, I thought, to end the piece, rather than to have just David, but I wanted all the people of Israel to join him, representing the hope in Israel, in God. And that's how I thought it should end rather than with bloodshed and running after the Philistines and killing them. Yes, I thought that that was the right way to end this.

Tommer: I agree. I wanted to ask you what performances did David and Goliath have so far?

Aharon: Well, not that many. A couple of times Yuval performed it with the Vocal Ensemble. I can't give dates if you're looking for dates.

Tommer: Oh, no. I'm just talking about how many performances-- so Yuval did two, then you did one…

Aharon: Two or three times.

Tommer: ….One with the piano version--

Aharon: And then for my seventieth birthday, which was here in Kfar Sava, Yuval conducted it with the Kibbutz Artzi Choir and my choir together. There were over a hundred people there. It was nice with the big choir. It should be done with a big choir but [unfortunately] it was done with piano. The only performance of the orchestrated version is the one I conducted in Ashdod. Then, I did the piano version once in the Tzilim Bamidbar Festival (Sounds of the Desert), artistically directed by Michael Wolpe, and that was it. Oh, and I did it on a program that you saw on YouTube;
that was performed here in Kfar Sava with piano and just with my choir. So, there were about seven performances.

Tommer: So, you premiered the orchestrated version….

Aharon: Yes.

Tommer: Now, that brings me to my next question. As a composer who is also a conductor, generally speaking, would you prefer to conduct your own works or would you rather have someone else with a new fresh interpretation do it?

Aharon: Why not? I don't prefer to conduct my own works. I mean, you know my association with Stanley [Sperber] all through the years. When he was conducting the Rinat Choir, I wrote for them and he conducted it. I always loved the way he conducts, especially choral pieces. I never had any problems about his interpretation because it always seemed right to me. It's not that I don't like conducting my own works, but I'm open to other interpretations. Sometimes, I sit in on rehearsals when other conductors perform my orchestral works and I have to tell them "no" it's too quick or too slow and perhaps they're not paying attention to the ritardandos or the little things that I wrote. I write everything down. In Israel, unfortunately, the reality is that there's never enough rehearsal time. And all these things are not paid attention to. But -- if it's done well… Gabor Hollerung for instance, the Hungarian conductor, conducted a lot of my works. I'm very happy with his interpretations.
Tommer: Do you have any tips that you can give a conductor or a choir trying to perform *David and Goliath*?

Aharon: Find another profession [laughs].

Tommer: Like for example, you mentioned a big choir...

Aharon: Look, it can be performed by a small choir, too, but I think it's the kind of proportions as you need in *Akeidat Yitzchak* (The Binding of Isaac) and *Bat Yftach* (Jephthah's Daughter); I think you need a big sound. I would like nothing better for it to be performed….do you know The Dale Warland Singers?

Tommer: No. Is that a minus one for me?

Aharon: No, but I want you to listen to what his choir sounds like in the United States. You would not believe that there's not one Jew in the choir, nobody knows Hebrew but it sounds absolutely fantastic…What were you asking me?

Tommer: You think I was listening? [laughs].

Aharon: Oh, never mind. I won't find it….

Tommer: I was asking if you have any tips for…

Aharon: …To perform *David and Goliath*?

Tommer: Yes, because you conducted the orchestrated version I was wondering if you encountered any particular problems.

Aharon: Oh, yes there are a lot, especially in the recitatives.

Tommer: Do you conduct every syllable?
Aharon: No, no. For instance, in bar 19 I would do this: I hold my right hand; then I am using only my left hand to bring in each section. The minute you move your right hand you are already in the next bar. It is very tricky for any conductor to do this, but that's what it is. So, as the old saying goes, you need to have the score in your head and not your head in the score.

But, I think that only the recitatives are problematic in the piece.

Tommer: Aharon, I just want to say it was a pleasure.

Aharon: Well, I don't know if I helped you here, Tommer.

Tommer: I don't know either but we'll know in the near future [laughs].
CHAPTER V: PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS AND SUMMARY

*David and Goliath* by Aharon Harlap is a deep and dramatic Biblical cantata on the Hebrew text of Samuel I, chapter 17. Although its challenges and demanding melodies rule out non-professional choirs, the piece offers an extremely effective and rewarding experience to accomplished choirs who include it in their repertoire. Interestingly, the composer did not choose to accommodate the performance level of the choir that commissioned the piece and did not lower his musical demands. Consequently the piece was performed much later when an opportunity arose. It was successfully performed several times by different groups, followed by a performance of a new and fully orchestrated version of the piece. This study has focused on the orchestrated version, providing a musical analysis together with a guide to the composer's techniques and his complete biography.

*David and Goliath* calls for SATB choir, tenor or mezzo-soprano, baritone and bass soloists (for the roles of David, Saul, and Goliath respectively), flute, harp, and strings. The piece can be performed with a chamber choir, but, although it is not mentioned in the score, it is better performed with a larger "force" in order to achieve a fuller and darker sound, as stated by the composer in his interview. The choir's part is mainly homophonic and functions mainly as a narrator, often given accompanied recitative-like phrases which present a challenge for the conductor. Harlap, who also conducted the piece, explains in the interview that his method of conducting the
recitatives was to hold his right hand on the beat and only move his left hand to bring in each section. He warns that moving the right hand indicates a shift to the next bar and therefore, the hand should be held very steady on the beat in order not to confuse the ensemble.

At the end of the piece the choir turns from being a narrator to being the hero, when given the prayer-like chorale with the text from Psalm 131; V.3. This fact gets reinforced in m.339 with a very short and surprising soprano solo coming from the choir for the first time, and closing the piece. The solo parts are not too demanding in their range, but Harlap's dissonant and disjunct melodies, which are rarely doubled in the orchestra, call for accomplished singers both as soloists and in the choir. Although the orchestra does not double the choir, it always supplies the harmonic support needed, which helps to eliminate intonation problems. At the end of the piece, the orchestra fades and leaves only the harp to support both the choir and David's solo part. This is a very delicate moment and although short, it might present intonation problems, especially since the harp's dynamic is marked PP and P. The conductor might want to take this fact under consideration when he chooses where to place the harp on the stage. Since soloists are usually more accomplished singers than the average choir singer, it is this writer's suggestion that the harp should be placed closer to the choir (rather than the soloists).

Harlap's music is not atonal but it stretches tonality to its limits. He writes in well-known modes but does not utilize traditional harmonic note hierarchy. His unique harmonic language contrasts a thick dissonant texture with parallel triads. This study puts *David and Goliath*'s harmonic language in the context of some of Harlap's
other choral works, such as *Jephtha's Daughter* and *Akidat Yitzchak* (Isaac's Binding). Harlap's use of parallel triads contributes sweetness and transparency to the very dissonant and dramatic mood of all three works. The tritone is the most important interval in *David and Goliath* and is used extensively throughout the piece. It is strongly associated with Goliath and helps paint the composer's image of Goliath's enormous size and heavy walk. In addition, the end of the Biblical story in the piece outlines a harmonic progression of a tritone: from the opening G minor to C Sharp minor (m. 295).

*David and Goliath* is through composed and has only one movement but many different sections which are derived from the text and differ by tempi and orchestration colors. Some of the Biblical text was removed in order to maintain fluency in the dramatic story. Each tempo marked in the score is associated with one of the leading characters and is derived from his leitmotif. The tempo relationships have no mathematical connection between them and are sudden. As so, they should be memorized by the conductor in order to successfully present each character.

The transliteration of the Hebrew to English is consistent and clear. However, it requires an understanding of the Hebrew pronunciation, especially of the eighth letter in the Hebrew alphabet which is positioned in the back of the throat with the tongue pushed towards the soft palate. It is transliterated in the piece as "kha" (see ex. 3.1).

This research has provided a guide to the composer's techniques in the piece. Harlap's musical decisions in *David and Goliath* are inspired solely from the text and its structure. For example, Harlap's use of leitmotifs is consistent throughout the piece and derived from the appearance of the characters in the text. Harlap mentions in the

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interview that in his choral works he often leans on the text for making musical decisions, while in his orchestral works he is more committed to the form and the harmonic system (for example, serialism). The analysis of *David and Goliath* has opened a window to the style of this highly acclaimed composer. However, since Harlap is such a prolific and versatile composer, further research is needed to contrast the composer's choral works with his orchestral ones. Such analysis will provide a deeper comparative understanding of Harlap's compositional language regarding essential elements such as texture, tonality, and motif development.
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Unpublished sources

Unpublished program notes courtesy of the composer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text as chosen by the composer (English transliteration)</th>
<th>Translation from King James Bible</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vayaasfu Plishtim et makhaneihem lamilkhama,</td>
<td>1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, (and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim). *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veshaul veish Yisraeil neesfu vayakhanu beeimek Haeila, vayaarkhu milkhama likrat Plishtim.</td>
<td>2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uPlishtim omdim el hahar mizeh veYisraeil omdim el hahar mizeh, vehaguy beineihem.</td>
<td>3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayeitzei ish habeinayim mimakhanot Plishtim Golyot shmo, migat, govho sheis amot vazaret.</td>
<td>4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vekhova nekhoshet al rosho veshiryon kaskasim hu lavush; umishkal hashiron khameishet alafim shkalim nekhoshet.</td>
<td>5 And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umitzkhat nekhoshet al raglay vekhidon nekhoshet bein kteifav.</td>
<td>6 And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayaamod vayikra el maarkhot Yisrael vayomer lahem Lama teitzu laarokh milkhma? halo anokhi haPlishti veatem avadim leShaul? Bru lakhem ish veyeireid eilai</td>
<td>³And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Im yukhal lehilakheim iti vehikani, vehayinu lakhem laavadim: veim ani ukhal lo, vehikitiv viyitem lanu laavadim, vaavadetem otanu</td>
<td>⁹If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayisma Shaul vekol Yisrael et divrei haPlishti haeileh vayeikhatu vayiru meod</td>
<td>¹¹When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer David el haanasim haomdim imo leimor, mi haPlishti heareil hazeh kikheiref maarkhot Elohim khayim ?</td>
<td>²⁶And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, (What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? For) who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayishmeu hadvarim asher diber David vayagidu lifnei Shaul vayikakheihu.</td>
<td>³¹And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer David el Shaul, al yipol lev adam alav avdekha yeilekh venilkham im haPlishti hazeh.</td>
<td>³²And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer Shaul el David, lo tukhal lalekhet el haPlishti hazeh lehilakheim imo: ki naar ata vehu ish milkhama mineurav.</td>
<td>³³And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer David el Shaul , roeh haya avdekhha yeeliv batzon uva haari veet hadov venasah she meihaeider:</td>
<td>³⁶And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vayatzati akharav vehikitiv vehitzalti mipiv vayakom alai, vehekhezakti bizkano, vehikitiv vehimitiv.</td>
<td>³⁷And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew Text</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gam et haari gam hadov hika avdekha: vehaya haPlishti haareil hazeh keakhad meihem, ki kheiref maarkhot Elohim khayim.</td>
<td>Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer David, Adonai asher hitzilan miyad haari umiyad hadov hu yatzileini miyad haPlishti hazeh. Vayomer Shaul el David, leikh va Adonai yiyeh imkha.</td>
<td>David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayikakh maklo beyado, vayivkhar lo khamisha khalukei avanim min hanakhhal, yayasem otam bikhli haroim asher lo uvyayalkut vekalo veyado: vaigash el haPlishti.</td>
<td>And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayeilekh haPlishti holeikh vekarev el David;</td>
<td>And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; (and the man that bare the shield went before him).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayabeit haPlishti vayireh et David, vayivzeihu: ki haya naar, veadmoni, im yefei mareh.</td>
<td>And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer haPlishti el David, hakelev anokhi ki ata va eilai bamaklot? Vayekalei haPlishti et David beilohav.</td>
<td>And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer haPlishti el David, lekha eilai, veethnah et bsarkha leoff hashamayim, ulvehemot hasadeh.</td>
<td>And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayomer David el haPlishti, at ba eilai bekherev, uvkahanit, uvkidon:vaanokhi va eilekha besheim Adonai tzvaot, elohei maarkhot Yisrael asher kheirafta.</td>
<td>Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayom hazeh yesagerkha Adonai vehikitikha vahasiroti et roshkha meialekha; venatati peger makhanei Plishtim hayom hazeh leoff hashamayim ulekhayot haaretz;</td>
<td>This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew Text</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehaya kikam haPlishti vayeilekh, vayikrav likrat David, vayemaher David, vayarotz hamaarakha likrat haPlishti</td>
<td>And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayishlakh David et yadi el hakeli vayikakh misham even, vaykala, vayakh et haPlishti el mitzkho, vayipol al panav artza.</td>
<td>And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, (that the stone sunk into his forehead) and he fell upon his face to the earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayarotz David vayamod el haPlishti, vayikakh et kharbo, vayishlefa mitaera, vaymoteteihu vayikhrot et rosh. Vayiru haPlishtim ki meit giboram, vayanusu.</td>
<td>Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayakumu anshei Yisrael vihuda vayariu, veyirdefu et haPlishtim ad boakha guy, vead shaarei Ekron. Vayiplu khalelei Plishtim bederekh shaarayim, vead Gat, vead Ekron.</td>
<td>And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gam ki eileikh begei tzalmavet lo ira rah ki ata imadi shivtekha umishn'tekha heima yenakhamuni.</td>
<td>Psalm 23: 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakheil Yisrael el Adonai meiata vead olam</td>
<td>Psalm 131:3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and forever.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* The text in brackets was omitted by the composer.
APPENDIX B

Programs
Subscription Series 2009-2010

Concert No.4 “David & Goliath”

Conductor: Vag Papian
Soloist: Haran Melzer, Cello

Chamber choir “Kfar Saba,”
music director: Aharon Harlap
Two Orchestras together on one stage:
The Ashdod Symphony with the Israel Chamber Orchestra

Programme:
Aharon Harlap - Cantata “David & Goliath”
C.Saint-Saëns - Cello Concerto No.1 In A Major
INTERMISSION
P.I.Tchaikovsky - Symphony No.6 “Pathétique”

Adagio. Allegro non troppo. Andante. Allegro vivo
Allegro molto vivace. Adagio lamentoso

24.03.10 – Wednesday, Yad Lebanon—Ashdod, at 8.30 pm
25.03.10 – Thursday, Yad Lebanon—Ashdod, at 8.30 pm