

# ALAN HOVHANNES

## SHALIMAR

SUITE FOR PIANO

Opus 177

*duration: 11 minutes*

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### C. F. PETERS CORPORATION

NEW YORK

LONDON

FRANKFURT

# SHALIMAR

## Suite for Piano

1. Fantasy
2. First Interlude
3. Jhala of the Fountains
4. Second Interlude
5. Jhala March
6. Rain Jhala
7. Third Interlude
8. Jhala of the Waterfall

Shalimar, Opus 177, was composed in Kashmir during October 1959, after visiting the Mogul gardens and many beautiful mountains in the Himalayan regions. The fountains no longer gush forth their music and beauty in the Shalimar gardens, but the memory of their sound and visual wonder among the great Chenar trees, with steep, rugged mountains rising in the background, was in my imagination and I summed up the lost scenes during the days of Mogul grandeur. The form of the Suite, with its interludes for borders, suggests the carpet-like design of Mogul gardens.

Alan Hovhaness

Dedicated to Nuru Hovhanness

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# SHALIMAR

Suite for Piano

## 1. Fantasy

ALAN HOVHANNES, Op. 177

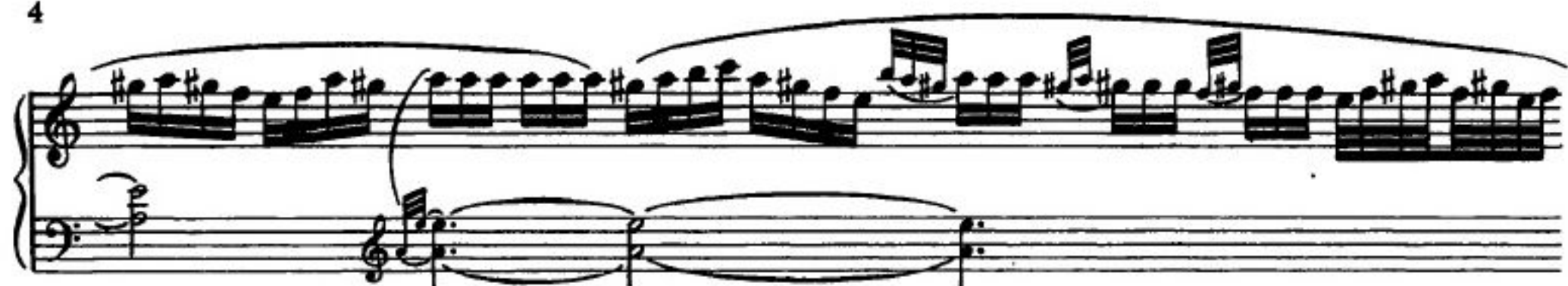
$\text{♩} = 92-100, \text{♩} = \text{♩}$







This page of musical notation consists of six systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation is highly detailed, featuring numerous slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a complex melodic line in the treble with many slurs and ties, and a bass line with sustained chords. The second system continues the melodic development with more slurs and ties. The third system features a more active bass line with moving eighth notes. The fourth system shows a continuation of the melodic line with some rests in the bass. The fifth system has a more active bass line with moving eighth notes. The sixth system concludes the page with a final melodic phrase and a sustained bass line.







♩. = 108, ♪ = ♩





## 2. First Interlude

 $\text{♩} = 120, \text{♩} = \text{♩}$ 

The musical score for '2. First Interlude' is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 120$  and the key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The melody is primarily in the right hand, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with sustained chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained bass note in the left hand.

## 3. Jhala of The Fountains

 $\text{♩} = 112$ ,  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ Hold Pedal into repetition

## 4. Second Interlude

 $\text{♩} = 138, \text{♩} = \text{♩}$ 

The musical score for '4. Second Interlude' is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 138$ , and the key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The score begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The first system features a melodic line in the right hand with a long slur and a bass line that enters in the second measure. The second system continues the melodic development with various slurs and ties. The third system shows a more active right hand with eighth-note patterns. The fourth system features a complex melodic line with many slurs and ties. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final melodic flourish in the right hand and a sustained bass line.



## 5. Jhala March

 $\text{♩} = 116-126$ 

The musical score for "5. Jhala March" is written in 2/4 time with a tempo of 116-126 beats per minute. The piece is in G major and consists of five systems of piano accompaniment. The first system begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score is characterized by a driving, rhythmic melody in the right hand, often using eighth and sixteenth notes, and a steady bass line in the left hand. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the fifth system.



## 6. Rain Jhala

 $\text{♩} = 116 \text{ or } 138, \text{♩} = \text{♩}$ *pp sempre pedale*

8va bassa.....

8va bassa.....

8va bassa.....

8va bassa.....

8va bassa.....

8va bassa.....



8va bassa.....:

8va bassa.....:

8va bassa.....:

8va bassa.....:

8va bassa.....:

8va bassa.....:

.....:

8va bassa.....:

## 7. Third Interlude

$\text{♩} = 116$

pp

This musical score for '7. Third Interlude' is written for piano in 4/4 time. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 116. The first system consists of five measures, with the first measure marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The second system contains five measures, and the third system contains five measures, ending with a double bar line. The melody is primarily in the right hand, featuring various note values and rests, while the left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment.

## 8. Jhala of The Waterfall

$\text{♩} = 112$   
gva.....

*f*

8.....

8.....

This musical score for '8. Jhala of The Waterfall' is written for piano in 3/4 time. It starts with a tempo marking of quarter note = 112 and a 'gva' (glissando) instruction. The first system has four measures, with the first measure marked '*f*' (forte). The second and third systems each contain five measures. The piece is characterized by a continuous, rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, while the right hand plays a more melodic line. The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of the third system.



8.....

*p*

8.....

*pp*

8.....

*cresc.* *f*

8.....

*p* *pp*

8.....

*f*

8.....



Virgil Thomson offered an extremely perceptive estimate of the talents of Alan Hovhaness when he wrote in the New York Herald Tribune on February 8, 1947:

"He writes in the early Christian, the medieval and the modern Armenian techniques, possibly even a little in the pre-Christian manner of that ancient and cultivated people. He observes the ancient rules and imitates with modern violins a sizeable selection of near-Eastern stringed instruments. He even extends the oriental grammar of composition to include, as it may well have done in Greek times, held notes against which florid melodies expand at ease and even quintal counterpoint.

"It remains oriental and classical, nevertheless, in structure. The music is at times strophic in phraseology and emotionally continuous, never climactic. Each piece is like a long roll of hand-made wall paper. Its motionless quality is a little hypnotic. There is resemblance here, too, to the early ceremonial pieces of Erik Satie—the 'Mass For The Poor', the 'Prelude To The Heroic Gate of Heaven', and the Rosicrucian Fanfares. Its expressive function is predominantly religious, ceremonial, incantatory, its spiritual content of the purest. It is oriental from the right side of the railway track.

"For everyone's pleasure—and indeed Hovhaness' work is not hard for everyone to like—the high quality of this music, the purity of its inspiration, is evidenced by the extreme beauty of its melodic material (which is original material, not collected folklore) and in the perfect sweetness of taste that it leaves in the mouth. There is no vulgarity in it, nothing meretricious, silly, easy or of low intent. It brings delight to the ear and pleasure to the thought. For all its auditory complexity—for ornateness is of its essence—it is utterly simple in feeling, pure in spirit and high-minded. And for Western ears it is thoroughly refreshing. Among all our American contributions to musical art, which are many, it is one of the most curious and original, without leaning at any point on ignorance, idiosyncrasy or personal charm."

The music of Alan Hovhaness has developed richly in the eleven years since Mr. Thomson penned this tribute and yet it is still essentially serviceable in pin-pointing the strangely beautiful, individual gift of this composer. One or two points no longer seem accurate—as, for example, the estimate that Mr. Hovhaness' music is "never climactic". Mr. Hovhaness has moved on from there, but the overall approach noted by Mr. Thomson remains the same.

The composer's "orientalism" (in no way to be confused with the term so often applied to the techniques of many Russian musicians from Glinka on) has no quality of faddism about it. To begin with, it is part of his heritage through his Armenian father. (He was born in Somerville, Massachusetts, where his father was a chemistry professor. His mother was of Scottish extraction.) Although he was raised in a thoroughly American background and even resisted, as a child, whatever attempts his father made to help him identify with his cultural legacy, Mr. Hovhaness eventually came to it as his love of old music, art, and architecture developed antiquarian tastes. His studies of ancient Armenian (and later other near-Eastern, and then Eastern) culture were given impetus when he became organist in Boston's Armenian church and was exposed to the occasionally ageless modes and monody of traditional liturgical Armenian music. Then he began to learn a bit of the Armenian language (he is still not really proficient in it or really deeply interested to be so). He found within the language a repository of words which seemed in a sort of symbolic-poetic fashion to represent the spirit of the music and the culture which he most admires. Thus, words like "Lousadzak"—"The Coming Of Light"—and "Khaldis"—"God Of The Universe"—are attached to his music in what he has termed an acknowledgment of an influence.

The "orientalism" was a hard-won, carefully-thought-out expression, too. Mr. Hovhaness was trained in music in Boston in the usual strict, academic fashion. He studied piano with Adelaide Proctor and Heinrich Gebhard, composition at the Conservatory under Frederick Converse. By the early "Thirties" (when he was in his early twenties), he had already composed an impressive body of music which had drawn not a little admiration in Boston music circles. His spiritual mentor seemed to be Sibelius and his music supposedly was marked by "a pronounced Finnish accent". He traveled off to Finland at one point and

after his return seemed even more destined to become something of "the American Sibelius". And, then he took serious stock of himself, undoubtedly aided in his decision by his growing interest in Eastern culture. He decided to destroy all of his music up to that time—a difficult decision, one imagines, since this material included no less than two ambitious symphonies and several full-length operas, over a thousand works in all. The destruction was ruthless and complete; little trace of this music exists now.

Then began the serious study of Oriental styles and techniques, the experimentation within these styles and techniques, and the attempt to fuse them with certain traditional forms of our own music. There was necessary, too, a period of "digestion", in which the materia of oriental music could be absorbed and blended so that, say, a mode from Armenian sources might be blended with a rhythmical structure from Indian sources for working within a classical western canonic form. Mr. Hovhaness' success at his task is exemplified impressively by the music which has resulted from his work. Few composers today seem so capable so consistently of making music of such real beauty, such intense personal expressiveness, such profound spiritual effect.

Once again, it seems appropriate to quote another critical estimation of Mr. Hovhaness—this time from Olin Downes' column in The New York Times on February 25, 1951. It seems to amplify certain of the thoughts just raised:

"It is the music of a creative artist, as we already know him to be, of a rather incredible and unparalleled spirit, which finds expression in music of a special fabric and style. If further testimony supplementing the findings of the past as to the potency of racial inheritance in art were needed today it would be uncontestedly provided here. For this music by a composer who is American-born and trained, son of an Armenian father and a Scottish mother, is completely of the East and not conceivably of the West, although a completely Western environment has surrounded its development.

"Let it be understood: one does not pretend here to estimate the ultimate value or durability of this product, but one does sense in it an awareness, or, let us say, an intuition, which goes so much farther than reason, of the holiness of nature and the glory of the world.

"If this interpretation is wide of the work, it is nevertheless a tribute to a creative musician of whatever rank his may ultimately prove to be.

"The material? It is, or has been hitherto in the music of Mr. Hovhaness that we have heard the repetition or variation of melodic lines; the polyphonic intermingling of figures and arabesques, which remind one of the continuously repeating and dissolving traceries made by a rippling stream. There is repetition and variation, but not development, or architectonics. The modal scale designs are those, in the terminology of Indian classical music, of 'ragas', and the fixed rhythmical structures are of the 'talas'. The respective patterns of ragas and talas may be combined as variously shifted.

"In ways too intricate to be described here, it is an approach characteristic of much Eastern music, and none of the music of the West. Mr. Hovhaness has delved deeply in this lore, in addition to his assimilation of the living spirit of ancient Armenian religious song."

As with the quotation from Virgil Thomson which has already been cited, this reaction by Mr. Downes cuts, in a way, to the heart of Mr. Hovhaness' music and yet it does not set completely accurately in focus the role of the oriental elements in that body of work. Be that as it may, the trends that have been noted as being contemporary to these statements have been strengthened even more in the composer's more recent music. He has been attempting to find within certain older Indian and other Eastern musics similarities to the music of early Europe on up to the days of the troubadours. He has identified himself more and more deeply with classical Western forms. The influence of his intensive study of Renaissance polyphony is beginning to show clearly in his work. He seems to be effecting the fusion of East and West in a fashion or style which might be termed "neo-Archaic." And yet, it would be wrong to think of this fusion as evolving from strictly applied intellectual techniques. Ideas and craft work with Hovhaness only to a certain point. Then, a decade ago as now, his strangely-informed, uninhibited spirit takes over.