

Samir Odeh-Tamimi: *Shira Shir* – Work description

for baritone and orchestra (2006) / Sy. 3739

Samir Odeh-Tamimi based his piece *shira shir* for male voice and orchestra, composed in 2007, on the epic poem *Dos lied vun e mojs gehargetn jidischn volk* by the Polish author Yitzhak Katzenelson. Murdered by the Nazis in 1944 at the age of 57, Katzenelson was involved in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and this was also where he wrote (in Yiddish) his “Song of the Slain Jewish People”. Odeh-Tamimi has rendered it in Ivrit, giving fragments to the male voice which, along with a few cantilena without fixed pitch, sings loud, glissandoing and even yelled falsetto accusations against God, who has abandoned his people and lets them die in concentration camps, against hopelessness, against terror, against senseless death. The cantata *Sing a Song* (in Ivrit: *shira shir*), in which Odeh-Tamimi commemorates the Holocaust's millions of victims, has no soft side. It is expressive, energetic, striking and massive. The vocal party and the orchestral clusters, with their raw interjections, meld together in a great outcry. They combat injustice in utterly exemplary fashion, though probably in the knowledge that a song, however deafening and devastating, can scarcely prevail.

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