

Paul Allen

Clarinetist

This is more about my response to the Sabbath service than about a specific prayer. The idea of importance to me is "peace". The idea stands out to me in the Hashkiveinu prayer, which says the Eternal One "spreads the canopy of peace over us". What does the word mean? The new prayerbook explains that "shalom" means peace, wholeness and well-being. The Sabbath service through prayer and music makes the ideas of wholeness and well-being something that has a reflective meaning to us, notwithstanding the difficulties and noisiness of the rest of the week.

For me music has a quality of peaceful reflection. The piece I will play is the first of "3 Songs without Words" written by the Israeli composer Paul Ben Haim. The piece was originally written for voice, and later for clarinet by the composer. Ben Haim was born in Germany, and emigrated to Palestine in 1933, 2 years after being fired as conductor of the Augsburg Opera. His name was Paul Frankenburger. By the late 1950s he became one of the few Israeli composers with an international reputation. He was a leader of the Eastern Mediterranean School that synthesized Eastern and Western approaches to music. He worked with the famous Yemenite Jewish folksinger Barcha Zefira, who influenced his musical language. Her repertory included Yemenite, Bokharian, Persian, Arabic, Ladino and other North African and Near Eastern Jewish repertory.