

Richard Farber

Wind Sand Sun Sea,

a chamber opera

Libretto

version June, 2003

THE CHARACTERS: **WIND**, Bass-Baritone, was wounded in the battle for the Golan Heights in the Six Day War.

SAND, Basso, is a veteran of the Yom Kippur War on the Sinai Front.

SUN, Tenor, the youngest, served in West Bank during the long years of the Intifada. He commanded a roadblock that was attacked by sniper fire.

SEA, Tenor, the oldest is a veteran of the War of Independence. During a cease fire in the fighting North of Ashkelon he went with a friend for a dip in the Sea.

MINOR ROLES

SAND'S WIFE, soprano

SUN'S WIFE [OR GIRL FRIEND], mezzo soprano

The major role singers play four Israeli men of different ages who are at the beach in Tel Aviv. They are not named because when a person thinks to himself he often does so without referring to himself by name. I used the elements, one for each character, that reminds them of the traumas that they experienced in war, and how these traumas take away from one of the elementary pleasures of being an Israeli - a day at the beach.

THE PLOT: We are at the beach in Tel Aviv or one of the nearby towns. We are eavesdropping into the thoughts, the very souls of four different people relaxing there. We can hear their inner thoughts and feelings. We realize that for each of the characters one of the elements of the beach brings back to them the trauma of war. We at first hear very short phrases and do not know which of the people on the beach we are listening too. But gradually we are able to "zoom in" on the separate characters and experience their feeling and hear their stories. As the day at the beach resolves towards evening we again lose the characters into the happy sounds of the beach. The very brief scenes with the wives of Sun and Sand are reality situations that take place at the beach.

The beach is all that is fun and carefree. We are at the beach. Gradually emerging from the sounds of children playing by the water, the cries of the ice cream sellers and the people playing racquet ball hear phrases sung by the characters -- their inner thoughts and memories. For each of the characters one of the elements of the beach those referred to in the title, brings back memories and feelings from the wars that they have lived through. The phrases become

longer and longer until we hear longer arias. At the end of the chamber opera the phrases again get shorter and we are left with the acoustic tapestry of the happy carefree beach. But we now have experienced something of the Israeli psyche and have lived through the most important incidents in the lives of these Israelis of four different generations.

DURATION: A full evening in one long act.

THE ORCHESTRA: The orchestra will perform more than one function.
1] It will accompany and support the singer in a standard operatic convention and

2] the orchestra will be a commentator adding an additional Greek chorus level of response and opinion.

ORIGINAL SOUNDS FX: There will be an additional acoustical element of highly realistic 'original tone' recordings that will be used in the beginning and in the end of the opera. I believe this will further the feeling of depths of different realities and memories which the piece is about as well as being a sharp contrast to the painful music of the four characters. The sounds will include children playing by the water, ice cream sellers, people playing racquet ball, a lost child calling for its mother. The waves. Sea gulls. These sounds must be extremely beautiful, happy and carefree. The composer will supply these sounds.

THE SET: There is one set - the beach at midday. Photos or painted flats may be used. The floor of the stage is covered with sand. Beach chairs are on the stage. The chairs are filled with the Six singers. Other chairs may have dummies on them or be empty.

LIGHTING: The opera begins at around midday and quickly progresses through the afternoon. The end of the opera is towards sunset.

THE ORCHESTRA: A chamber orchestra 5 WW, 5 Brass, 3 Perc., Strings [a total of 36 players or less]

THE COSTUMES: The singers may be in bathing suits or in casual clothing appropriate to the beach.

© 2003 Richard Farber 23 Altermann st. Tel Aviv 69415 ISRAEL

Tel. ++ 972-3-647-82-76 e-mail farberr@netvision.net.il

AS THE CURTAIN OPENS OR THE LIGHTS GO UP WE SEE A STYLIZED VIEW OF THE BEACH IN HIGH SUMMER AT MIDDAY. PERHAPS PAINTED FLATS PERHAPS HUGE PHOTOS OR A COLLAGE AS THE BACKGROUND. THE STAGE IS COVERED WITH SAND. THERE ARE BEACH CHAIRS SOME EMPTY SOME WITH DUMMIES AND SIX WITH OUR CHARACTERS. SUN'S WIFE IS READING A BOOK. WIND'S WIFE IS READING THE WEEKEND NEWSPAPERS. THE MEN ARE STARING AT THE WATER OR LYING BACK ON THEIR BEACH CHAIRS.

WE HEAR A GENERAL PANORAMA OF THE BEACH AT MID DAY.

ORCHESTRA IMPERCEPTIBLY IN . THE ORCHESTRA PLAYS FOR THE ENTIRE OPERA UNTIL THE LAST FOUR WORDS OF THE LIBRETTO WHEN IT IMPERCEPTIBLY DISAPPEARS.

WIND: The wind.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.

SAND: The sand.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.

SUN: The sun.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.

SEA: The sea.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.

WIND: Days in the wind.

SEA: The sea has long since d
Divided in two.

SUN: Today we are warned to stay
Out of the sun.

SAND: Sand wind born and
 Sand sea born.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.
WE HEAR A SEA GULL FLY PAST.

WIND: Nights in the wind
 Wind heavy with dew.
 Days in the wind and
 Nights is the wind and

SAND: I walk in the sand, it is high Summer
 I slept in the sand then, Fall and Winter,
 And cried in it and
 Shat from fear in it.

SEA: When I was three
 My father threw me in.
 Sink or swim he said.
 Sink or swim.

A KIND OF MILITARY BAND STARTS TO PLAY AND GROWS LOUDER AND
LOUDER. IT SUDDENLY STOPS.

SUN: We manned the roadblock
 One day and the next
 and the next.
 The sun burned down
 The wind dried us
 And the people hours and hours
 Waiting, cursing, slowly moving
 Line of humanity just wanting
 To the next town, or to the doctor,
 Or to visit family
 Or to plan a suicide mission.
 Hours and hours in the Sun.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.

SEA: When I was a boy I loved the sea.
 You couldn't get me to come
 Out of the water.

SAND: The sand.

SUN: Standing all day in the sun,
 Road block in the Mind-aching sun.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.

WIND:] The wind.
SEA:] The sea
SUN:] Mind-aching sun

WE HEAR THE RACQUET BALL PLAYERS MORE CLEARLY.
THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS RATHER HAPPY AND UNCRITICAL.

SEA: On the sea shore near Ashkelon
 He died.
 November Nineteen Forty Eight.
 The sea, mirror flat in the early
 Winter East wind heat wave.
 He died on a lark. On a
 Wavy haired youth's
 Mischievous
 Let's go for a swim
 Let's go
 The sergeant will never know.
 We wont be moving out until tonight
 It's only across the ridge
 And the Egyptians three or four kilometers south
 Let's go for a swim in the
 Mirror flat sea.

SEA:] The sea
] The sea mirror flat.
WIND:] The wind

] The wind from the helicopter.
SUN:] The line of people sometimes moving
] Mostly stopped at our doing.
SAND:] The sand,
] Wind blown
] Sun heated sand.

THE ORCHESTRA RESPONDS.

WIND: We thought the war over for us
 After taking the Dotan valley
 The seventh of June Nineteen Sixty Seven.
 We thought we would lose our chance at the
 Syrians on the wind swept Golan Heights
 Windswept looking up the canyons
 Windswept looking into the dug out
 Concrete and Basalt positions.
 We thought we would lose our chance.

THE ORCHESTRA PLAYS A DISTRESSED MILITARY BAND MUSIC UNDER THE
FOLLOWING LINES.

 Up into the wind
 On to the heights
 Up up never stop
 Never never stop
 Until you are stopped.

THE MILITARY BAND FINISHES.

SAND: You cover the canons mouth
 You stuff its mouth with socks and rags
 You've cleaned and oiled it
 Covered caressed and canvas protected it
 But the sand gets in
 The sand is in
 The barrel sand choked
 The barrel covered oiled rust free loved and cared for
 Filling with sand.

You don't know from where.
Don't know if you wouldn't
Plug the end with concrete to
Keep the sand out, but
Your life depends on that barrel when the
Migs dive, Nineteen Seventy Three
And anyway
Concrete too is made from sand.

A LOST CHILD CRYING FOR ITS MOTHER IS HEARD.

WIND: The wind.

ORCHESTRA COMMENTS.

WIND'S WIFE: Put the sunblock on.
You can' be too careful

WIND: Yes dear.

WIND'S WIFE: Use more.

WIND: Yes dear.

WIND'S WIFE: Do me too.
Use a lot.
Rub it all over.

WIND: Yes dear.

WIND RUBS SUNBLOCK ON HIS WIFE.

ORCHESTRA COMMENTS.

SAND:] Wind blown sand.
SEA:] The sea mirror flat.
SUN:] The sun.

WIND: Is that enough dear ?

WINDS WIFE: Yes, thank you.

SUN: The sun mind aching
Hot sweating
Arbitrarily stop and go the line of supplicants
And you to decide who goes forward and who returns
Who to the doctor
And who sent home.
And all cursing you.

THE MILITARY TYPE OF BAND PLAYS AGAIN.
THE ORCHESTRA COMMENTS ON THIS COMMENT.

SUN: The Sea near Ashkelon.
Mirror flat on an East wind winter day.
A swim
A boyish lark
He loved the sea.

SEAGULLS HEARD AGAIN.

WIND: My mother told me to stay
Out of the wind.
I didn't.
I rode in that jeep
Serviced my recoilless rifle head up
In the wind.
I lay there
June eighth Nineteen Sixty Seven in the wind.
The helicopter blew
Blood and sweat into my eyes.
Afterwards there were months and months
Out of the wind.

SAND: Two lakes of Bitter Water and
Silver shimmer of
Ruler straight Canal
Hills of rock and
Sand.

SUN: The Sea

WIND: No wind

SUN: The sun.
The sun, was my companion
As I choose who would pass the road block and
Who would go back
The sun my companion
And me with a job that I did not want.

THE ORCHESTRA COMMENTS.

SUN'S WIFE: It's hot today.

SUN: Yes, it is.

SUN'S WIFE: It must be more then thirty-five.

SUN: Could be.

SUN'S WIFE: Thank God there's a little breeze
By the water.

SUN: A breeze?

SUNS WIFE: Yes dear, by the water.
Don't you want to go in ?

SUN: No, not now.
Perhaps later.

SUNS WIFE: O.K., I'll ask you again in a little while.

SUN: Thank you.

THE ORCHESTRA COMMENTS.
SHE GOES BACK TO REAING HER BOOK.

You have read just the beginning of the libretto. For a complete copy and information about performance rights please contact me or Mr. Guido Huller at Drei Masken Verlag