

**Gilead Mishory**

## **“Hebrew Ballads”**

**After poems by Else Lasker-Schüler**

A cycle for soprano and piano (once in a while with the pianist's voice)

“Hebräische Balladen” was commissioned by the Foundation for Art and Culture of North-Rhine-Westphalia. From Lasker-Schüler's poem-cycle in German language, under the same title, Mishory chose fifteen texts. Thirteen of those are composed as songs, or as recitation with music. Two others appear as solo piano-music.

The composer tried to construct the cycle thematically: most of the songs are dedicated to biblical figures. They are „framed“ between the songs which depict the complicated and polygonal relation of the speaking poet to God. The two „night-pieces“ for solo-piano, inspired by the poems „Saul“ and „Pharaoh and Joseph“, divide the whole piece into three parts. The total length is about 60 minutes.

Stylistically the various pieces are different from each other. Mishory approaches the texts associatively, not considering any theories, composition-methods or dogmas. He tries to reflect musically the richness of Lasker-Schüler's poetry, with all its inner conflicts, Idylls, tragedy and humour.

A first performance of a part of the cycle took place in November 2002 at the „Else-Lasker-Schüler-Forum“ in Wuppertal, with the soprano Katja Beer. In March 2003, Beate Frey, to whom the cycle is dedicated, with the composer at the piano, performed the complete cycle for the first time at the „Museum Baden“ in Solingen, Germany. Both performances were accepted enthusiastically by the audience and found very affirmative critical acclaim. Since then the cycle has been performed a few times in Germany.