

# *Only a book*

## *Theme and Variations for String Orchestra*

*Commissioned by iPalpiti Artists International*

“Only a Book” was inspired by a beautiful poem by the same name. The poem portrays the powerful tie between the Jewish people and the book of faith.

The pieces consist of five variations, dealing with different time periods in the history of the Jewish people. The first and main theme is eternal, one that would follow the people of the book wherever they go- it is always present, like the book we’ve been carrying with us for ages.

The first variation, *“The beginning”* is relatively positive although full of yearning, and describes, in a way, the “Golden age” of the Jewish people, when they were respected and allowed to practice their faith. The Pizzicato at the beginning of the variation, however, conveys some hesitation, some fear of future persecution.

The second theme, *“Darkness”* is related to the darkest periods of the Jewish people, from the inquisition to the Holocaust to today, even. It is dramatic, angry, frustrated, with an urgent middle part, and ends on a “sour” note, which connects us to the next segment:

*“Mourning”*, the third variation, is exactly it. With its sparse beginning, the music is sad, mourning the life of so many, and conveys loneliness and disbelief.

The fourth variation, *“Rebirth”*, expresses the time after the mourning, when slowly there is a movement, hesitant but growing stronger, to go to where the Jewish people are welcomed, where home is. From the Diaspora they come, drifting like water in many rivers going towards one big ocean.

*“New beginning”* is the last variation, and it portrays the never-ending hope for new times, for joy and happiness. This elation is getting stronger and faster, building excitement and hope for a better future.

...And throughout all these blessings, heartaches, sadness and happiness, the one thing that always made it possible to carry on, to move forward and to thrive, was this book, the book of life. Because of this book, we live.

ONLY A BOOK

**By UNKNOWN**

*This people embarked on a long journey  
and in its hand... only a book.*

*Some people have traveled with gold and silver,  
with diamonds and jewels:  
we, with this book.*

*Some people have traveled with horse and chariots,  
with might and splendor:  
we, with this book.*

*Some people have traveled with sword and armor,  
with trumpets and flags, with spears and shields:  
we, with this book.*

*Some people never traveled. They stayed home,  
rooted in their land, blossoming in isolation, and then decaying:  
we journeyed...with this book.*

*This is the book for which Israel was chosen despite  
the envy of the angels, and the resentment of the nations.*

*This is the book that placed man above beast,  
that made God's glory the human life.*

*This is the book that proclaimed: One God, One humanity, one world.*

*This is the book that gave human dignity its origin,  
Social security its birth; and to the humbly born  
and the cruelly treated, their claim to justice and to care.*

*This people embarked on a long journey and  
in its hand... only a book.*

*Thanks to this book, we live.*