

Commissioned by the **Nederlands Studenten Orkest**
With financial support of the **Fonds Podiumkunsten**.

First performance on 10 February 2019 by the **Nederlands Studenten Orkest** at De Ruchte,
Someren (NL). **Arjan Tien**, conductor.

Ideas and inspiration:

Barazah was commissioned by the Nederlands Studenten Orkest. The orchestra consists mainly of young students who study and live in the Netherlands. In 2019 they will play a series of 12 concerts in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. The theme of the tour is Victory. When the theme had been formally decided I was happy and I felt comfortable with it. It seemed like I would have to write a composition about my life.

After that, I got more and more ideas! What came first to me was the thought that most member of the orchestra would be the same age as me when I first arrived in the Netherlands as a juvenile asylum seeker. It reminded me of the conversations with my fellow refugees at the refugee reception center! We got together with a few refugees from different nationalities. We told each other about our life experiences, not forced but just when someone wanted to say something, for example about the journey or life in their country of origin. The stories were life stories, imaginative, very exciting, dramatic, but sometimes all of a sudden unexpectedly funny, moving, crazy, powerful, full of vitality, and hopeful....

Then I thought it would be nice if I could take this as a starting point and inspiration for a composition, where I could put it in such a way that I could positively inspire the musicians. Because in the end, that is all that matters. No matter how hard life can be - pain and unpleasant experiences are not new to humanity we are all connected! But there is always a reaction to that pain, ugly or beautiful. History shows us that only the beautiful reactions may become immortal.

However, we also understand that victory in itself is not enough when we lose our humanity! And I think this is a message that we badly need now in our time and, indeed, at any time.

Barazah:

Barazah is a vegetable that grows high in the mountains. It has tremendous life force and emerges from between the small openings in the rocks, so if you look from a distance, it seems as if it has grown straight out of the rocks. It also takes water and minerals from deep under the rocks with great difficulty. But once it grows above the rocks, it is green and incredibly healthy, especially for the kidneys. It grows in spring and according to folklore: whoever eats Barazah when it grows, will not get sick again for the rest of the year!