

Overture to the Old World

(2025)

for symphony orchestra



Stormy Sea with Lighthouse (1826) - Carl Blechen (1789 - 1840)

by Benjamin Gabbay (b. 1995)

Overture to the Old World (2025)
for symphony orchestra

by Benjamin Gabbay (b. 1995)

Duration: 15"50"

“Overture to the Old World” revolves around two distinct musical images: a lonely cry of atonement, depicted in the introduction as a chant rising up from the depths of the sea, and the voice that responds to that cry—an electrifying proclamation modeled after the Baroque French Overture, traditionally a symbol for the arrival of royalty both earthly and heavenly. With the intermingling of these two themes and, ultimately, the ennobling of the chant melody, the work hearkens to the power of ancient truth and paints a journey through desolation to spiritual resurrection.

The introductory soundscape was inspired by a dream in which I observed the performance of a symphony inside a stone tower that stretched infinitely into the night sky and sat at the edge of the sea. The chant melody itself is offered as a wordless representation of the ancient Greek prayer “Kyrie eleison” (“Lord, have mercy”), with the climax of the phrase representing the shift to the second line of the prayer, “Christe eleison” (“Christ, have mercy”).