

## **İlhan Usmanbaş (b.1921)**

İlhan Usmanbaş was born in 1921 in Istanbul, Turkey. He began self-learning the cello as a child before entering musical studies at the Galatasaray High School. After high school he entered the Istanbul Faculty of Literature and the municipality conservatory where he studied harmony and cello. Eventually he transferred to Ankara State Conservatory to further his harmony, counterpoint, and compositional skills, studying under Ferid Alnar, Ahmet Adnan Saygun, as well as cello with David Zirkin and piano with Ulvi Cemal Erkin.

His first orchestral work was inspired by Mozart's "A Little Night Music," and was written when he was still a student. The same year he wrote this symphony, he began reading Sartre and Leibowitz and following up on French literature. He discovered Alan Berg's "Wozzeck" while reading, and along with Bülent Arel, began to analyze and perform other contemporary musics.

In 1952, via UNESCO, Usmanbaş went to America for the first time, and in the same year, became a founder of the Ankara Helikon society. He worked as a music history teacher at Ankara State Conservatory, and during this time earned a Rockefeller scholarship to travel to America once again to meet with many composers. During this time of the 1950's, he mainly composed using serial techniques, up until the 1960's when he began to explore new possibilities.

Over the years, Usmanbaş has been a teacher of composition, written many books, translations, and articles on the subject, amongst the most important are Müzikte Türler ve Biçimler translated from André Hodeir and 'Kısa Dünya Musikisi Tarihi translated from Curt Sachs.

*—Program note by Gözde Çakır*

Reference:

Muzikotek. "İlhan Usmanbaş." Accessed on May 28, 2020.

<https://muzikotek.com.tr/en/publishing/composer/ilhan-usmanbas>

Turkish Music Portal. "İlhan Usmanbaş." Accessed on May 28, 2020.

<http://www.turkishmusicportal.org/en/composers/detail/ilhan-usmanbas>