

Cover Art

DAVID AMRAM

A MESSAGE FROM THE MILKEN ARCHIVE FOUNDER



Dispersed over the centuries to all corners of the earth, the Jewish people absorbed elements of its host cultures while, miraculously, maintaining its own. As many Jews reconnected in America, escaping persecution and seeking to take part in a visionary democratic society, their experiences found voice in their music. The sacred and secular body of work that has developed over the three centuries since Jews first arrived on these shores provides a powerful means of expressing the multilayered saga of American Jewry.

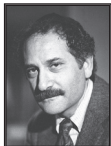
While much of this music had become a vital force in American and world culture, even more music of specifically Jewish content had been created, perhaps performed, and then lost to current and future generations. Believing that there was a unique opportunity to rediscover, preserve and transmit the collective memory contained within this music, I founded the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music in 1990.

The passionate collaboration of many distinguished artists, ensembles and recording producers over the past fourteen years has created a vast repository of musical resources to educate, entertain and inspire people of all faiths and cultures. The Milken Archive of American Jewish Music is a living project; one that we hope will cultivate and nourish musicians and enthusiasts of this richly varied musical repertoire.



Lowell Milken

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



The quality, quantity, and amazing diversity of sacred as well as secular music written for or inspired by Jewish life in America is one of the least acknowledged achievements of modern Western culture. The time is ripe for a wider awareness and appreciation of these various repertoires—which may be designated appropriately as an aggregate “American Jewish music.” The Milken Archive is a musical voyage of discovery encompassing more than 600 original pieces by some 200 composers—symphonies, operas, cantorial masterpieces, complete synagogue services, concertos, Yiddish theater, and folk and popular music. The music in the Archive—all born of the American Jewish experience or fashioned for uniquely American institutions—has been created by native American or immigrant composers. The repertoire is chosen by a panel of leading musical and Judaic authorities who have selected works based on or inspired by traditional Jewish melodies or modes, liturgical and life-cycle functions and celebrations, sacred texts, and Jewish history and secular literature—with intrinsic artistic value always of paramount consideration for each genre. These CDs will be supplemented later by rare historic reference recordings.

The Milken Archive is music of **AMERICA**—a part of American culture in all its diversity; it is **JEWISH**, as an expression of Jewish tradition and culture enhanced and enriched by the American environment; and perhaps above all, it is **MUSIC**—music that transcends its boundaries of origin and invites sharing, music that has the power to speak to all of us.



Neil W. Levin

Neil W. Levin is an internationally recognized scholar and authority on Jewish music history, a professor of Jewish music at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, music director of Schola Hebraeica, and author of various articles, books, and monographs on Jewish music.

🎵 About the Composer

"I can be high all the time on life. . . . Anyone who expects me to be an introspective cosmic sourpuss to prove I'm a serious composer had better forget it!" warns the famously irreverent composer, conductor, and multi-instrumentalist **DAVID AMRAM** (b. 1930). "I couldn't care less if I'm gifted or not. I never tried to prove anything by writing music." One of the most eclectic, versatile, and unpredictable American musicians of the 20th–21st centuries, Amram has given equal attention throughout his life thus far to contemporary classical art music, ethnic folk music, film and theater music, and jazz. The *Boston Globe* has saluted him as "the Renaissance man of American music," and *The New York Times* noted that he was "multicultural before multiculturalism existed." Yet Amram's so-called multiculturalism has not been political—"correct" or otherwise—but rather a function of his genuine interest in a variety of musical traditions and practices. "Music is one world," he has declared.

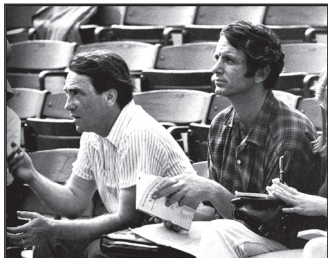


Amram was born in Philadelphia, but he spent his childhood on the family farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where the family moved shortly before his seventh birthday. His father had been a farmer before becoming a lawyer, and—like David Amram to this day—he continued to farm in addition to his professional pursuits. Since there was little Jewish population in that farming region, young David grew up without the benefit of a Jewish community, but his grandfather (David Werner Amram, for whom he was named), who had been active in early American Zionist circles and had spent considerable time on a kibbutz in Palestine, taught him basic Hebrew; and his father conducted Sabbath services in their home. His father also introduced him to recordings of cantorial music and to his own amateur piano renditions of European classical pieces. His uncle was a devotee of jazz, introducing David to recordings of such artists as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong—and then taking him to hear some of those performers in person. Those three traditions—jazz, classical, and Jewish liturgical music—were thus somehow interrelated for him from childhood, in terms of both emotional and improvisational aspects.

Amram began piano lessons at the age of seven. He experimented with trumpet and tuba before settling on the French horn as his principal instrument. By the age of sixteen he had also established a firm interest in composition. In 1948 he spent a year at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, but he temporarily abandoned formal musical education, earning his bachelor's degree in European history from George Washington University in 1952. During those university years he was an extra horn player with the National Symphony, and he also studied privately with two orchestral members. He played for about a year in a chamber ensemble that performed both jazz and classical music—very unusual at that time—which contributed

to his growing conviction that the two genres could reinforce each other.

During his military service (1952–54) Amram was stationed in Europe and played with the Seventh Army Symphony, after which he toured for the State Department, playing chamber music. In Paris for a year, he devoted himself earnestly to composition and also played with jazz groups—including Lionel Hampton's band—and he fraternized with *Paris Review* circles and such writers as George Plimpton and Terry Southern. In 1955 he returned to the United States, having resolved to focus more rigorously on fine-tuning his classical composition crafts. He attended the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied composition with Vittorio Giannini and Gunther Schuller, and conducting with Dimitri Mitropoulos, and he also played in the Manhattan Woodwind Quintet. He supported himself by playing with such prominent jazz musicians as Charles Mingus at Café Bohemia and Oscar Pettiford at Birdland, and he led his own modern jazz group at the Five Spot Café on the Bowery.



Joseph Papp (left) and Amram during *King John* rehearsals at the Public Theater, 1967



Amram with Leonard Bernstein, 1967

In 1956 Amram began a long association with producer Joseph Papp of the New York Shakespeare Festival, eventually composing scores for twenty-five of its Shakespeare productions. He and Papp collaborated on a comic opera, *Twelfth Night*, for which Papp adapted a libretto from the original play. Music for theater, film, and television has played a prominent role in Amram's overall work. He wrote the incidental music for the Archibald MacLeish drama *J.B.*, which won a Pulitzer Prize. He also wrote music for the American production of Camus's *Caligula*; T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*; Eugene O'Neill's *Great God Brown*; and Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. In 1959 he wrote music for—as well as acted in—*Pull My Daisy*, an experimental documentary film created and narrated by Jack Kerouac and featuring other Beat Generation writers, including Allen Ginsberg. He became even more widely known for his memorable scores for two of the most successful American films of the early 1960s, *Splendor in the Grass* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, and he also wrote the score for *The Young Savages*. His music for television includes a 1959 NBC dramatization of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, which starred Ingrid Bergman. That same year, his concert piece *Autobiography* for

strings was presented under the auspices of New York University. During the 1966–67 season he was appointed by Leonard Bernstein as the first participant in the new composer-in-residence program at the New York Philharmonic. Amram has written more than one hundred orchestral and chamber works, a number of which have Judaically related themes. In a 2001 interview for *Moment* magazine, he expanded on his artistically driven concern for Jewish roots:

I couldn't be comfortable with people from every race and nationality if I didn't have an innate sense of my own roots. If people ask you who you are and what your roots are, and you don't have the same sense of wonder and desire to understand [being Jewish] as you do that of the people you're with at the moment—if you don't know and respect who you are, then others instinctively will doubt your ability to know and respect who they are.

In addition to the music on this recording, Amram's Judaically related pieces include a movement of his *Kokopelli* Symphony that is based on an old Hebraic chant; and his six-movement cantata, *Let Us Remember* (which he calls a “musical sermon”), to words of Langston Hughes, premiered at the 48th annual convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in San Francisco in 1965. *Let Us Remember* derives a universal message from the Jewish *yizkor* (memorial) liturgy, tying the American black freedom struggles to historical oppression of Jews and addressing the two peoples' experience confronting hatred. In 1982 Amram became the director of the International Jewish Arts Festival, held annually on Long Island.

Amram's fascination with jazz was heightened when he first heard the voice of the famous cantor Yossele [Joseph] Rosenblatt on the sound track of Al Jolson's

film *The Jazz Singer* (generally cited as the first commercial “talking” picture). “When I heard that,” he recalled in a 1998 Milken Archive oral history interview on Ellis Island, “I was able to connect improvisation to that soulful, wailing sound.” When he was only twelve, he sat in as trumpeter with Luis Brown's Negro Dixieland Band. He has always maintained that his earliest experiences with jazz changed his life. “It made me think of all composition as improvisation.” Later, his David Amram Jazz Quintet became a fixture in New York circles and clubs, and it appeared frequently at the Village Gate in Greenwich Village—one of the city's most prestigious jazz, blues, and folk venues. He is fond of recalling that many of the great jazz musicians with whom he worked loved classical music and were fascinated by it. He was introduced to the music of Frederick Delius by Charlie Parker, who also transmitted his love of Bartók; and he remembers that Dizzie Gillespie's favorite classical composers were Stravinsky and Bach. In 1970 he performed at the first International Jazz Festival in Dakar, Senegal, and in 1977 he visited Cuba with Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, and Earl Hines. His piece, *En Memoria de Chano Pozo*, salutes the great Cuban drummer who played in Gillespie's band in the late 1940s.

Long before it was fashionable, Amram developed an interest in authentic ethnic music and native musical cultures. His visit to Brazil in 1969 left a profound stylistic mark on his subsequent compositions. His 1975 visit to Kenya with the World Council of Churches introduced him to African rhythms and sonorities that he incorporated in various pieces. He also began to address the folk materials of North American Indian cultures, and those elements were evident in the orchestral work he wrote for the Philadelphia Orchestra on the occasion of the United States Bicentennial, in 1976. In *Native American Portraits* he included Cheyenne melodies, a Seneca ceremonial

song, and Pueblo dances. His preoccupation with world musics and non-Western forms permeates nearly all of his music, as do rhythmic and improvisatory jazz features. Transparency of feeling and emotion, as well as the spiritual dimensions of music, are paramount for him. "I am concerned with making the music as true in feeling as I can," he has said.

Amram's chamber and solo music includes *Discussion* for flute, cello, piano, and percussion; a sonata for unaccompanied violin; *Fanfare and Processional*; *Three Songs for Marlboro*; and *The Wind and the Rain*. Among his choral works are *Songs from Shakespeare*, Psalms, and various liturgical-biblical text settings. *The World of David Amram*—an hour-long documentary presented on National Educational Television networks in 1969—included the premiere of his *Three Songs for America*. In general, his music bespeaks a contemporary yet highly personal idiom. "It is untouched by the dictates of stylish fashion," wrote *New York Herald Tribune* critic William Flanagan, "or, on the other hand, the opportunism that so often plagues the work of composers associated with the commercial theatre and drama." Amram has always valued spirit and emotional message over form, device, or technique. "For this reason I find the constant battle between style and content to be meaningless," he has explained. "What is said is paramount"—i.e., not so much *how* it is said. He is moved most by music he considers to be timeless and "always contemporary," and he finds the music of Machaut and Monteverdi as "modern" as Bartók and Stravinsky. For him, truly great contemporary music belongs as much to history as to the present or the future. And he is convinced that both jazz and world musics can deepen our appreciation of the classical canon—even of such composers as Beethoven, Mozart, and Brahms. "We can listen with a bigger heart."

Amram has always felt strongly about the importance of bringing music to people at an early age. For more than twenty-five years he was the music director of young people's and family concert programs for the Brooklyn Philharmonic. At some of those programs he demonstrated and played on unusual and exotic instruments. "It is tremendously important for professional people to work with the young," he claims. "That is the way a true music culture is created—not through merchandising, but through love."

Amram has been described as "continuously open to experience"—whether aesthetic, ethnic, or religious. Indeed, both he and his music defy categorization. He believes that music more closely approaches the heart of genuine religious experience than any other form of communication. At the conclusion of many of his own concerts, he involves the entire audience. "We must get back to the idea of music as something in which everyone can participate. It's a way of getting back to our spiritual roots. I want to show that music can be shared ... without losing high standards in any way."

—Neil W. Levin

Program Notes with Text

SONGS OF THE SOUL: SHIREI N'SHAMA

This piece (1986–87) is transparently emblematic of Amram's lifelong passion for diverse ethnic musics—in this case all within the boundaries of world Jewish cultures. In its juxtaposition of folk elements that are usually assumed to be foreign to each other, *Songs of the Soul: Shirei n'shama* represents the composer's highly personal perception of potential synergies among otherwise disparate musical traditions and styles.

Songs of the Soul was born in an environment of American Jewry's recently heightened awareness of, and fresh interest in, the so-called Jewish Orient—the many non-Western ethnic Jewish communities and cultures—which was sparked in the late 1960s following the Six Day War in Israel and continued to grow throughout the 1970s. Such expanded geographic-cultural consciousness had been kindled much earlier (in Europe as well as in America) by the Zionist movement itself—well before the establishment of the Jewish state, when the very notion of historical cultural ties among the various communities of world Jewry reinforced Jewish national objectives and thinking beyond the more circumscribed and accepted bond of common religion. That awareness, however, had applied more narrowly to attuned Zionist circles.

Following Israel's brilliant military victory in 1967 and its accompanying euphoria, greatly widened ethnic-national identification and pride among American Jewry ignited a new cultural curiosity among broad cross sections of its population. American tourism to Israel also increased vastly, now including many who possessed little knowledge about Israel or its constituent ethnicities. Many of those tourists returned enthusiastic about what they perceived as exotic: the sounds, rhythms, and customs of the Jews who had come from such places as Yemen, Persia, Bukhara, Syria, and North Africa, as well as the indigenous Jewry of pre-state Palestine.

Synagogues, Jewish schools, and community centers in America began presenting programs and festivals devoted to those musics. Recordings of those traditions became commercially available in American outlets, and film and television references proliferated, leading to a new level of popular fascination with Oriental—viz., Near Eastern, central Asian, Indian, African, Arabic, and other non-Western/non-European-based—Jewish

traditions. This amounted to an American “cultural discovery” of the Jewish Orient, often with a sense of virgin wonderment. European musical traditions also benefited as part of that rediscovery, as many American Jews encountered those traditions for the first time either in or via Israel—at concerts, festivals, synagogue visits, and tours of religiously concentrated neighborhoods. Ironically, many of those same European traditions could be found in the United States, but it was the travel experience that often brought them to life for American Jews. The allure of personal historical identification provided a potent additional dimension vis-à-vis the 1960s and 1970s hunger for “roots.”

This attraction to musical exotica was also a function of the broader American interest at the time in “the other”—Eastern musics, religions, folkways, and philosophies—which manifested itself in the emergence of audiences for such artists as Indian sitar player Ravi Shankar or Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum.

Songs of the Soul was commissioned by the United Y's (YMHA's/YWHA's—Jewish community cultural centers modeled in part on the YMCA) of Long Island, New York. It was premiered at the fifth annual Jewish Arts Festival of Long Island in 1987, conducted by the composer. “This time I wanted to do a piece that reflected the polycultural nature of the Jewish people as a nomadic people,” he said.

The first movement, *Incantation*, is based on a traditional chant employed by the Ethiopian Jews (Falasha) at their Passover seders. Amram used only a part of the actual chant and constructed the movement freely around it—alternately fragmenting and expanding it. Its most prominent three-note motive is stated at the beginning and permeates

the movement in various guises. There is an equally arresting rhythmic figure in the percussion.

The second movement, *Niggun* (lit., melody), was conceived by the composer as a “song without words,” after a typical Hassidic definition of *niggun*. Its overall melos stems from eastern and Central European liturgical traditions—Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Romanian, with even a hint of a well-known synagogue composition from Berlin by Louis Lewandowski. The principal melody, transformed and mutated through imaginative orchestral colorations and variations, is present throughout. Though the melody is original, its modal flavor suggests age. It could just as easily be a mystical Hassidic *niggun* as a cantorial lament, or even a Yiddish folk tune, combining features and moods of all three types. “Actually, it is a series of melodies of my own,” Amram explained, “but which came out of the eastern European Jewish folk melos, secular as well as sacred.” Typical of Amram’s music, emotion is paramount. “I tried to capture some of the *feeling* of the great cantors of eastern and Central Europe and their atmosphere.”

The third movement, *Freilekh—Dance of Joy*, is truly polycultural, fusing eastern European klezmer inflections with a Yemenite sacred tune and a Sephardi secular song, all under a Yiddish title denoting a typical high-spirited dance. The Yemenite tune here is a traditional version for the kabbalistic liturgical text of the preliminary service on the eve of the Sabbath (*kabbalat shabbat*—welcoming the Sabbath)—*l’kha dodi* (come, my beloved [Sabbath bride]). This tune was brought to Israel by Yemenites who were airlifted from Yemen in 1948 in a rescue operation known as *marvad haksamim* (magic carpet). Amram learned it from Sephardi singer-guitarist Avram Pengas, who was born in Greece but grew up in Israel in the Yemenite community. The two met in New York,

where they played together in a Near Eastern trio periodically over twenty years. This tune was one of the many upon which they improvised during those sessions. The Sephardi melody is a Ladino folksong, *Morena Me Laman*, which Amram learned from the Armenian oud player George Mgrdichian, with whom he also played for many years. The movement is in the form of a rondo, at whose conclusion all the themes from the previous movements return as a type of recapitulation.

—Neil W. Levin



SHIR L'EREV SHABBAT (Sabbath Evening Service)

Although he uses liturgical melodies and references in many of his works and has also composed some individual liturgical settings, *Shir L'erev Shabbat*, a unified Sabbath eve service, represents Amram's major foray into sacred music. Like so many Sabbath services by 20th-century American composers, this was commissioned by Cantor David J. Putterman and the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York.

In the spring of 1943, Cantor Putterman, who served the pulpit of the Park Avenue Synagogue—a nationally prominent and religiously centrist congregation affiliated with the Conservative movement—presented his first “Sabbath Eve Service of Liturgical Music by Contemporary Composers.” That service offered, as world premieres, the first fruits of his ambitious experiment: the commissioning of well-established as well as promising younger American composers, non-Jews as well as Jews, to write for the American Synagogue and its liturgy. There were some precedents in Europe during the 19th century, notably in Vienna and Paris, for invitations to local Jewish and Christian

composers for synagogue settings. Some American synagogues also preceded Putterman in commissioning new music for Jewish worship—in some cases by highly important composers. But Putterman's project, unlike those occasional or one-time occurrences, was soon designed to function in perpetuity on an annual basis.

Over its decades-long span, Putterman's Park Avenue Synagogue program sought to encourage serious artists—who were often outside the specifically Jewish liturgical music world—to contribute to Jewish worship, each according to his own stylistic language without imposed conditions. In addition, Putterman's practical aim was to accumulate an expanding repertoire of sophisticated music suitable for American synagogues, many of whose worshipers were no strangers to contemporary developments in the world of serious cultivated music.

The very first new music service that spring included world premieres of settings by Alexandre Gretchaninoff, Paul Dessau, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Hugo Chaim Adler, and Max Helfman—all commissioned expressly for the occasion—along with other contemporary but preexisting works by accomplished synagogue composers. The experiment proved immediately successful, and Putterman soon organized permanent funding for the annual commissions and premiere performances. The underlying mission was stated in the printed programs furnished for the congregation: "The program is dedicated to the enhancement of Jewish worship; to a wider diffusion and utilization of the resources of Jewish music; and to the encouragement of those who give of their lives and genius to its enrichment."

Those special Friday evening services of new music soon became not only important occasions for the wider Jewish community, but also eagerly anticipated annual events on New York's general cultural calendar; and

they attracted considerable national attention as well. For the composers mostly associated with the general music arena, the commissions often constituted unique artistic challenges. For those already devoted in some measure to Jewish liturgical expression, the annual commission award became a much coveted honor as well as a prestigious opportunity—almost a "right of passage" in some perceptions. Indeed, by the end of the 20th century, many of the most significant works in the aggregate literature of American synagogue music had been born as Putterman commissions.

Over the years, dozens of successful composers received Putterman commissions and had their music presented at those annual services. The roster includes, among many others, such names as Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Weill, Darius Milhaud, Herman Berliński, Stefan Wolpe, Alexandre Tansman, Robert Starer, Jack Gottlieb, Lazar Weiner, Yehudi Wyner, Miriam Gideon, Marvin David Levy, Leo Smit, Lukas Foss, Jacob Druckman, Leo Sowerby, and David Diamond. Of equal interest from a historical perspective is the list of many of America's most prized composers who were invited by Putterman but who, for one reason or another, declined: Arnold Schoenberg (who did seriously contemplate the proposition), Samuel Barber, Ernest Bloch, Paul Hindemith, Paul Creston, Walter Piston, Norman Dello Joio, Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Bernard Hermann, William Schuman, and Igor Stravinsky—to cite only some.

The first seven annual contemporary music services comprised individual settings of specific prayer texts by a variety of composers. Beginning with the 1950 service—and for more than a quarter century afterward, with the exception of special anniversaries or retrospectives—entire musical services as artistically unified works by single composers were commissioned and presented each year.

Cantor Putterman first met Amram in the summer of 1957 at a “Shakespeare in the Park” production in Central Park, for which Amram had written the incidental music. That production was his first collaboration with Joseph Papp. Impressed with Amram’s gifts and promise, Putterman told him after the performance that he would want him “someday” to write a work for the synagogue. That noncommittal invitation became Putterman’s official commission only three years later, and the result—*Shir L’erev Shabbat*—was premiered in 1961. It was performed subsequently at the Washington (D.C.) Hebrew Congregation in 1965, and in New York at Carnegie Hall in 1967, with tenor Seth McCoy singing the cantorial solo parts.

The work encompasses both the preliminary *kabbalat shabbat* (welcoming the Sabbath) and Sabbath eve services (*arvit*), but—with the exception of the opening *ma tovu*, a nonobligatory text from Psalms that is used for many liturgical occasions as a prelude but is not specifically part of either the *kabbalat shabbat* or *arvit* liturgies—the excerpts here are from the Sabbath eve service proper. In composing the service, Amram did not consciously incorporate preexisting traditional material, nor did he base his settings on traditional Ashkenazi prayer modes or motifs. He relied rather on internal and implied musical ideas suggested to him by the texts themselves—the rhythms and cadences of the words and phrases, and their emotional parameters as he perceived them. “I just tried to let the music of the prayers, the music of the words, and the spirit dictate what to write,” he later recalled.

The opening three-note motif in the organ introduction to *ma tovu*, which imaginatively spans a major ninth, serves as a unifying device for the entire service, and it reappears throughout. Amram thought of this motif, which he recalled having heard sung by a lay cantor in a Frankfurt synagogue, as somehow reminiscent

of “symbolic of a giant shofar”—a highly personal interpretation unrelated to the Sabbath service. Throughout the work, the solo vocal lines are spacious and expansive, creating an aura of openness and breadth. That feeling is reinforced by the harmonic structure, which is framed by open chords and especially open fifths, with effective superimpositions of independent fifths on one another. This technique creates a sonorous quality that is particularly well suited to the combination of mixed chorus and organ, lifting the organ out of a purely accompanimental role. The style and harmonic language falls somewhere between free and extended tonality, with faint hints of polytonal and even nontonal flavors. Part of the artistic freedom here lies in that very juxtaposition of tonal and nontonal elements, which can sound at once refreshingly arbitrary and musically logical. The formal structure follows no preordained design, but is generated by the composer’s innate sense of expressive impulse: his sense of feeling and emotion underlying the texts, and his interpretation of those emotional dimensions.

“The experience of writing this service was like a delayed *bar mitzva* for me,” said Amram, who did not have a formal *bar mitzva* at age thirteen, because his father was in the service during the war. “I gained a new part of my Jewish manhood—at thirty rather than thirteen. By acknowledging my own ancestral vibrations, I could enjoy life every second more, just by knowing more who I was and am.”

Predictably, the premiere brought out an unconventional crowd for a Sabbath worship service, including many of Amram’s Greenwich Village jazz club comrades—Jews and non-Jews—who had never been to a synagogue, and, as he characterized them, many “Jewish hipsters who hadn’t been to a synagogue since they were children.”

Amram later orchestrated two of the settings, *Sh'ma yisra'el* and *Yigdal*, and used them in his opera *The Final Ingredient*.

—Neil W. Levin

SHIR L'EREV SHABBAT

Sung in Hebrew

Translation by Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

MA TOVU

How lovely are your dwellings, O House of Israel.
O Lord, through Your abundant kindness I enter
Your house
and worship You with reverence in Your holy
sanctuary.
I love Your presence in this place where Your glory
resides.

Here, I bow and worship before the Lord, my maker.
And I pray to You, O Lord, that it shall be Your will
to answer me with Your kindness and grace,
and with the essence of Your truth that preserves us.

BAR'KHU

Worship the Lord,
to whom all worship is due.
Worshiped is the Lord,
who is to be worshiped for all eternity. Amen.

SH'MA YISRA'EL

Listen, Israel! The Lord is our God.
The Lord is the only God—His unity is His essence.

MI KHAMOKHA

Who, among all the mighty, can be compared with
You, O Lord?

Who is like You, glorious in Your holiness,
awesome beyond praise, performing wonders?
When You rescued the Israelites at the Sea of Reeds,
splitting the sea in front of Moses,
Your children beheld Your majestic supreme power
and exclaimed: "This is our God: The Lord will reign
for all time."

And it is further said: "Just as You delivered the
people Israel
from a superior earthly military power,
so may You redeem all from oppression."
You are worshiped (He is worshiped, and His name is
worshiped),
who thus redeemed Israel. Amen.

KIDDUSH

You are worshiped (He is worshiped, and His name is
worshiped), our God, King of the universe, who creates
the fruit of the vine. Amen.
You are worshiped (He is worshiped, and His name is
worshiped), our God, King of the universe,
who has sanctified us through His commandments
and has taken delight in us. Out of love and with favor
You have given us the Holy Sabbath as a heritage,
in remembrance of Your creation. For that first of our
sacred days recalls our
exodus and liberation from Egypt.
You chose us from among all Your peoples,
and in Your love and favor made us holy
by giving us the Holy Sabbath as a joyous heritage.
You are worshiped (He is worshiped, and His name
is worshiped), our God, who hallows the Sabbath.
Amen.



THE FINAL INGREDIENT

Amram's second opera, *The Final Ingredient*, with a libretto by Arnold Weinstein, was commissioned in 1965 by the ABC television network in cooperation with the Jewish Theological Seminary for broadcast that year on the Seminary's national program, *Directions*. The libretto was based on a play by Reginald Rose, which takes place at the infamous German concentration camp Bergen-Belsen.

The opera is related to the Holocaust in terms of its specific situation and its backdrop, but it is not so much a drama about the Holocaust as it is about faith, Jewish national survival, the rediscovery of heritage, and the triumph of the spirit over degradation and oppression. ABC, however, was more concerned with its Passover dimension, and they conceived of it as a potential "Passover opera" that might be shown annually—almost as a Jewish counterpart to Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and its place as an annual Christmas-related opera.

The plot concerns a group of Belsen inmates at Passover in 1944. Although the observance of Passover is not even required by Jewish law under such life-threatening and dire circumstances, the inmates determine to improvise a seder—the annual Passover home ritual that recounts the biblical story of the ancient Israelites' exodus from Egypt and their liberation from slavery so that they could receive the Torah at Mount Sinai as a free people and take possession of their land. At every seder, each Jew is supposed to regard himself as if he were personally brought out of Egypt on that ancient night. Thus the seder is a reaffirmation not only of Jewish national

existence in collective terms, but also of each individual Jew's identification with the Jewish people. For this group in *The Final Ingredient*, their determination to hold a seder, however primitive it might be, represents their refusal to succumb to defeat or to renounce either their faith or their perpetual Jewish distinctness. This seder becomes an act of spiritual defiance.

The inmates must first assemble the ritual seder table. For this they need to locate or fashion substitutes for the required food items and symbols used to explain the principal themes in the telling (*haggada*) of the story and in considering the significance of the Festival and its observance. Obviously, in the concentration camp, they cannot find the necessary items. Rather, those items must be metaphorical versions of the traditional symbols—which also relate to their present situation. They have managed to provide something to represent all the items but one: the egg for the seder plate, where it serves as a memorial to the burnt sacrificial Festival offering in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem (*zekher l'ḥagiga*). The association of the egg with the seder has acquired additional aspects and points of significance, which have generated a variety of explanations. Among those is the egg as a symbol of regeneration and of the continuum of the life cycle.

Just outside the barbed-wire fence of the compound, there is a small tree on whose branch is a bird's nest with eggs in it. Eli, a fellow inmate, tries to persuade a young man named Aaron to risk the dangers of scaling the fence to procure one of the eggs, since only Aaron has enough remaining physical strength. But Aaron is interested neither in the seder nor in any Judaic observance. He has rejected Judaism since childhood, which has placed him at odds with his father and his father's religious concerns, and there is lingering antagonism and resentment in their relationship. Moreover, Aaron has succumbed to total despair. "No

one cares less than I," he sings in the opening scene (not recorded here), not even the dead—not even those murdered there by the Germans—"whom we bury every day by the hundreds." So complete is that despair that as the curtain rises, he admonishes the bird that it has no right to sing: "Who are you to sing, bird? Don't you know, God has told each creature that we are here on earth to suffer? No, you poor deluded bird ..." Those words sum up his spiritual defeat. For Aaron, there is no purpose in a seder—no purpose in reaffirming Jewishness, survival, freedom, or anything else. Nothing has any meaning.

Aaron's elderly father—who, with the others, still clings to his belief—tries to persuade Aaron to go after the egg, even in the absence of faith. He asks it simply as a father's request of a son. But Aaron still refuses. When Walter, another inmate, asks if their suffering cannot be allowed to provide some lesson for future generations—if at least they will have died for a cause—Aaron replies that there is no cause and nothing to learn or be learned: "World, rummage through the ashes! Nothing will you learn. Look for no lessons."

Scene 5 (the first of the three excerpted here) takes place in the women's barracks, where the women—their babies in their arms—are mourning those who have already been murdered by the Germans. Their hummed lament becomes a lullaby to their babies, while the guards taunt and mock them by calling to be entertained and heckling them to sing louder and more lustily. Such demands were not unfamiliar in the camps, and they had roots in medieval incidents. The women responded by singing Psalm 137 (*al naharot bave!*—By the Rivers of Babylon), which refers to the Babylonian captivity following the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem. In that scenario, too, the Babylonian captors made similar mocking demands

that their captives sing them their "song of Zion." But that Psalm also contains assurance of eventual Divine restoration: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem ..."

In the following scenes (also not recorded here) Aaron ultimately accedes to his father's plea, but only after witnessing and being moved by the guards' vicious brutality. First his father attempts yet again (still in vain) to prevail upon Aaron by recalling his earlier bravery and sense of compassion. He reminds Aaron of an incident in his youth when he overcame his fear and climbed a much more forbidding tree in order to restore a bird's nest filled with hatching eggs that had been dislodged by a windstorm and was dangling from a branch. But Aaron remains unmoved, as if embarrassed by the reminder of his youthful deed.

Whether or not they were known to the playwright and librettist, there are irresistible talmudic and rabbinic echoes here, rooted in two biblical commandments. One of those commandments (Deuteronomy 22:6-7) prohibits the taking of a mother bird from a nest while she is sitting on eggs or tending to her young; and, in the event that one must take either the young or the eggs (highly unlikely, since they would have scarcely any food value), he must first shoo away the mother bird, taking the young or the eggs only in her absence. Keeping that commandment carries with it the reward of prolonged life—one of only two of the 613 commandments in the Torah that have this reward specifically attached to them. The other is the commandment to honor one's parents (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16). Comparison of those commandments has not been lost on rabbinic commentators, who have found meaning in the provision of the same reward for two unrelated commandments: one of the least significant and one of the most important—what may be the easiest and what may be the most complicated and difficult ones to observe. In an account in the Talmud (*kiddushin*

39b, *hullin* 142a), the great sage turned apostate Elisha ben Abuya (first half of the 2nd century C.E.) is said to have witnessed a father instructing his son to climb a tree to fetch chicks from a nest. The lad does so, remembering to observe the provisions of the related commandment, but he is killed falling from the tree. Some have attributed Elisha ben Abuya's renouncement of Judaism to that incident. The son had obediently fulfilled two commandments promising long life: he had honored his father by following his instructions, and he had remembered to shoo away the mother bird.

In Amram's opera, only when Aaron witnesses the guard brutally beating his father—after discovering hidden wooden clubs that he and the other inmates were intending to use in making a ladder to scale the fence—does Aaron change course in an instant and determine to honor his father's wish. It is Aaron's revelatory moment. Despite his earlier protestations, there remains within him a dual spark of defiance and Jewish connection—a spark ignited as the threat of physical terror and humiliation becomes even more real and more personal for him. While the other inmates stage a diversion, he successfully scales the fence and snatches the egg, but he is shot and killed by the guards as he returns with it. For his father, heard in his anguish as Scene 9 opens, Aaron has died with some purpose after all—and as a Jew once again. "Now he believes!" cries the distraught father over Aaron's lifeless body. He summons forth the words of the central monotheistic Judaic credo and proclamation of faith that Jews recite twice daily in their prayers, as well as, when possible, at the moment of imminent death. Even though it is too late for Aaron, his father calls upon him to "Say it with me, Aaron my son." The other inmates respond in repetition, refusing to permit their tormentors to rob them of the only thing they have left—their unalloyed faith.

In Scenes 9 and 10, the inmates make their final preparations for Passover and for the seder. As one of the men tosses out the rotted loaf of forbidden bread that the guards have left them for their daily ration, another man symbolically recites the customary pronouncement, normally invoked on the night before the eve of Passover, that no *hametz* (leaven)—any food items or ingredients forbidden on Passover—remains in their possession. (Of course, they can be only "symbolically" free of *hametz* in the camp.) As their seder commences, the participants refer to the various symbols. Max holds up a piece of improvised *matza*, which they have baked in secret from a handful of stolen flour, and he recalls the prescribed Aramaic words from the *haggada* that refer to *matza* as the "bread of affliction" and invite "all who are hungry" to partake. Another inmate, Walter, substitutes a clump of freshly pulled grass for the prescribed bitter herb (*maror*), which traditionally symbolizes the bitterness of Egyptian slavery. For the inmates, it is this "bitter" grass upon which they must "walk in slavery." A handful of earth replaces the usual sweetened condiment, the *haroset*, which is eaten at the seder as a reminder of the bricks and mortar used by the Israelite slaves in their forced labor for the Egyptian pharaohs. Instead of the usual salted water for dipping a vegetable (the *karpas*, or "fruit of the earth") before proceeding to the full deliberations on the Passover story, their actual human tears are used to represent the tears of bondage. Under normal circumstances, a lamb or other shank bone is required for the seder. It symbolizes the burnt sacrificial offering in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, and it also symbolizes the paschal lamb the Israelites sacrificed and roasted in preparation for the exodus from Egypt—which was to be eaten together with *matza* and bitter herbs on the eve of the exodus and whose blood was wiped on the doorposts and lintels of the Israelite dwellings to signal the "angel of death" to "pass over" their homes when

visiting the tenth plague upon the Egyptians. Aaron's father provides his dead son's belt as a substitute, proclaiming that "his lamb" had been slaughtered by the Germans. And the egg that Aaron retrieved now symbolizes for them the eternal survival of the Jewish people and the perpetual regeneration of its spirit despite the avowed genocide in progress.

At the conclusion of a seder, Jews customarily pronounce their hope that the messianic era will have arrived by the next year: "Next year in Jerusalem! This year we have celebrated Passover in the diaspora; next year at this time may we do so in Jerusalem as an ingathered and reunited people." The inmates, too, hold out that hopeful expectation, noting that their diaspora context this year has been "the bloody earth of Belsen."

The opera concludes with the communal singing of *Yigdal elohim hai*, a stalwart hymn of faith based on Maimonides' "thirteen principles of faith" but erroneously referred to in the libretto as a "hymn of rejoicing." *Yigdal* is not part of the seder ritual, although it can be sung at the conclusion of the Passover eve service that precedes the seder, as well as on other liturgical occasions. But it was employed here by the librettist in an exercise of artistic license, probably because of its theologically powerful statements.

Unlike the Holocaust itself, which is not an appropriate transcendent metaphor for broader humanistic or universal themes—or for anything that diffuses its historical centrality as the planned, calculated, and culminating annihilation of the Jewish people by a highly developed Western society with no scarcity of willing collaborators—this particular story can support, on its own terms, universal parallels and lessons. Indeed, Amram was attracted to what he perceived as its universal message: the consequences of hatred.

—Neil W. Levin

THE FINAL INGREDIENT

An Opera of the Holocaust in One Act

Three Women:

Deborah Selig, soprano

Pei Yi Wang, mezzo-soprano

Sarah Elizabeth Williams, mezzo-soprano

First Guard and Sigmund:

Brian Pfaltzgraf, tenor

Second Guard, Felix, and Walter:

Mark Kent, bass

Eli:

Tyler Oliphant, baritone

Max:

Jesse Blumberg, baritone

Rabbi:

Nicholas Phan, tenor

Old Man:

Thomas Glenn, tenor

Scene 5 [*The women's compound. The women are humming as if they are praying for the dead. Three women step forward. Another places her baby in a battered homemade rocker and begins to sing a lullaby. Soon all the women join in.*]

WOMEN

Lullaby, lullaby, sleep, sleep, my baby, lullaby,
lullaby ... Sleep in peace, my little child. Dream tonight,
God will right all your sorrows, dear. Sleep, my little
baby, hear our lullaby.

[*The Guards in the tower rise.*]

FIRST GUARD

Singen Sie laut meine Damen. (Sing loudly, ladies.)

SECOND GUARD

Singen Sie laut und lustig. (Sing loudly and merrily.)

FIRST GUARD

Ich will etwas lustiges. (I want to hear something cheerful.)

BOTH GUARDS

Singen Sie laut, meine Damen, bitte lauter schöne Damen. (Sing loudly ladies, please; sing even louder, pretty ladies.)

FIRST WOMAN

They want us to sing. Do you hear them?

SECOND WOMAN

Well, we have sung before in captivity.

FIRST WOMAN

Sing to us the song of Zion. Sing us the Psalm of our people in captivity.

[The third woman begins singing Psalm 137 as the other women accompany her.]

THIRD WOMAN

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
yea we wept when we remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows
on the midst thereof.
For they that carried us away captive,
they asked of us a song.
And our tormentors asked of us mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

WOMEN

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget her cunning
if I do not remember thee.

THIRD WOMAN

O, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
if I set not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

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WOMEN

Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom
in the day of Jerusalem who said raze it, raze it ...
even to the foundation thereof.

THIRD WOMAN

Oh, daughter of Babylon that art to be destroyed,
happy shall he be that repayeth thee
as thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be that taketh
and dasheth thy little ones against the rock.

Scene 9 *[The prison barracks. The door opens, and Max, Walter, Eli, and a fourth prisoner enter. They close the door and stand grouped in the doorway, exhausted and shocked at Aaron's death. The other prisoners, barely able to move, crowd around them.]*

ELI

Aaron is dead. *[Some of the prisoners lower their heads. Eli holds up the egg.]*
He brought this back. They'll be coming soon. Well,
what are we waiting for? It's time. *[Eli pulls open the door. The men follow him out into the darkness.]*

MAX

[Max walks over to the bucket of soup and bread. He picks up the loaf, looks at it. He throws it away. The prisoners watch the bread hungrily but make no move.]
Any leaven which remains in my possession, and which
I have not seen or removed, shall be as if it were not,
and of no more account than the dust of the earth.
[Max walks out into the darkness. The others follow.]

Scene 10 *[As the last of them came out, two prisoners carry the rabbi. A file of men approach from the other direction. They begin to form a large circle. They sit on the ground in the darkness, facing the center. Eli*

stands and walks to the center of the circle. He takes a package of yarmulkes made of crude scraps of cloth from his clothes. He puts one on his head and passes a few to one of the prisoners, who gives them out to the men.]

ELI

Our women made these for us. They expect that we shall wear them proudly. *[He hands the other yarmulkes to be passed around.]* Now this is our Passover seder! And no man will stop us from having it! We celebrate our people's flight to freedom from Egypt and the bonds of slavery, as Jews have celebrated for thousands of years.

[Max walks to the center of the circle and takes out packages from underneath his jacket. He opens one and presents a thin, jagged cracker, which he holds up.]

MEN

As Jews have celebrated for thousands of years.

MAX

This is our unleavened bread, the bread of wretchedness, which our forefathers ate in Egypt. It was baked from a handful of stolen flour. Let those who are hungry enter and eat.

[Eli sets the packages down on the ground, and Max moves back in his place. Walter rises and walks to the center of the circle. He rips a clump of grass from the ground and holds it up.]

WALTER

This is our bitter herb, the grass on which we walk in slavery as our fathers walked and wept in Egypt.

MEN

This is our Passover seder, and no man will stop us. Nothing will stop us tonight.

[Walter puts the grass down next to the matzas and walks back in place. The rabbi moves slowly to the center of the circle. He scoops up a handful of earth from the ground.]

RABBI

This is our *haroset*—not apples and cinnamon and nuts, but a handful of the earth to make us remember the clay with which our fathers in Egypt wrought bricks. *[The rabbi returns to his place as Felix comes to the center of the circle, holding the tin cans the old man had hidden. He then holds them up.]*

FELIX

This is our parsley, the fruit of the earth, for which we give thanks. There is no salt here. Each man will dip his parsley into the salt of his tears. *[Felix moves from the circle. Sigmund enters and holds up a wooden cup with water in it. He pulls a stem with three withered grapes from his pocket.]*

SIGMUND

Three grapes bought with the gold from our teeth. *[He holds the grapes over the cup and crushes them in his fist.] This is our wine. [Sigmund sets the cup next to the matzas and leaves the center of the circle. Eli enters and holds up a tiny bird's egg. He holds it high for all to see, with dignity.]*

ELI

This egg is the symbol of our immortality. Here tonight our Aaron gave his life that we might have it. Remember him until the day you die. Remember him.

[A squad of German soldiers approaches. Eli leaves the center of the circle, and the Old Man takes his place. He takes a piece of rope and holds it up.]

OLD MAN

We sacrificed a lamb in Egypt once. We place a shank bone on our tables to remember this. Tonight a lamb was sacrificed. He was my son. My one and only son. This was his belt. This is our shank bone! Our Passover seder is ready. For tonight and for all times it is the symbol of freedom. This year our seder is held on the bloody earth of Belsen. *[Triumphantly shaking his fist at the guard]*
L'shana haba, birushalayim! (Next year in Jerusalem!)

CHORUS

L'shana haba, birushalayim!

OLD MAN

Next year in Jerusalem! Sing praises to God, begin our song tonight with Yigdal, the hymn of rejoicing.

[All the prisoners sing this ancient prayer of rejoicing in Hebrew as the German guards watch in silence.]

YIGDAL

*yigdal elohim hai v'yishtabah,
 nimitza v'ein et el m'tziuto.
 ehod v'ein yahid k'yihudo,
 ne'lam v'gam ein sof l'ahduto.
 ein lo d'mut haguf v'eino guf,
 lo na'aroh elayv k'dushato.
 kadmon l'khol davar asher nivra,
 rishon v'ein reshit l'reshito.
 hino adon olam l'khol notzar
 yore g'dulato u'malkhuto.
 shefa n'vuato n'tano,
 el anshei s'galato v'tifarto.
 lo kam b'yisra'el k'moshe od,
 navi umabit et t'munato
 torat emet natan l'amo el,
 al yad n'vi'o ne'eman beito.*

*lo yahalif ha'el v'lo yamir dato,
 l'olamim l'zulato.
 tzofe v'yode'a s'sareinu,
 mabit l'sof davar b'kadmato.
 gomel l'ish hesed k'mifalo,
 noten l'rasha ra k'rishato.
 yishlah l'ketz ha'yomin m'shihenu,
 lifdot m'hakei ketz y'shuato.
 metim yha'ye el b'rov hasdo,
 barukh adei ad shem t'hilato.*

(We exalt and praise the presence of the living God; His existence and being transcend all time—was, is, and will forever be.

His essence is unity—His uniqueness lies in His oneness,

He is unlike any other unity;
 That oneness is inscrutable and without end.

He has no physical form—nor anything even corresponding to form;

His holiness is incomparable; His holiness is unimaginable.

He preexisted all of His creations—
 Was and always has been the beginning, the first of all that ever was.

He is the Master of all creation;

All creatures reflect His dominion and majesty.

He abundantly shared His prophecy with His beloved and treasured people.

Never among Israel has anyone appeared who could in greatness compare with Moses, our prophet, whose closeness to God exceeded that of all others. God gave to His people a Torah of truth through the agency of His faithful prophet, Moses. God neither amends His law nor changes its character; His precepts remain forever, for eternity.

He searches out and understands our deepest and most hidden secrets;

He knows every ending at its very beginning.

He rewards the pious according to their deeds,
And repays evildoers in proportion to their guilt.
He will send our messiah at the End of Days,
To bring redemption to those who faithfully wait.
With the greatest of loving-kindness God will bring
the dead to eternal life;
Praised be His glorious name for all eternity.)

Translation: Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

About the Performers



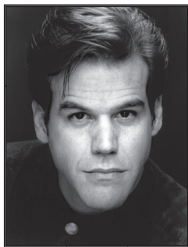
The **RUNDFUNK-SINFONIEORCHESTER BERLIN** (Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra) was founded in 1923 as the first radio orchestra in Germany. Its repertoire spans more than three centuries, but since its founding, the ensemble has been especially dedicated to contemporary works. Many of the greatest composers of the 20th century have performed their own music with this orchestra, either as conductors or soloists, among them Hindemith, Honegger, Milhaud, Prokofiev, Strauss, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Weill, and Zemlinsky—and more recently Krzysztof Penderecki, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Berthold Goldschmidt, and Udo Zimmermann. Since 1956 the orchestra has performed in twenty countries, including China and Japan. It also records extensively for DeutschlandRadio, founded in 1994, and many of its recordings have been

awarded the German Record Critics' Prize. In 2002 Marek Janowski succeeded Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos as principal music director.



Born in Boston, **CHRISTOPHER WILKINS** earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard (1978), where he was music director of the Bach Society Orchestra. As an oboist, he performed with the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra at Tanglewood and with the Boston Philharmonic under Benjamin Zander. In 1979–80 he attended the Hochschule der Künste in West Berlin as a recipient of the John Knowles Paine Traveling Fellowship, awarded by the Harvard Music Department. He studied at Yale University with Otto-Werner Mueller, receiving his master of music degree in 1981. He was assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1983 to 1986, and from 1986 to 1989 he served as associate conductor of the Utah Symphony, assisting his former teacher Joseph Silverstein. From 1989 to 1996 he was music director of the Colorado Springs Symphony, serving in later seasons as music advisor. In 1991 he began an eleven-year tenure as music director of the San Antonio Symphony, where he is now music director emeritus.

As a guest conductor, Wilkins has appeared with many of the leading American orchestras, including those of Chicago, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Houston, Detroit, and Cincinnati. He has also appeared with orchestras throughout Latin America and in Germany, Russia, Spain, and New Zealand. In 1992 Wilkins won the Seaver/NEA Award, designed to identify exceptionally talented American conductors early in their careers. Plácido Domingo has named him a resident conductor of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas.



Tenor **RICHARD TROXELL**, a native of Thurmont, Maryland, received his operatic training at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia (1988–92). He came to prominence in 1995 in the role of Pinkerton in Frédéric Mitterrand's film of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. In 1997 he made his Alice Tully Hall debut in the

United States premiere of Gounod's opera *La Colombe* with L'Opéra Français de New York. The 2000–01 season included his New York City Opera debut in Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges* and his debut at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in *Manon Lescaut*. Troxell is equally at home in oratorio and concert repertoire, having sung in such works as Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

For more than seventy-five years the **BBC SINGERS**, Great Britain's only full-time professional chamber choir, has commissioned, premiered, and recorded new works by many of the 20th century's leading composers and worked with some of its most distinguished conductors. Soon after the company's organization in 1924, the BBC recognized the need for a permanent

choir. The ensemble's pioneering daily live broadcasts of religious services, with much of the music delivered only minutes before broadcast time, helped develop its acclaimed musicianship and sight-reading skill. World renowned for technical virtuosity, versatility, and tonal beauty, the BBC Singers broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Television and has a busy schedule of concert performances in the British Isles and abroad. Though the chorus's repertoire includes many liturgical and religiously inspired masterpieces and it has participated in a festival of Jewish music in London, the Milken Archive/World of American Jewish Music project has introduced the BBC Singers to an entirely new repertoire of Judaic works, both liturgical and secular.

The English organist **CHRISTOPHER BOWERS-BROADBENT** began his musical education as a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, and went on to study organ and composition in London at the Royal Academy of Music, where he became professor of organ in 1976. An important exponent of contemporary music, he has made numerous recordings, including the works of Pärt, with which he has an especially close connection. He is organist and choirmaster of Gray's Inn Chapel Choir in London, and since 1973 he has also been organist of the West London Synagogue, Upper Berkeley Street, only the fourth person to hold that position since the historic synagogue, home to Great Britain's first Reform congregation, opened in 1870.

The **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC**, one of the leading performing arts educational institutions in the United States, was founded in 1880. The university's orchestra, symphony band, and chamber choir have toured the United States and abroad. The University Symphony Orchestra, conducted by its director, Kenneth Kiesler, has been a guest at the Salzburg Festival in Austria and the



Lyon Festival in France. The **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN OPERA THEATER** has produced a vast array of operas. The featured soloists for *The Final Ingredient* excerpts were recorded when they were students at the School of Performing Arts: **DEBORAH SELIG**, soprano; **PEI YI WANG**, mezzo-soprano; **SARA ELIZABETH WILLIAMS**, mezzo-soprano; **THOMAS GLENN**, tenor; **BRIAN PFALTZGRAF**, tenor; **NICHOLAS PHAN**, tenor; **JESSE BLUMBERG**, baritone; **TYLER OLIPHANT**, baritone; and **MARK KENT**, bass.

A native of New York, **KENNETH KIESLER** studied at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, the Aspen Music School in Colorado, and the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. At twenty-three he was the youngest conductor of a full production in the history of the prestigious Indiana University Opera Theater. He was accepted into the Leonard Bernstein American Conductors Program; won the silver medal at the 1986 Stokowski Competition at Avery Fisher Hall; and



received the Helen M. Thompson Award (in 1988); and in 1990 he was one of four American conductors selected to conduct the Ensemble Intercontemporain in sessions with Pierre Boulez during the Carnegie Hall Centenary. Kiesler was music director of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra for twenty years, becoming conductor laureate at the end of the 1999–2000 season, and he is now music director of the New Hampshire Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared as guest conductor with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony, and he has conducted the Jerusalem and Haifa symphony orchestras in Israel. Since 1995 he has held the positions of professor of conducting and director of university orchestras at the University of Michigan School of Music. Kiesler is also the founder and director of the Conductors Retreat at Medomak, Maine.

Credits

DAVID AMRAM (b. 1930)

Songs of the Soul (1987)

Publisher: C. F. Peters Corp
Recording: Jesus Christus Kirche, Berlin, Germany, May 1999
Recording Producer: Wolfram Nehls
Recording Engineer: Thomas Monnerjahn
Assistant Recording Engineer: Susanne Beyer
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener
Coproduction with DeutschlandRadio and the ROC Berlin-GmbH

Shir l'erev Shabbat (excerpts) (1965)

Publisher: C. F. Peters Corp
Recording: St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, London, UK, June 2001
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes
Assistant Recording Engineer: Morgan Roberts
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener
Coproduction with the BBC

The Final Ingredient (excerpts) (1966)

Publisher: C. F. Peters Corp
Recording: Hill Auditorium/University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, January 2001
Recording Producer: David Frost
Recording Engineer: Tom Lazarus
Assistant Recording Engineer: Michelle Nunes
Editing Engineer: Marc Stedman
Recording Project Manager: Richard Lee

University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra:

Violin: Grace Oh, *concertmistress*; * Juliana Athayde, *principal*; * Benjamin Peled; * Jeremy Black; * Joanna Bello; Madeline Cavalieri; Timothy Christie; Michelle Davis; Joel Fuller; Spring Gao; Mary Golden; Lara Hall; Sherry Hong; Adrienne Jacobs; Catherine Jang; Elizabeth Lamb; David Lamse; Lydia Lui; Kate Massagli; Bethany Mennemeyer; Emilia Mettenbrink; Stephen Miahky; Martha Walvoord; Cece Weinkauff; Sarah Whitney. **Viola:** I-Chun Chiang, *principal*; * Joseph Kam; * Emily Watkins; * Youming Chen; Kyung-Hwan Lee; Deborah Matthews; Ty McDonald; Tam Tran. **Cello:** Avi Friedlander, *principal*; * Barney Culver; * Andrew Barnhart; Ann Brandon; Eileen Brownell; Jill Collier; Andrew Deogracias; Leah Hagel; Tara Hanish; Alisa Horn; Heather Triesdall; Elizabeth Weamer. **Double Bass:** Andrew Anderson, *principal*; * Li Xu; * Daniel Dault; Molly Doernberg; Rital Laurance; Maren Reck; Kevin Sylves. **Flute:** Dawn Kulak; Koren McCaffrey; Adrienne Miller; Lori Newman; Jee Hye Shim. **Oboe:** Aaron Hill; Charles Huang;

Adrienne Malley. **Clarinet:** Andre Dyachenko; Reis McCullough; A. J. Stancil; Serguei Vassiliev; Michael Wayne. **Bassoon:** Jason Artz; P. J. Woolston; Nathaniel Zeisler. **Horn:** Eric Kuper; Rachel Parker; Joel Wealer; Yuri Zuvanov. **Trumpet:** Dara Chapman; Saphra Mikal; Sarah Schneider; Jesse Tubb. **Trombone:** Drew Leslie; Alexandra Zacharella. **Bass Trombone:** Garrett Mendez. **Tuba:** Kevin Wass. **Timpani:** Ako Toma-Bennett; Percussion: David Endahl; Larry Ferguson; Jason Markzon. **Harp:** Allison Perkins; Katryna Tan. **Keyboard:** Joseph Cullen; Matthew Mazzoni.

**Concertmasters and principal string players rotate positions during the season. Wind players rotated principal positions during these recording sessions.*

University of Michigan School of Music Opera Chorus

Soprano: Donna Bareket; Marla Beider; Melissa Clairmont; Rachael Crim; Kathryn Drake; Katherine Fitzgibbon; Kara Haan; Katherine Kilburn; Caitlin Lynch; Alissa Mercurio; Elizabeth Mihalgo; Juliette Petrus; Annie Radcliffe; Patricia Rhiue; Deborah Selig; Virginia Thorne. **Alto:** Julie Berra; Jean Broekhuizen; Leah Dexter; Carla Dirlikov; Jennifer Johnson; Dorothea Mead; Suzanne Pekow; Lindsay Pettitt; Kindra Scharich; Lindsay Shipp; Sara Taetle; Amanda Thomas; Kimberly Walton; Betsey Williams. **Tenor:** Ryan Banar; Brandon Brack; Joshua Breitzer; Hugh Floyd; David Fryling; Michael Gallant; Brent Hegwood; Jeremy Nabors; Eugene Rogers Jr.; Eric Stinson. **Bass:** Jesse Blumberg; Ian Eisendrath; Scott Hanoian; Dana Haynes; Aaron Kandel; Mark Kent; Phillip Kitchell; Adrian Leskiw; David Neely; Jon Ophoff; Marco Santos; Andrew Steck; Aaron Theno; James Turner II; Stephen Warner

University of Michigan School of Music Artistic Staff

Kenneth Kiesler, *conductor and director of orchestras*; Lisa Engelbrecht, *vocal coach*; Mei-Ann Chen, Andrew George, *assistant conductors*.

University of Michigan School of Music Production Staff

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Credits

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