

Cover Art

CHARLES DAVIDSON

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.

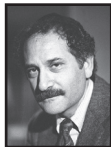
My personal interest in music and deep abiding commitment to synagogue life and the Jewish people united as I developed an increasing appreciation for the tremendous diversity of music written for or inspired by the American Jewish experience. Through discussions with contemporary Jewish composers and performers during the 1980s, I realized that 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, the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music was founded in 1990.

The passionate collaboration of many distinguished artists, ensembles, and recording producers 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 genre.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lowell Milken".

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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neil W. Levin".

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 Hebraica, and author of various articles, books, and monographs on Jewish music.

About the Composer



Born in Pittsburgh in 1929, **CHARLES DAVIDSON** is one of the most frequently commissioned composers by synagogues, cantors, and Jewish organizations, as well as by general secular choruses across America. He was one of the first graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary's Cantors Institute (now the H. L. Miller Cantorial School),

where he later also received his doctorate in sacred music and where he has served on the faculty since 1977 (now Nathan Cummings Professor). Early in his career, Cantor Davidson became the music director and conductor of the International Zionist Federation Association Orchestra at the University of Pittsburgh and of the Hadassah Choral Society, and director of the Pittsburgh Contemporary Dance Association. Prior to his formal cantorial training at the Seminary, he was a student at the unique Brandeis Arts Institute (a division of the Brandeis Camp Institute) in Santa Susana, California. The program there—under the direction of the conductor and composer Max Helfman—provided a rich and exciting forum for Jewish arts by bringing established Jewish musicians, dancers, and other artists of that period together with college-age students in an effort to broaden their creative horizons in the context of contemporary Jewish expression. Davidson and other future composers of distinction, including Yehudi Wyner and Jack Gottlieb, were able to benefit from the influence and tutelage of distinguished resident artists—among them Julius Chajes, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Erich Zeisl, and Heinrich Schalit.

Davidson's monumental *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, a setting of children's poetry from the Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia (where only 100 of the 15,000 imprisoned children survived), is unquestionably his best

known and most celebrated work. It has been performed throughout the world (more than 2,500 performances) to consistent critical acclaim and is featured on no fewer than eight commercial recordings. It is also the subject of two award-winning PBS documentaries: *The Journey of Butterfly* and *Butterfly Revisited*. In 1991, following the collapse of the communist regime and the birth of the Czech Republic, it was performed at a special ceremony in the town of Terezin, presided over by the new president, Václav Havel, among other dignitaries, and attended by an audience of Holocaust survivors to mark the 50th anniversary of the Germans' creation of the camp and ghetto. Performances followed at Smetana Hall in Prague and the Jesuit Church in Brno.

Davidson is a highly prolific composer and arranger. His catalogue contains more than three hundred works—including dozens of synagogue pieces, songs, choral cantatas, entire services, Psalm settings, musical plays, theatrical children's presentations, instrumental pieces, and a one-act opera based on Isaac Bashevis Singer's story *Gimpel the Fool*. Among the many memorable works in addition to those recorded for the Milken Archive series are *The Trial of Anatole Sharansky*; *Night of Broken Glass*, an oratorio in commemoration of *Kristallnacht*; *Hush of Midnight: An American Selihot Service*; *L'David Mizmor*, a service commissioned by the Park Avenue Synagogue; *Libi B'Mizrach*, a Sephardi synagogue service; and a service in Hassidic style. His oeuvre also includes a number of secular and even non-Jewish holiday choral settings that are performed often by high school and college choirs.

Cantor Davidson is the editor of *Gates of Song*, a collection of congregational melodies and hymns, author of the book *From Szatmar to the New World: Max Wohlberg—American Cantor*, and author of several cantorial textbooks. He served with distinction as *hazzan* of Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, from 1966 to 2004. He is currently working on an opera based on another Singer story, *The Magician of Lublin*.

— Neil W. Levin

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Program Notes

A SINGING OF ANGELS

In 1971 Cantor Jerome B. Kopmar founded a children's chorus under the auspices of his congregation in Dayton, Ohio, for the dual purpose of elevating the musical content of its services and of offering concert performances for a broader general public. Known as the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale, the ensemble (some eighty members between the ages of nine and eighteen, at its peak) quickly attracted national attention—the only Jewish youth chorus to do so in the postwar decades. It performed twice in Israel, as well as in England and Holland, toured the United States, and appeared on national television on the NBC network—all in addition to its annual spring concerts in Dayton.

The typical voicing for Jewish choruses both in Europe and America has always been either SATB—for mixed four-part chorus or for boys singing soprano and alto with adult male voices on tenor and bass—or in the *männerchor* tradition, TTBB, for all adult male voices. Very little worthwhile sacred or secular Jewish music existed in three-part treble format (SSA). Therefore, commissioning new music for its own performances was a priority for the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale. Indeed, beyond the valuable educational and artistic experience for the young choristers and the aesthetic pleasure they brought to their audiences, the most lasting contribution of this all-too-brief episode in American Jewish cultural history is the body of new works commissioned by the Chorale. Over a period of twenty-seven years, until Kopmar's retirement, in 1996, and the dissolution of the Chorale, full-length works and shorter individual pieces—sacred and secular—were commissioned from such composers as Issachar Miron, Morton Gold, Ralph Schlossberg, Abraham Kaplan, Sholom Kalib—and Charles Davidson.

Davidson's *A Singing of Angels* was born thus as a Beth Abraham commission in 1966 and received its premiere by the Chorale in Dayton in 1967 under Cantor Kopmar's

direction. (It was a co-commission with the Beth El Junior Choral Society of Beth El Congregation in Akron, Ohio.)

Davidson envisioned a “folksong suite” comprising original choral settings and arrangements of traditional Jewish folk or folk-type songs, which would be reimagined for young voices and refocused through an artistic lens. For his subject matter and musical material he turned to the vast storehouse of eastern European Yiddish folklore, and he selected a group of songs that evoke—through a series of vignettes, anecdotes, and dialogues—various aspects and emotions of daily Jewish life in the villages and small towns of 19th- and early-20th-century eastern and east Central Europe. Most of these songs are well known to the cognoscenti of Yiddish culture; a few are generally familiar among wider segments of American Jewry as well. They vary in mood, flavor, and tone. Some are lively, sparkling with energy and humor; others are dreamlike and reflective, expressing poignant yearning and romantic love. Collectively they recall some of the typical, if admittedly romanticized, family scenes and struggles, reveries, situations, hopes, and folk superstitions (along with the satirical mockery they have sometimes provoked) that once apertained among large segments of Yiddish-speaking populations—throughout the Pale of Settlement of the Czarist Russian Empire as well as in such regions of the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburg Empire as Galicia and southern Poland.

Apart from avoiding the hazards inherent in requiring both Jewish and non-Jewish American children to sing accurately and meaningfully in a language entirely foreign to most of them (notwithstanding a minuscule handful who still do have formal exposure in Yiddishist schools and summer camps), Davidson wanted to achieve an immediacy with contemporary audiences who were generations removed and perhaps culturally distant from the world depicted in these songs. He therefore conceived *A Singing of Angels* as an English-language work, not simply or reluctantly as a set of songs in translation; thus, no Yiddish option is provided. He collaborated with Samuel Rosenbaum, a talented and creative translator

of many Yiddish songs and poems and a scriptwriter for numerous Judaic cantatas. Rather than pursue literal translations for these lyrics, Rosenbaum created English adaptations that are liberally based on the original texts, but which convey no less vividly their authentic spirit within an accessible context. No mere substitution for the original Yiddish, this work takes on, by artistic intention, a unique flavor of its own. And it becomes thereby a vehicle for a deliberately imagined sense of nostalgia, with which audiences who have never experienced the world to which they refer can still somehow identify.

Of the nine songs Davidson selected, some have always been considered genuine folksongs, while others, some with known authorship, have come to be perceived as such. All were at one time integrated into orally transmitted repertoires and traditions, within which they were most commonly sung without concern for their origins. These nine songs provided the raw ingredients (tunes and lyrics) for the composer's inventive choral treatment, with his original harmonization, moments of counterpoint, instrumental accompaniment, and even some new material. For live concert performance, the work also includes a dramatic spoken narration (not part of this recording), which amplifies the historical-cultural context and bridges the movements.

Yiddish Folksong: Origin and Oral Tradition

Apart from the other parameters that might be included in a generic definition of folksong, folksongs are by nature part of an oral tradition—disseminated, learned, sung, and passed down by oral transmission, without recourse to notated sources. Notwithstanding some now discredited and naive 19th-century romantic notions, obviously no tune or poem, however simple, can have emerged authorless, as if it had created itself—sprung by some imagined spontaneous generation “from the natural expression of the folk,” as otherwise sophisticated collectors and even scholars sometimes suggested when the fields of ethnology and ethnomusicology were in their infancy. The identity of a song's composer may be

unknown to us, but that anonymity in no way nullifies the fact of human origin and authorship, any more than the anonymous Elgin marbles in ancient Athens could have come into being without having been chiseled by sculptors. Whether or not we know or suspect the originator's identity—as most often we do not—every folk tune and its text still began life as someone's invention. The folksong embryo was then subject to subsequent and, in some cases, continual alteration and development by others who sang, modified, and transmitted it orally in an ongoing and vital folkloric process.

The germination and historical course of folksong *adaptations* is similar. The deliberate attachment of a new text (newly composed or preexisting) to a previously known tune, either anonymous or attributed—or vice versa, i.e., a new tune joined to an older text—must also be initiated by some individual before acquiring its folksong function and gaining currency in a folk repertoire. Eventually the new hybrid entity may be considered a folksong—if it achieves assimilation and acceptance within an oral tradition.

Folksong can also include those songs whose tunes and texts were conceived together as corresponding parts of performable units, which might have been composed initially as renditions for popular entertainment by professional tunesmiths or bards. For example, many Yiddish songs that became part of genuine folk tradition and took on practical folksong functions were introduced as professional or quasi-professional performances—sometimes even improvised on the spot—by *badkhnim*, or wedding jesters, across large expanses of eastern Europe; and *badkhnim* also performed songs that were already in print but became folksongs as a result of their well-received performances. But once such songs became a part of oral tradition in this way, the identity of their composers often became unimportant in popular consciousness and was sooner or later shed. Like amateur song inventions and adaptations, such professionally conceived or introduced songs achieved folksong status through wide general acceptance, which, in turn, was

probably because of their *Volksgeist*, or folk character. That *Volksgeist* may reflect not only the folkways, lifestyles, customs, themes, and sensibilities of a cultural group, but also the familiarity of its own peculiar folk *melos*. This overall assimilative process, together with the substantive change a song may undergo along its journey from professional composition to folk tradition, is sometimes described informally in contemporary ethnological parlance as “folklorization.”

It is probably true that the vast majority of Yiddish folksongs can properly be classified as “anonymous”—certainly with respect to one of the two components: texts or tunes. Yet ethnological research continues to yield new insights about the history and sources of specific songs, occasionally assigning identifiable authorship to previously anonymous and orally transmitted ones. However, the folklore status of those songs is not thereby diminished—if their primary mode of transmission and inheritance has been oral, and if we accept that such folklore status lies more in a song’s historic function, transmission mode, and common usage than in the factual circumstances of its patrimony.

In any case, those songs that are indeed still anonymous are not folksongs simply because they are anonymous, but because they are known to belong to an established oral tradition within the folklore of some particular ethnic, regional, national, social, or occupational group. Oral tradition is both an accumulative and a collective operation. Even though it may be documented in printed form, it “achieves its constancy,” as the erudite Jewish music historian Albert Weisser aptly observed, “not through the printed word, but by the very organic life span of the culture of which it is a living member.” In Weisser’s understanding, then, oral tradition differs from “personal” invention not by denying the role of the individual in invention or transmission, but by what happens to a song thereafter—*how* it lives and grows within its nurturing environment. In that sense, therefore, whatever its ancestry, folksong is very much a collective property and heritage rather than an individual

possession. And “the folk”—as the perpetrators of these songs within their natural habitats—are thus not without a significant role in the molding, development, and metamorphosis of folksongs, in a procedure that we might call “continuous creation.” The role of “the folk” lies in a song’s evolution and change, whether conscious or unintentional.

The Process of Change

Change and variation are the inevitable consequences of oral transmission, of migration, and of differences among regional and cultural-environmental influences—all in the absence of any acknowledged *urtext* or “authorized version.” Both the tune and its text can, and usually will, therefore, have multiple variants. Folksong variants may be understood as nonidentical—but similar—accepted renditions of the same basic song, as they appear in the repertoires of differing distinct traditions. Such variants contain and represent the different ways a folksong has been transmitted and known traditionally from one region, generation, community, or social-cultural group to another. One variant may be considered as authentic or genuine as the next, provided each can be verified actually to have been extant among its adherents according to the particular variant. This principle can apply equally to anonymous folksongs and to those with known origins or composers.

Differences among musical variants can be minuscule or substantial, ranging from variations in passing and neighboring tones, phrase contours, modalities, details of rhythmic values, embellishments and ornamental extensions, *apoggiaturas*, repetitions, and even inclusion or omission of entire passages. Textual variations can encompass the following: word substitutions; regional vocabulary or dialect patterns; morphological matters; alternative situations, scenarios, or locales; introduction of different characters; changes in tense or gender; and a variety of other literary considerations. But the differences among variants do not obscure the basic identity of a song in terms of its recognizability to the layman or average listener. And the basic tune or tune skeleton generally

ensures its recognition even when a variant involves more radical textual variation.

All nine songs in *A Singing of Angels* have been found with multiple variants, with many others perhaps awaiting discovery. They include anonymous folksongs and those with known authorship of text or tune, or both. Davidson used them either according to the musical variants he already knew or according to those he selected from notated collections.

I. ONCE MY PAIR OF OXEN

The Yiddish title of this anonymous folksong, from which Rosenbaum's English lyric was adapted, is known as *Hob ikh a por oksn*, which actually translates as "I have a pair of oxen." The song was found to have been established in at least one region of the Russian Empire by the late 19th century, if not earlier, and it is possible that it was also known in other Yiddish-speaking areas of what we now loosely call eastern Europe.

The fact that the text was first published in 1901 in Russia, in the watershed and, for its time, definitive collection *Jewish Folksong in Russia* (St. Petersburg), by Saul Ginsburg (1866–1940) and Pesach Marek (1862–1920) accords the song its bona fide Yiddish folklore status. Ginsburg and Marek were Russian Jewish *haskala* (Jewish Enlightenment) adherents and historians who also had law degrees. They were also avid music aficionados and active participants in the *haskala*-infused Russian Jewish intelligentsia, as well as in other intellectual, artistic, and Zionist circles. As was not uncommon in their Russian bourgeois intellectual milieu, both practiced professions: Marek as an accountant who nonetheless published serious historical writings; and Ginsburg as a lawyer who was also a history professor for a brief time after the October Revolution and before emigrating to the United States. Both had a passionate interest in Jewish history, which they eventually confined to the Russian imperial

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, אָקסען , אָקסען , אָקסען , וואָס זײַ ברוקען לױקשען . אָך , וואונדער , לײבער וואונדער , ווי דײַ אָקסען , ברוקען לױקשען , דאָס איז מיר אַ וואונדער ! (bis) ²	Hob ich!) a Por Ochsen, Ochsen, Wos sei brocken Lokschen. Ach, Wunder, Lieber Wunder, Wie die Ochsen Brocken Lokschen, Dos is mir a Wunder! (bis) *)

Facsimile from Ginsburg and Marek's 1901 collection

sphere. Driven by the emerging interest and activity in the documentation and preservation of Jewish folklore as part of a Jewish national revival, and encouraged by the growing realization after about 1890 that much of the oral tradition among the Jewish folk masses of the Czarist Empire was in danger of being lost, they became convinced of what was then still a novel proposition, at least in Russian historical thinking: that the history of Jewish folk music throughout the empire was itself an essential component of Russian Jewish history in general—not merely a matter of musicological interest.

Ginsburg and Marek teamed up to produce what became the first serious and comprehensive documented collection of Yiddish folksongs, which, despite the plethora of subsequent collections and publications by more advanced field researchers and trained ethnologists, has served ever since as a major primary resource for students and scholars. Prior to that landmark 1901 volume, the widening ripples of interest in Yiddish folksong had been confined in print to various single-sheet issues, a few broadsides, and pamphlets containing only a few songs—including texts alone in most cases. Rare musical notations of individual folksongs had appeared only occasionally as part of, or at the end of, journal articles—mostly in Germany. Moreover, the contents of certain other publications of that time designated as "folksong" were not really folksongs at all. Rather, they

were popular entertainment-oriented creations with a folk spirit. These were frequently conceived “from the outside” by urban-based songwriters and bards who were not themselves part of the folk culture they tried either to depict or address—among them the lawyer Mark Warshavsky (1848–1907), now best known for his romanticized song *Oyfn pripetshik*, and the dramatist and poet Eliakum Zunger (1836–1913). (Some of their songs, however, did gain popularity among the folk masses and were adopted into traditional folk repertoires.)

Ginsburg and Marek therefore had few precedents on which to rely in pursuit of their mission, which began in 1898, the year generally assigned to the birth of the Jewish national music movement in Russia. They were neither equipped nor inclined to pursue on-location field research of the type begun soon afterward in Russia by the famous Anski Expedition and followed by a number of important collectors in the Russian orbit who developed more sophisticated methodologies—the most significant undoubtedly being Moshe Beregovsky (1892–1961). Nor did Ginsburg and Marek notate their songs or have them notated, as they might have known them firsthand, or even second- or thirdhand, as did some later folklorists and compilers such as Yehuda Leib Cahan (1881–1937), whose extremely valuable 1912 volumes were the result of his singing from memory to an arranger who then notated the songs. Rather, Ginsburg and Marek’s procedure was even more indirect. They placed notices in three *haskala*-oriented Russian Jewish periodicals (two Hebrew and one Russian language) announcing their project and requesting notated contributions from throughout the land. They noted that it was especially important for this project to have the cooperation of elements of the intelligentsia who lived in remote or outlying regions of the empire, where old lifestyles and song traditions still persisted and were—they hoped—not yet irreparably diluted by *haskala* or other modern erosions.

In large measure, this project unavoidably involved viewing “the folk” from the elite perspectives and sensibilities of the Jewish middle classes, who could

appreciate the long-range academic and intellectual significance of the endeavor in a way that the actual singers among the folk masses could not. Contributions would naturally come from, or via, those Jews who read such periodicals in the first place. Although some of them might have known certain folksongs from childhood—perhaps from home or communal environments that had preceded their own *haskala* influence or orientation, or from relatives in previous generations that were not yet so affected—many responded to Ginsburg and Marek by deliberately collecting songs from the folk cultures of which they were not, or were no longer, a part. Nevertheless, as the editors commented in their introduction to the volume, the response was rewarding and highly informative, and it even included submissions by “teachers from the provinces and Zionist activists.”

The resulting volume, which includes 376 folksongs, put the lie to the now inconceivable and ignorant statement in 1861 by the ethnographer Moshe Berlin that Russian Jewry in fact had no secular folksong of its own. This assumption had persisted among cosmopolitan Russian Jewish intellectual circles, in part because that intelligentsia was so culturally removed from nonurban Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement and from its folk masses. The project also confirmed the premise held by Ginsburg and Marek—and by others attracted early on to the potential of a Jewish national music based on its folklore—that it would have been a theoretical impossibility for the Jewish masses in the outlying regions, given their common colloquial daily language (Yiddish), not to have developed a folksong tradition with a secular content. That there could even have been such a debate may startle us today, but the question remained real in many untested assumptions until the publication of this work.

Although some contributors included musical notations along with Yiddish texts, which were then given to the music critic, composer, and future head of the music section of the Anski Expedition, Joel Engel (1868–1927), to edit and prepare for publication, the Ginsburg and Marek

volume unfortunately went to press with only the texts and no music notations at all. Unexplained “exhaustive technical problems” is the reason cited in the preface for this omission, along with the unfulfilled promise that the music would be issued in a future publication. Therefore, only the text of our song, *Hob ikh a por oksn*, is confirmed by its presence in Ginsburg and Marek. But the same song appears with its tune in subsequent collections by others, including one as recent as 1984 in Israel, which suggests the authenticity of the musical parameter. The tune upon which Davidson relied is consistent with the basic pattern of those notations, which differ legitimately in small details among the received variants.

The contributions furnished Ginsburg and Marek appeared to stem mostly from—or be known in—the northern Jewish populations of the empire and the Pale: mainly the areas of Lithuania, Kurland, Poltava, and Podolia; and none from Poland or even from what was then known as Russian Poland. Each contributor’s name and his song’s presumed locale was printed with the text, and some text variants are included as well. *Hob ikh a por oksn*, for example, is documented in Ginsburg and Marek as submitted from six distinct towns or regions (Kurland, Vilna, Grodno, Kovno, Minsk, and Keydan). This in itself may suggest that in one or another of its variants, the song was ubiquitous throughout the wider area encompassed by that source. But it also demonstrates the danger of assuming a connection between where a song was found to be generally known and its supposed geographical derivation, since many songs were often known in multiple and disparate regions. (Even internal linguistic or dialect-related hints among text variations can be misleading, because those elements traveled as well and sometimes resulted in inconsistencies.) Indeed, the oral music tradition of eastern European Jewry owed much to its itinerant musicians, bards, and *badkhanim*. Traveling cantors and out-of-town *yeshiva* (talמודic academy) students also brought songs from one region to another, which then could become rooted in local tradition. Therefore, we cannot know the actual birthplace of *Hob ikh a por oksn*.

This song belongs to the category of “humorous folksong” and has no real meaning or logical progression other than its internal quasi-nonsense humor, which is reinforced by its rhyme and rhythm. It is also a cumulative song, a category known in the folklore of many peoples and ethnic traditions, which, in practice, can be used as a game. Additional strophes can even be improvised on the spot, making for a nearly endless possibility of variants; and indeed other extant strophes have been found, which refer to minks, turtles, and fish. Each strophe of a cumulative song accumulates one additional element—in this case a pair of animals or things—and the entire newly increased list is then repeated at the end of each strophe as an internal refrain, typically sung with an exaggerated acceleration. Familiar examples of other cumulative songs in Jewish tradition are the post-seder songs for Passover—*Had gadya* and *Ehad mi yode’a?*—whose multiple musical versions (i.e., distinct and unrelated tunes for the same text, as opposed to variants) almost always incorporate such repeated and accelerated accumulations.

Davidson established the playful mood in the introduction by quoting a once-familiar children’s play-chant motive, “Olley, Olley In-Free.” Excitement increases gradually through the modulation by a half tone upward for each succeeding strophe, and a treble obligato adds interest at the fourth strophe. A brief pause for a contrasting statement in the minor mode precedes the final extreme acceleration.

II. MY PAGES ARE SNOWY WHITE

The Yiddish title of this love song is known variously as *Papir iz dokh vays* (Paper Is White) and *Papir iz vays un tint iz dokh shvarts* (Paper Is White and Ink Is Black). Love songs were long thought to be historically alien to eastern European Jewish tradition, since romantic love itself is presumed to have been a foreign introduction. This attitude reflects the commonly held myth of a cultural monolith across eastern European Jewry, especially concerning religiously observant Jews. “Love is a new word among us,” remarked a Yiddish writer in the 1870s, perhaps implying that it was emerging then as a by-

product of the “new” cultural inroads of modernity—even among the religiously oriented folk masses who could no longer be entirely insulated forever from reverberations of the *haskala* from outside nor protected from instances of youthful rebellion that it could inspire. Yet even the 1901 Ginsburg and Marek volume contains a substantial number of specimens of love and courtship songs, mostly from the feminine perspective. The other early-20th-century collections also confirm that, at least by the 19th century in traditional folk circles—notwithstanding the persistent institution of arranged marriages, as well as continued (albeit not always successful) rabbinic, parental, and other social discouragement even of “innocent” romance as a Western and non-Jewish behavior—themes of romantic love are hardly infrequent among those folksongs repertoires.

Moreover, the aforementioned Yehuda Leib Cahan demonstrated through manuscript text sources that love songs—or at least poems—were current in Yiddish folklore as early as the 16th century. And the ethnomusicologist Moshe Beregovsky observed that some love songs in post-19th-century compilations are similar in structure and form to those 16th-century ones—which suggests at least some degree of continuum.

Still, it may be that the proliferation of Yiddish love songs in the Pale was in some respects a 19th-century phenomenon, fueled by gathering external forces and further driven by changing socioeconomic circumstances associated with an increasing Yiddish-speaking proletarian base.

By the early 20th century *Papir iz dokh vays* had become definitively established within Yiddish folklore in the Russian sphere. It was later found to be well known in Romania and may also have traveled through parts of the Hapsburg Empire. But it is believed to have been born under entirely different circumstances, as a song composed by Eliakum Zunsner for his biblically based play *M'khiras yosef* (The Selling of Joseph) and introduced in that play's initial student production in Kovno, Lithuania, in 1874. In the scene where Potifar's wife, Zolika, tries to

seduce Joseph, she sings an eight-strophe love song to him, and this song is thought to be the archetypal model and precursor of what later evolved into the present folksong, with radically varied and revised lyrics that would have resonated with 19th- and early-20th-century sensibilities and life situations.

Some time after the run of the play, the extracted song—in gradually altered form, with numerous textual as well as musical variants—apparently was spread among the masses in the Pale by traveling bards, and probably by Zunsner himself, who by some point in the 1870s abandoned his supplementary “day job” trade and became one of the most famous and sought-after *badkhnim*.

Most revealing is the song's inclusion in Moshe Beregovsky's first volume of a projected multivolume anthology of Jewish folklore embracing vocal, instrumental, theatrical, and dance music. This volume presents annotated transcriptions from fieldwork dating at least as far back as the 1910s, but it was not published in Moscow until 1962, as *Yevreyskiye narodnye pesny*—without any date of Beregovsky's writing or completion. That he cited no fewer than five variants, the earliest documentation of which dates to 1912, attests in no small way to the song's wide currency across a geographical expanse that included Kiev, Berditchev, Ushomir (Zhitomir region), Vilna, and Poland.

Moshe Beregovsky is generally considered the most distinguished and commanding pioneer of Jewish folk music scholarship in Russia during the Soviet era. His vast collections of field recordings are reputed to include many thousands of items, and he edited and authored several important works (published and unpublished in his lifetime) in addition to the posthumous volume cited above. But in contrast to other Jewish folklore collectors and scholars both within and outside the Russian political and cultural orbit, he emphasized the urban environment and guise and the proletarian significance and value of Jewish folk music—in keeping with the prevailing Soviet ideologies to which he subscribed, at least officially,

especially in his publications of the 1930s. Within that ideological framework, he focused on proletarian themes in Yiddish folksong, denouncing the emphasis on the *Volksgest* in relation to a Jewish national regeneration, calling it a deliberately conceived antidote to the social and revolutionary struggles of the proletariat against capitalist oppression; and he branded much other Jewish musicological scholarship and musical creativity as tainted by a “clerical-bourgeois” approach, seeing therein both a bourgeois political (let alone a Zionist) agenda and a national-religious focus that ran counter to a perceived universality of proletarian aspirations. For Beregovsky, the legitimate “folk” referred to the enlightened, socially progressive, and forward-looking working classes, not the reactionary, romanticized, and parochial antiprogessive Jewish populations in the small towns and villages across the former Russian Empire.

Yet Beregovsky’s work is decidedly separable from that orientation, and it stands as an enduring monument to ethnomusicological scholarship—with methodologies and perspectives almost uncannily advanced for their time. Also among his contributions was a novel perception, at that time, that Jewish folklore should be considered within the overall context of the wider host culture and as one of its integral and interrelated parts. He was able, for example, to relate one of the *Papir* variants directly to a Ukrainian song, and to suggest both the points of divergence and their estimated time frames of occurrence. Our ability to trace the present song with the aid of his scholarship is itself a testament to its lasting value. Even his ideological orientation can turn out to be of assistance, inasmuch as it illustrated that songs such as this one had become current in the folklore of urban proletarian culture and did not necessarily remain confined to the environments to which they might have been introduced by *badkhonim*.

Beregovsky’s principal entry of *Papir is vays* ... (text variant), which was transcribed as heard in Kiev in 1929 from an actress in a Moscow Jewish theater, is far more complex than other variants—including the one on

which Davidson relied—and contains substantial musical differences from one strophe to another. In it, as in many but not all of the other variants, the signature opening phrase commences with an upward minor sixth leap, rather than a fifth as in Davidson’s setting, which more closely corresponds to Cahan’s variant from Poland—both of which lack the dotted quavers and semiquavers of the Beregovsky sample. Two additional variants, from Khotin, Bessarabia, are also found in a 1959 collection from Romania.

As a masculine expression, *Papir iz dokh vays* is an atypical Yiddish love song of its time. Its gender reversal apparently occurred at some point along its evolutionary path, or was consciously instituted as part of the overall textual revision by one or more bards—since the song was obviously a manifestly feminine proclamation of desire in Zunsner’s play. But it remains typical of its genre in its melancholy mood and its longing.

Among parodies of this song is a humorous one located by the indefatigable Yiddish folksong scholar Chana [Eleanor Gordon] Mlotek, which reads: “Paper is white and ink is black; since you went away I neither eat nor drink—I’m expiring. May I hope to hear the same from you very soon!” Davidson’s setting adds an original counter melody, which introduces and concludes the movement and also serves as a descant to the principal melody.

III. IN THE VALLEY

The Yiddish words to this song, known in its original form as *Bay dem shtetl shteyt a shtibl* (Near the Town Stands a Cottage), were composed by Zalmen Rozental (ca. 1889–1959) to a simple preexisting folk tune. A native of Telenești, Bessarabia, Rozental wrote poetry in both Hebrew and Yiddish, including more than 100 lyrics to older folk melodies, and he pursued ethnographic and folklore research that yielded more than 300 songs. He was particularly interested in modern children’s education, in connection with which he wrote many playful children’s songs such as this one, and he founded a progressive school in his hometown in 1914. He studied

in Odessa and lived for a time in Kishinev, and in 1940 he was exiled to Arkhangelsk (Archangel) for fourteen years for Zionist activities that fell afoul of the authorities.

The text of this song, therefore, cannot be said to have arisen from a natural folk milieu. Rather, it depicts—with harmless and quasi-nonsensical humor—an aspect of small-town traditional Jewish life as viewed from an outside, modern, and romanticized urban perspective. It was also translated into Hebrew by the famous poet laureate and avatar of modern Hebrew poetry, Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934). The song has many musical variants, but there are also alternative versions: Rozental's text has been adapted to other independent and unrelated tunes. Among them is an original tune by the well-known Yiddish songwriter Michl Gelbart (1889–1962) dating to 1937–38; a version recorded in America by the popular cantor and entertainer Moïshe Oysher; and another heard in Bucharest in 1949.

The song was published in 1925 according to Rozental's original adaptation (tune and text) by the folklorist Menahem Kipnis, who transcribed it as he had heard it sung by an informant. It also appeared in Emil Seculeț's volume of Yiddish songs known in Romania (1959), where he heard it sung in *Botoșani* in 1929; and in 1932 in Abraham Zvi Idelsohn's monumental and lifelong work, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, in the volume devoted to "The Folksong of the East European Jews" (IX) where, unlike many other entries, it gives no source. This suggests that Idelsohn simply knew it himself from oral tradition or forgot his source.

Davidson juxtaposed a variant of Rozental's adaptation against a separate unrelated waltz tune, and a wordless "nonsense" passage recurs between sections. But he also appears to have improvised on the original basic tune, giving it subtle turns of phrases not found in any of the extant variants.

IV. IF DREAMS CAME TRUE

This anonymous children's folksong, which has numerous textual as well as musical variants, is known by several

Yiddish titles—*Volt ikh geven a rov* (I Would Have Been a Rabbi); *Zol ikh vern a rov* (Should I Become a Rabbi?); *Zol ikh zayn a rov* (Should I Be a Rabbi?); *ikh volt g'gent zayn a rov* (I Could Have Been a Rabbi)—according to its various text incipits. It appears to have been known through these and other variants in many parts of eastern Europe, and it was also translated into Hebrew by Bialik. The text reflects typical children's daydreams about their future occupations. An entirely different musical version of the song is found in Cahan (1912, vol. 2), which he collected from Chemerovtsky, in the Ukraine. Here too Davidson has expanded the basic tune, and has also interpolated a complementary lilting triple-meter melody.

V. DANCE WITH ME

This is an anonymous Yiddish folksong whose Yiddish title is *In rod arayn* (Join the Dance!). But the refrain has been attributed to Velvel Zbarzher-Ehrenkrants (1826?–1883; *Di khsidishhe mizinke*). The song's modality conforms to the scale of one of the principal Ashkenazi prayer modes (*Shtayger*), known now by cantors and musicologists as the *ahava rabba* mode, and often colloquially but erroneously identified in cantorial parlance by the Yiddish term *freygish* (Phrygian—understood as "Jewish Phrygian"). The mode is built on the fifth tone of a minor scale (i.e., the fifth becomes the tonic)—with a lowered second and a raised third, giving the characteristic augmented interval between the second and third tones—and a lowered seventh as well, which provides the signature cadential element. The mode—and particularly its scale—is historically ubiquitous in Ukrainian and other eastern European secular songs, and it was adopted by synagogue chant only as a result of eastward Jewish migrations from German-speaking areas following the expulsions in the medieval and immediately postmedieval periods. Much Yiddish folksong later became infused with this modality as well—both from liturgical tradition and more directly from surrounding non-Jewish folksong. The modality also often permeates Hassidic song, which borrowed not only the mode but often songs and melodies in their entirety from Ukrainian, Polish, and other host cultures.

Although there are thematic strains of love-song sentiments in the text of this variant, the song is usually placed more broadly in the category of songs for, or referring to, weddings and other festivities. Indeed, the lyrics here contain an invitation to join the dance and rejoice together “while the stars still shine”—perhaps meaning merely while the night is yet young and while there is still time, or perhaps in reference to a typical outdoor wedding celebration “under the stars,” although the image of both romantic suggestion and mixed dancing (men with women) would then place the song outside traditional religious circles in eastern Europe and attach to it an element of modern Western influence. The third strophe here appears to express a spontaneous infatuation and to acknowledge with some poignancy the potentially fleeting nature of this couple’s encounter. Davidson, however, interpreted that strophe differently, in a Holocaust-oriented context, where, for him, it becomes a harbinger of the echoes of murdered children’s voices, and he transformed the musical expression accordingly. Indeed, Chana Mlotek has located a parody of this song that was sung in the Vilna Ghetto during the Second World War. Among other variants is one that more specifically refers to a wedding, where the elderly parents desire to dance together: “She loves her son-in-law, and I love my daughter-in-law. I would dearly love to dance with you, but at eighty my legs don’t obey me.”

VI. THE MERRY REBBE ELIE

Although to this day it is most often assumed to be an anonymous European folksong, *Der rebe elimeylekh* (The Rebbe Elimeylekh)—the original title of the song that forms the basis for this movement—was actually composed in America by Moshe Nadir [Isaac Reis] (1885–1943), an émigré Yiddish poet and intellectual from Galicia who wrote the song probably sometime during the first two decades of the 20th century and published it initially in pamphlet form in 1923, arranged by Abraham Ellstein. It has been adopted into some circles of Yiddish folklore simply as a benevolent humorous song, at most a gentle satire, about Hassidim—followers of a charismatic *rebbe*

(rabbinical-type leader) or, more generally, adherents of one of the various and splintered mystically oriented and pious movements and philosophies known collectively as Hassidism, whose founding is attributed to Rabbi Israel Ba’al Shem Tov (1700–1760), known by the acronym the BESHT. And the song’s wider popularity among non-Yiddish-speaking circles has been encouraged by numerous concert renditions, choral arrangements, and recordings. All of this, however, is patently misleading, since the song actually belongs clearly to a special category of censorious anti-Hassidic songs.

Among the *mitnaggedim* (orthodox, establishment-oriented opponents of Hassidism on Jewish legal, academic, and philosophic grounds) in Europe during the 19th century, there arose a body of songs that mocked the Hassidim—and especially their *rebbes* and *tzaddikim* (patriarchal righteous ones), derogating them for what was perceived to be superstition, backwardness, blind obeisance to *rebbes*, frivolity, cult of personality, mystical focus, and excessive emphasis on song and dance as a means to ecstasy. For the *mitnaggedim*, this was all to the detriment of more sober study of the traditional religious texts—Bible and Talmud—as the primary objective and overriding virtue of Jewish life. Many of these anti-Hassidic vehicles also soon became popular as entertaining folksongs among Jews who were, strictly speaking, neither Hassidim nor *mitnaggedim* in a formal sense, but more sympathetic to the latter in their overall mainstream sensibilities. But these songs are often misinterpreted, especially by American audiences, as artificially nostalgic but nonetheless welcome romanticized vignettes of a European Hassidic world with which few, even through their previous generations, have any real connection beyond its legendary superficial trappings. Biting satire and intended negative image of the ecstatic Rebbe Elimeylekh and his inebriated followers notwithstanding, the popular perception of this song in particular is now more often innocently tied to yet another sympathetic look at a supposedly joyous aspect of folk life in the “Old World.” It is in that spirit of fun that Rosenbaum fashioned his more benign

English lyrics, and in which Davidson included the song in this suite.

This song is generally thought to have been aimed at a specific *rebbe*: Elimeylekh of Lizhensk (1717–87), a popular *tzaddik* of the third generation of the Hassidic movement and one of the founders of Hassidism in Galicia, who, ironically, was known for his asceticism. Unlike some of his fellow *rebbes*, however, he also acknowledged that asceticism was not necessarily the only path to the mystical Hassidic goal of *tikkun*—“restitution and repair of the world”—and he is quoted as having said that one *tzaddik* might reach *tikkun* through eating and drinking while another might do so through an ascetic life. But he also proposed that at times a *tzaddik* must descend to the level of his community in order to uplift it. And in later life he is said to have refocused on self-fulfillment, apparently neglecting the spiritual leadership of his community of followers.

Nadir's conception of this song should be understood in the context of his own periods of skeptical disillusionment, anger, and moodiness. “When God had nothing better to do,” he is quoted as saying, “He created a world. When I have nothing better to do, I destroy it!” Indeed, much of his writing had an intended shock value, and his literary debut in New York's *Daily Herald* was in a section titled “Awfully Bad Poetry and Not So Bad Prose.”

Der rebe elimeylekh seems to have achieved transatlantic folkloric status even before Nadir published it, for its first notated appearance (text only) was in a 1922 Vilna compilation (*Pinkes*) by Shlomo Bastomski, a folklorist and collector who identified it as an anonymous folksong received from an individual in Soviet Russia in 1921. Bastomski included it as well, without attribution, in his more substantial subsequent 1923 volume, where an addendum informs: “This song has a very nice melody.”

Only two years later it appeared in a Warsaw compendium as received from someone in Białystok. Even though Nadir republished the song in New York in 1929, this time in a book, folklorists, collectors, and editors remained

ignorant of its pedigree, and they continued to include and present it, in its array of variants, as an anonymous folksong—from Europe (as late as 1969) to Buenos Aires to Israel, as well as the United States. There is also testimony that it was sung in Soviet Russia in Russian, as *Uncle Elye*.

In recent decades, folklorists as well as amateur aficionados have seized upon superficial parallels between *Der rebe elimeylekh* and the well-known English nursery song “Old King Cole” (a “merry old soul who called for his fiddlers three”), in which can be found, of course, no trace of the underlying significance, ramifications, or purpose in Nadir's song. There is the obvious if clouded mirror of the king who appears to have no more pressing urgencies than to be entertained, but there is no parallel to the religious-philosophical purposes attached to song and even merriment in Hassidic thinking. The unavoidable comparison is sometimes lifted beyond its legitimate boundary, especially in citations of *Elimeylekh*, without critical assessment, as a Yiddish version of “Old King Cole.”

It was, however, none other than Idelsohn—apparently also oblivious to the facts of the song's genesis and unaware of its young age—who succinctly observed those parallels when he included *Elimeylekh* in his 1932 secular folksong volume (merely reprinted from Kipnis's Warsaw publication from the 1920s). More provocative than the admittedly obvious if thin literary comparison as an implied inspiration for Nadir's poem is Idelsohn's proposed musical parallel. At first glance it is easy to dismiss that suggestion, since anyone who recalls “Old King Cole” will likely do so as a simplistic narrow-range tune in major. But in his annotation to *Elimeylekh*, Idelsohn presented a rare and radically different tune variant of the English children's song—nearly an independent version altogether—in *minor*, whose refrain in particular bears startling resemblance to our Yiddish tune. That discovery increases at least the possibility of its role as a model for Nadir.

Nearly all printed variants and virtually all recordings and concert choral arrangements of *Elimeylekh* have been drawn from the various folkloric transmissions of the text as well as the tune—not from Nadir’s own published urtext. In most current familiar renditions, therefore, the denunciatory tone has long ago been tenderized and the negative characterization muted, partly through elimination of certain aspects altogether. Nadir’s original text did more than rely for its indictment on an insider understanding of the phrase *zeyer freylekh* (very merry) as euphemistic in this song’s context for “tipsy”—or more! In the last and now generally eclipsed stanza of his original poem, for example, “the drunken band of Rebn Meylekh-Elye danced and cavorted merrily, taking up each other’s instruments and carousing until dawn.”

Rosenbaum’s adaptation, of course, includes nothing so overt, and it focuses—as do most contemporary Yiddish renditions—on the positive perceptions of Hassidism vis-à-vis song and joy, celebrating its exuberant spirit and optimistic side. In at least that respect, for all its satirical humor and frivolity, even Nadir’s full original song does touch on a profound aspect of Hassidism: the sheer power of music to evoke joy even in the face of adversities, to encourage hope, and to alleviate mental, emotional, and even physical pain, sometimes by inducing altered states—a power acknowledged by some modern schools of science. These English lyrics and Davidson’s theatrical musical treatment both echo that Hassidic value of the *niggun* (melody) to “drive gloom and sadness away” and to “push all sorrow from today until tomorrow.” It is in that spirit that the song fits admirably into this suite.

VII. SOFTLY SHINES THE MOONLIGHT

Under its Yiddish title, *Oy a nakht a sheyne* (Oh, What a Lovely Night!), this song first appeared in print in a 1913 compilation, where it was identified as heard in Podvrodze [Padvrodz], Vilna district. It also appeared subsequently in 1927–28, in Cahan’s third volume, where it was presented as heard in Kishinev, Bessarabia. Cahan’s variant corresponds closely to the one used by Davidson.

The text could refer to the pain of impending separation associated with emigration to America, when many men departed to establish themselves financially before sending for their wives and families or fiancées. But more likely it belongs to the special category of love songs associated with the harshest periods and episodes of military conscription under the zarist regimes. Here the young woman bemoans her beloved’s imminent departure and wonders if he will ever return—as so many did not.

Idelsohn’s entry of the song without attribution of a source in his 1932 eastern European Jewish folksong volume (IX of the *Thesaurus*) once again tells us that he either knew it from the oral tradition or had forgotten his source. But since the source was probably not Cahan (songs learned from Cahan are so credited there), the song’s independent appearance in Idelsohn may be another indication of its widespread currency in Yiddish folklore by that time.

Davidson dedicated this movement to the memory of Max Helfman (1901–63), one of the most important American composers of synagogue and other Judaically related music, who also wrote a choral setting of this song in its original Yiddish. As one of Davidson’s mentors, Helfman exerted a profound influence on the composer’s creative path. The accompanying figure beginning in the sixth measure is adapted from one of Helfman’s own settings, and the folk tune itself is introduced in the eighth measure.

VIII. YOME, YOME

In this third-person quotation, or recounting of a mother-daughter dialogue, each strophe begins with a request to a musician—Yome (a diminutive for Binyomin, or Benjamin)—either to sing the song or to play accompaniment for it, depending on the text variant. One variant, *Mame vu geystu?* appeared in Ginsburg and Marek, submitted from Kurland and Keydan (mistakenly identified as Kovno), and another appeared in Cahan (1927, vol 3), as heard in Narayev, Galicia, in which

the musician addressed each time is named Shmulik (diminutive for Shmuel, or Samuel) rather than Yome. (Cahan contains another variant with Yome as well.) Yet another of the multiple variants was confirmed by a sixteen-year-old in Botoșani, Bessarabia, in 1928, and is documented in Seculet's folksong compilation.

Among extant variant texts, some introduce alternative or additional items that the mother suggests her daughter might want, at which the young girl protests each time that her mother doesn't understand—until at last her one true desire is elicited, which remains the same in all variants. It is easy to see how this song might be extended, almost endlessly, by the mother continuing to imagine things her daughter might want, and how it could provide the basis for a singing game.

There is an obvious kernel of gentle humor at the conclusion, when the mother finally grasps the answer and her daughter's string of “no” responses suddenly becomes an enthusiastic “yes, now you finally understand”—which practically invites comic delivery. But the song also reflects the embedded marriage goals of traditional Jewish societies.

There are numerous thematic parallels to this song in German, French, Italian, Polish, English, and other folksong repertoires. Cahan has located specific samples in each of those traditions.

IX. NO ONE ELSE

The concluding movement is based on a humorous Yiddish play song composed in America, *Dray yingelekh* (Three Little Boys). The words are by Israel Gochberg (1894–1970), who emigrated to the United States from Bessarabia in 1913; and the tune is by Michl Gelbart, who was born in Ozorkow, Poland, and emigrated in 1912. Gelbart became well known in America for his many Yiddish children's songs and six children's operettas, but his catalogue also includes many charming, simple, and even childlike songs not necessarily for children's audiences alone. Some of these even approach the level of art song.

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The second strophe of the original Yiddish poem contains a play on the word *nissele*, which means “little nut” but is also the name of the third boy, who is the protagonist (diminutive for Nissan): “Mother brought three nuts from the market: one was for Berele, one for Chaim-Shmerere, and the best one for herself; lest you wonder why there was none for me, it's because I *am NISSELE!*” Rosenbaum did not preserve that element in his lyric, in which he imagined alternative images, but he did exploit a similar play on words with the double meaning of “jack”—as the once-popular children's plaything and also the third son's name in his revised English adaptation.



... AND DAVID DANCED BEFORE THE LORD

In fashioning a complete *kabbalat shabbat* and Sabbath eve service on a foundation of combined jazz and blues idioms—in tandem with traditional Hebrew liturgical and biblical chant motifs—Davidson trailblazed new territory in 1966 with the completion of ... *And David Danced Before the Lord*. The work was a watershed event in the progressive development of American synagogue music and became yet another document of intercultural threads in the American Jewish experience.

Rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic elements of jazz and blues can be found in a few previous individual liturgical pieces, such as Kurt Weill's *Kiddush*, from more than two decades earlier, or Gershon Kingsley's *Jazz Psalms*, written more or less in the same year as Davidson's work; and here or there one can discern some imprints of jazz in the harmonic and rhythmic language in liturgical settings, such as in individual movements of Darius Milhaud's *Service Sacré* (1947). But Davidson's work is an overt foray into jazz and blues for an entire artistically unified service, complete with a traditional jazz combo. Apart from its aesthetic merit, the successful reception of ... *And David Danced* soon inspired other composers to

16

turn to jazz and blues as potential media of expression for the Hebrew liturgy.

The 1960s were fertile ground for some adventurous experiments with jazz and blues in Christian services—not only among those less formalized denominations where grassroots populist and folk traditions had long informed the music of worship, but even in some of the so-called mainstream or established churches, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant. The trend may have had some connection to the now-forgotten strains of “liberation theology” that made headlines in the 1960s and 1970s, but those musical experiments probably grew more out of new generational sensibilities and the search for “relevance”—the mantra of those decades—than it did from radical theological-political movements. Sheer aesthetic variety was an important consideration as well. An indigenous American music such as jazz would seem to have been a logical resource on which to draw for the American synagogue, and although much Jewish sacred music in nearly every period has incorporated and reflected American cultural and popular elements, by the beginning of the 1960s it still remained for Jewish liturgical composers to address jazz or blues in a full-length work.

... *And David Danced Before the Lord* was written and first performed in 1966 on commission from Cantor Richard Botton, who sensed some Jewish interest in further exploration into the contemporaneous experiments in church services. The world premiere, in Long Beach, New York, was televised for the CBS program *Lamp Unto My Feet*. In the congregation that night was a teenage Billy Crystal, on whom the work made so great an impression that he requested it years later for his own daughter’s bat mitzvah in California.

The title of this work is derived from the incident in II Samuel 6, where King David, following one of his military campaigns against the Philistines, has retrieved the Holy Ark from them and brought it back into Jerusalem with enormous joy and public celebration. He dances without inhibitions “before the Lord with



Davidson conducting at Congregation Adath Jeshurun

all his might.” But when his wife, Michal (daughter of the former King Saul), sees him “leaping and dancing” in front of the common people at the expense of his royal dignity, she is put off (“and she despised him in her heart”). She admonishes him for his behavior and asks how the King of Israel could have earned honor and respect by “uncovering himself [to dance] shamelessly,” especially in the presence of “handmaids of his servants,” like an ordinary, vulgar man. David replies defiantly that it was “before the Lord” that he danced and celebrated,

and that he will continue to do so—even more so: “I will be yet more vulgar than this.”

Although there is a larger orchestration for stage band—which was performed at Detroit’s Temple Israel and at a music festival at the Interlochen Arts Academy in the early 1980s—in the original version, recorded here, Davidson employs a small ensemble. The intimacy of the reduced forces, he feels, facilitates the rendition of improvisatory passages for individual instruments “in much the same way as Indian raga instrumentalists can look at one another as they play and feel the direction and flow of the music as it develops.”

Davidson chose to commence the service with a setting of passages from *shir hashirim* (Song of Songs), which would not normally occur in or introduce an American synagogue service for Sabbath eve. It reflects a custom that dates to the Kabbalists in Safed, who used to chant hymns to the cantillation motifs of *shir hashirim* as a way of welcoming the Sabbath on Friday afternoon—before the Sabbath. Davidson quotes traditional biblical cantillation motifs in the solo cantorial line, which is supported by blues chords and rhythmic impulses. Bass and vibraphone improvise in true jazz fashion, while the flute echoes the melodic pattern of the solo line at various points.

L’kha dodi (a phrase and title itself borrowed from *shir hashirim*, 7:12) is generally the musical centerpiece of a formal *kabbalat shabbat* (welcoming the Sabbath) service, which precedes the evening service proper. The text is attributed to the 16th-century kabbalistic poet Solomon Halevi Alkabetz (1505–84) and is a mosaic of scriptural phrases and references—from Judges, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Psalms. The Sabbath is personified and compared to a bride, as is the people Israel, and the refrain—which also serves as the introductory strophe—is based on a talmudic passage (Shabbat 119a). So complicated are aspects of this poem and its history, with cryptic references, metaphors, and images, that entire volumes have been devoted to it. The musical approach here combines a light jazz style with one of the traditional Ashkenazi prayer modes (known in cantorial parlance as *adonai*

malakh, whose scale is in some respects akin to major), which applies traditionally to other texts of the *kabbalat shabbat* service. But unlike those other texts, this mode is not required by tradition for *l’kha dodi*—nor is any, since this poem is the one section of the service for which there is no prescribed musical tradition. It has therefore always been an invitation for free musical expression and composition. The sprightly congregational refrains provide contrast with the cantorially rendered strophes, mirroring the poetic structure. A countermelody is played by the flute, and there is a strong rhythmic bass line. The close relationship between words and music is particularly exemplified in the fifth strophe (*hitor’ri*—“Awaken!”), where the music is punctuated by syncopated, descending 7th and 9th chords from the instrumental ensemble.

A cantorial tradition of preceding important prayers with vocalises dates at least to the Baroque, from which period we have ample notated documentation, but it probably extends centuries further back. In a service based on jazz and blues idioms, a “scat” reinterpretation of that custom seemed appropriate to the composer for the invitation to worship contained in the opening prayer of the evening service proper, *bar’khu*. In that sense the device falls well within tradition. Although precise written notes are provided in the score, the cantor is given license to improvise and expand on them, which adds a manifestly cantorial parameter.

Ahavat olam is introduced with what the composer calls a “slow, riverboat blues” in the piano, which sets the mood for the ensuing reflective and moving choral line. Throughout this setting, he aimed at a “lushly romantic sound that would reflect the text’s message of God’s eternal love for us.”

“A driving, polytonal, and syncopated note-cluster in vibes, piano, and string bass,” wrote the composer of the *sh’ma yisra’el* setting, “prepare the ear for the Hebrew declamation” of this pronouncement of God’s uniqueness and eternal oneness, sometimes called the “watchword of the Jewish people.” A custom of concluding the declamation of the final word, *ehad* (one), on a high note

is reflected here as the solo line moves abruptly from its low E flat through G to a high, sustained D. The choir becomes a “speaking chorus” under the legato solo line at the words “And you shall love the Lord your God,” and the solo line alternates between male and female voices.

Mi khamokha begins with a robust, syncopated pattern that suggests the urgency of the exodus from Egypt depicted in this prayer text, with its reflection of the desperation experienced by the fleeing Israelites and the pursuing Egyptians. There is also the subsequent rejoicing and boundless praise for God’s intercession when the Israelites are safe after crossing the parted Sea of Reeds. The vocal line is based on an Arabic *maqam* (a particular type of tune formula or tune pattern in Arabic and Arabic-influenced Persian and other Near Eastern musics), which in this case is known as *sigá*. This lends the setting a Near Eastern flavor that is entirely an arbitrary artistic choice; it is not meant to suggest any historical aesthetic connection to ancient Egypt. The concluding *b’rakha* (benediction, or expression of worship for God) quotes a melodic pattern from the musical tradition of the Three Festivals, most recognizable from its use in the Festival *kiddush* (sanctification recited over wine). Davidson incorporated this melodic material to stress the connection between Passover—one of the Three Festivals when this *kiddush* melody occurs in Ashkenazi tradition—and the Exodus.

The musical mood of *v’sham’ru* reflects the desiderata of Sabbath peace. Against an instrumental pattern of 7th and 9th chords, the soloist states the theme in a relaxed, easygoing duple meter (4/4), with unison-octave choral responses. Particularly interesting is the polytonal conclusion: G-minor 9 with D-flat 7.

The **hatzi kaddish** divides sections of liturgy and in this service introduces the silently recited core section known as the *amida* (“standing,” since it is thus recited). This setting commences with a musical quotation from a traditional Ashkenazi signature tune for the Festival of Shavuot. Although that tune permeates the Shavuot services, it is usually associated in particular and by label

with the *piyyut* (inserted liturgical poem) known as *akdamut*, sung before the biblical readings in the morning services of that Festival. In addition, the *kaddish* setting incorporates biblical cantillation figures and also pays homage to a familiar melody for the text’s occurrence on Sabbath eve. But the imaginative chromatic modulations give that melody a fresh character.

Grant Us Peace is the English adaptation of *sim shalom*, which occurs only in morning and afternoon services in traditional synagogues. Except for the liturgical rite known as *nusah ari*, which is followed in most Hassidic communities, that Hebrew text is replaced with a similar one, *shalom rav*, in evening services. American classic Reform ritual, however, as reflected by its once nearly exclusive reliance on the *Union Prayer Book* (now superseded in many Reform congregations by newer Reform prayerbooks), retained *sim shalom* for evening services as well; and the English adaptation has been a frequent feature.

Yih’yu l’ratzon, which follows the *amida* as a summary request that the just-recited prayers be accepted, was composed specifically for a female solo voice. Its vocal line is based almost entirely on a three-note figure and its permutations.

An’im z’mirot is a *piyyut* usually recited in traditional Ashkenazi ritual at the conclusion of the Sabbath morning services, but its use in this service is a legitimate aesthetic decision. The tune on which this setting is based is one of the most familiar versions for this poem and is amplified by the subtly sharp dissonances in the accompanying chords.

The 5/4 meter and cross-rhythms in the instrumental ensemble for the *kiddush* setting create the jazz parameter, which is juxtaposed against a more traditional and more familiar cantorial line. The incipit of the opening *b’rakha* again reflects the tune usually heard in Festival *kiddush* renditions, which in turn is derived from the *akdamut* melodic incipit. The simultaneous combination of two rhythms between the solo line and the accompaniment lends a feeling of excitement.

Davidson has referred to his setting of *aleinu* as “a jazz waltz, moving quickly to the choral climax” that reflects the majestic tone of the words “His greatness is manifest throughout the world. He is our God, there is none other.”

The concluding hymn, *adon olam*, frequently has been subjected to contrafact (adaptation of secular tunes to liturgical texts), a practice to which its iambic prosody lends itself easily. Especially in American synagogues after the 1950s, such contrafacts have included lighthearted and even pop tunes. So Davidson felt free to “conclude with a groovy setting that was fun to write and—I hope—is fun to sing.” A twelve-measure standard blues pattern over a basso ostinato allows the solo cantor and choir a degree of vocal freedom and an opportunity to “swing.” The grand gesture at the end is ubiquitous in American jazz.



BAROQUE SUITE: Children, Heritage of the Lord

This suite (published with the Hebrew subtitle as well: *Nahalat Adonai Banim*) might be viewed as a stylized Hebraic echo of Western Baroque musical idioms. Like *A Singing of Angels*, it was commissioned by the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale, which gave its premiere in Dayton, Ohio, in 1976. To this observer, who has conducted the work many times with various youth choruses for general as well as Jewish audiences, it has always seemed as if Davidson’s original conception might have been inspired not only by the magnificence and soaring lyricism of Yehuda Halevi’s poetry, but equally so—whether consciously or subliminally—by a sort of cultural-historical fantasy that could follow from a series of hypothetical questions: What if more than a small handful (at most) of self-proclaimed Jews had been able to participate as composers in the mainstream of Western music during the Baroque era? What if, as in 20th-century America, some of those imagined composers had devoted

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A Milken Archive recording session of Davidson’s music, London, 1999

a part of their gifts to Judaic expression as high art or on a universal plane? What if a body of Judaically related but nonliturgical choral music from that period, interpreting some of the great traditions of Hebrew poetry up to that time, had thus come down to us? And what if Jewish, and especially Hebrew, musical expression therefore formed a part of the aggregate Western Baroque canon—a constituent of our composite Baroque repertoire?

Yehuda Halevi (ca. 1075–1141) is universally regarded as one of the greatest of the medieval Spanish Hebrew poets who flourished in what is now often identified as the Golden Age of Spanish/Iberian Jewry. And to the general public today he is probably the most widely recognized exemplar of that artistic tradition. He was also an important philosopher, remembered for his seminal polemical work, *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, which he wrote in Arabic; and he was a physician who served royalty and nobility.

Much of Halevi’s poetry is informed by a philosophical concept he formulated in the *Kuzari*: a fourfold unity that embodies an inextricable relationship among God

20

(as the God of the people Israel and, as master of the universe, of all peoples); the people Israel, to whom truth was revealed through the Scriptures; the Land of Israel (*eretz yisra'el*), which he called the "Gate of Heaven"; and the Hebrew language itself, as the language both of prophecy and of the people Israel. His verse is often filled with passionate love and yearning associated with those intertwined aspects of Jewish existence and expression.

There are about 800 known poems by Halevi, secular as well as religious and quasi-religious. They embrace the following basic categories: love poetry; eulogies and laments; *piyyutim*—liturgical poems inserted into the regular liturgy; personal lyric poetry; and "songs," or hymns to Zion, which swirl with longing for the Land of Israel and all it signifies historically and spiritually for the Jewish people. Those approximately thirty-five *shirei tziyon* (Songs of Zion) contain some of his most famous poems, such as *Libbi b'mizrah* (My Heart Is in the East); *Y'fe nof* (Fair Vista); and *Halomi* (My Dream), which Davidson set for the third movement of his *Baroque Suite*.

In the poems Davidson selected for the second and third movements, Halevi incorporated and juxtaposed biblical verses from Psalms, Song of Songs, Numbers, and the Prophets. The poems for movements IV–VII are entirely original. They are all nonliturgical in function, in the sense that they are not additions to worship services. Nonetheless, they are deeply religious, invoking an intense love for God and between God and the people Israel, and celebrating that special and often misunderstood spiritual relationship.

Baroque Suite is a stylistic musical composite, loosely modeled on various—and mostly early—Baroque formal and harmonic features. And in a sense it is a fusion of Baroque vocal and instrumental elements, since it is a manifestly choral work whose form is nonetheless patterned after the quintessentially Baroque instrumental dance suite. Its succession of movements comprises a series of individual pieces in contrasting stylized dance rhythms typical of many such suites: a stately chorale, a courante, a sarabande, and a minuet—all introduced by

a prelude (solely instrumental here) and followed by a Baroque-style fugue, an intrada, and an aria, rather than concluding with a gigue as do so many late Baroque suites. There are also traces of late Renaissance choral writing, where interpolated homophonic passages or short sections deviate briefly from the established rhythmic pattern of a movement and from its otherwise continuous polyphonic flow. Mild allusions to late Renaissance textures may also be discerned in the relative similarity and equality of independent voice parts in some sections. But overall the counterpoint here is governed in Baroque fashion by a harmonic scheme and by a series of harmonic chord progressions that are defined in the harpsichord accompaniment—a trait that separates the choral style of this work from the more independent a cappella polyphony of the Renaissance.

Baroque Suite also makes modest reference to the typical Baroque representation of various *affections*—"states of the soul," such as excitement, grandeur, contemplation, exaltation, agitation, loftiness, or wonderment—through its sharply contrasting expositions. The resulting appositions among the movements in spirit, rhythm, and tempo create the desired tension throughout. This tension between opposing moods and between lyric expression and more disciplined order, as well as between contrasting *affections*, is emblematic of the Baroque and its departure from more conservative emotional detachment in music of the preceding period.

Reliance on patterns of strictly measured and regular rhythms in this suite also follows Baroque practice. But, almost in contrast to this metrical strictness, the vocal lines mirror the expansive lyricism of the poetry where appropriate. This too might be viewed within the contextual framework of a duality that is often associated with the Baroque.

The idiomatic use of harpsichord as the primary accompanying instrument echoes a familiar Baroque sonority. Its bass line, or sometimes other pitches central to the voice leading, is reinforced by the cello, much as in the typical Baroque *basso continuo* practice. The

flute adds yet another Baroque association, especially in its contrapuntal obligato passages. In his harmonic language, as well as in both vocal and instrumental idioms, Davidson maintains that he sought deliberately to evoke an early Baroque style (ca. 1580–1630), particularly in its Italian phase.

The following movements have been excerpted for this recording:

III. COURANTE

In stylized presentation, this dance form is a regular feature of late Baroque abstract instrumental suites (i.e., not necessarily functional dance music, although it also appeared as early as the 15th century in music to accompany actual dance). Johann Jakob Froberger (1616–67) is generally reputed to have established the courante as a standard component of dance suites. In this movement of the *Baroque Suite*, the choral entry, which presents a theme in G major that is repeated and then developed, is preceded by a gracious instrumental introduction. Halevi's words appear to have been inspired by the text of Numbers 24:5 (*ma tov u ohalekha ... / How lovely are your tents of dwelling*), which often forms the opening prayer in many contemporary synagogue services. That biblical passage was also the source for Brahms's "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place" in his German Requiem.

IV. SARABANDE

This slow dance form was also fixed as a standard suite movement by Froberger. It was common practice for such Baroque masters as Handel, Corelli, and Bach to utilize in their works well-known and even popularly recognizable tunes. Davidson followed that practice in this movement by quoting, with slight variations and modulations, such tunes found in actual Baroque-era works. The poem asserts God's knowledge of each person even before he was created, and it takes the form of a plea to God to guard the poet while he sleeps and to awaken him so that he may worship and praise God's name.

V. MINUET

Halevi's poem, titled "Morning Hymn," or "Hymn to the Morning," depicts the splendor of the early morning stars as they fade into the brightening sky during sunrise. For religiously observant Jews in former times, those morning stars served as an indication to those who stood watch during the night that the time for morning prayers had come. Davidson reflects this with a simple theme in F major, which is repeated and then developed to the movement's conclusion.

In highly stylized form, all three of these dance forms—the minuet, the sarabande, and the courante—along with others such as the allemande and the gigue—were brought to their artistic zenith in Bach's suites and partitas.

VI. FUGUE

This fugal movement is reminiscent of imitative contrapuntal techniques and idioms of the Baroque. Halevi's poem proposes that only those who serve God are truly free, while "servants of time will become slaves to time." This movement begins with a three-part fugato in C major, its modest development soon interrupted by a chorale. The fugal treatment of the subject is then continued, concluding with another chorale section and a coda.

The published score includes, in addition to the transliterated Hebrew text underlay, a singable English adaptation by the composer. Davidson has acknowledged in his preface, however, that the simplicity of Halevi's style in the original Hebrew is elusive, so that no English rendering can approach the poet's "inspired choice of words" and stylistic mastery.

— Neil W. Levin

A SINGING OF ANGELS (Folk Song Suite)

Sung in English

Text: Samuel Rosenbaum

I. ONCE MY PAIR OF OXEN

Once my pair of oxen
Baked a pie with rocks in.
Wasn't that a sight to see then
When the oxen baked the rocks in?
Wasn't that a wonder?

Once my pair of parrots
Picked some yellow carrots.
Wasn't that a sight to see then
When the parrots picked the carrots,
When the oxen baked the rocks in.
Wasn't that a wonder?

Once my pair of billy goats
Ate a pot of chilly oats.
Wasn't that a sight to see then
When the billy goats ate the chilly oats,
When the parrots picked the carrots,
When the oxen baked the rocks in.
Wasn't that a wonder?

Once my pair of vixen
Pushed a cart with six in.
Wasn't that a sight to see then
When the vixen pushed the six in,
When the billy goats ate the chilly oats,
When the parrots picked the carrots,
When the oxen baked the rocks in.
Wasn't that a wonder?

Once my pair of kitty cats
Bought a bag of bitty bats.
Wasn't that a sight to see then
When the kitty cats bought the bitty bats,
When the vixen pushed the six in,
When the billy goats ate the chilly oats,
When the parrots picked the carrots,

When the oxen baked the rocks in.
Wasn't that a wonder?

Once my pair of you-guess-who
Couldn't find a thing to do.
When the kitty cats bought the bitty bats,
When the vixen pushed the six in,
When the billy goats ate the chilly oats,
When the parrots picked the carrots,
When the oxen baked the rocks in.
Wasn't that a wonder?
Wasn't that a sight to see then
When the you-guess-who
Could not find a single, solitary, silly thing to do,
Wasn't that a wonder?

II. MY PAGES ARE SNOWY WHITE

My pages are snowy white, and my ink is pitch-black.
They beg you, my dearest one, won't you please come
back?
They tell you that I miss you;
Hope you miss me, too.
They tell that I love you;
Hope that you love me, too.

Last night I went all alone to a wedding in town.
My tears flowed unendingly till my heart did drown
When I thought of how long it will be
Till our wedding day.
Till you and I share the moment
When "harej at ..." [I take you to be my wife] you will say.

I dream of your face, so gentle and fine.
I dream that you've come for me and your lips touch mine.
And your arms do enfold me
But I dream all in vain.
For I wake from my dreaming,
All alone with my pain.

I end now my letter here and I seal with a kiss.
I send you a lover's kiss just to tell you this:
Till I hear from you in return,
My world will stand still.
For only you can end my longing,
Only you, if you will.

III. IN THE VALLEY

In the valley, on the meadow
Green the grass did grow.
In the valley, on the meadow
Tall the corn did grow.
And around the house were planted
Eight trees in a row.

And the house it rang with laughter
Of our family.
First came Papa, then came Mama
And the children three.
And dear Papa and dear Mama
Loved us tenderly.
And they bought us and they brought us
A menagerie.

First a puppy, then a kitten
And a pony, too.
Puppy barked, the pony neighed
And the kitten cried "me-yow!"

Brought a calf with one black eye
And with a crooked leg.
Brought a hen that
Clucked and cackled
Till she laid an egg.
Mazi tov!

IV. IF DREAMS CAME TRUE

I could be a *rov* [rabbi]
If I knew some Torah.
I could be a merchant
If I had some *skhoyre* [merchandise].
I could be a *shoykhet* [ritual slaughterer]
If I learned to slay.
I could be a *hazzan* [cantor]
If I learned to pray.
I could be most anything
Poet, scholar, even king.
If by wishing dreams came true,
I'd wish a million things to do.

I could be a *rov*.
I could be a merchant.
If by wishing dreams came true,
I'd wish a million things to do.

I could be a baker
If I could mix the dough.
I could be a tailor
If I could cut and sew.
I could be most anything
Poet, scholar, even king.
If by wishing dreams came true,
I'd wish a million things to do.
I could be a baker.
I could be a tailor.
If by wishing dreams came true,
I'd wish a million things to do.

V. DANCE WITH ME

Dance with me,
Dance with me.
Put your hand in mine.
Come, dance with me.
Dance with me
While the stars still shine.
Dance, dance,
Come, dance along with me.
Life's a happy chance
So take my hand
And dance along with me.

Sing with me,
Sing with me.
Add your voice to mine.
Come, sing with me,
Sing with me
Let our hearts entwine.
Sing, sing,
Come, sing along with me.
Let the song take wing.
Come on and sing
Along with me.

Remember me,
Remember me
When the song is ended.
Remember me,
Remember me
When the night's descended.
And if ever
You forget my song,

Speak my name
And hear again
The echo of my song.

VI. THE MERRY REBBE ELIE

When the saintly Rebbe Elie
Wanted people to be merry,
When he wanted his Hassidim to be gay,
He would take a sip of wine
And on *shiraim*¹ he would dine
And would send for his fiddlers to play.
And when the *rebbe's* forty fiddlers
Played upon their forty fiddles,
They banished gloom and sadness all the day.
For the *rebbe's* forty fiddles
Knew the answers to life's riddles
And could drive gloom and sadness away.

When the saintly Rebbe Elie
Wanted very to be merry,
He wanted to inspire higher joy.
He would to the *shames*² bellow,
"Come, let's make the music mellow!"
And would send for the cello to enjoy.
When the *rebbe's* yellow cello
Played a tune so sweet and mellow,
It lifted one and all to higher joy.
For the playing of the cello
Made each man to love his fellow
And the gloom and the sadness to destroy.

When the saintly Rebbe Elie
Wanted, oh, so very very to be merry,
When he wanted for his joy to reach on high,
He would start a *sher* [a dance] a-winding,
And he then began reminding
His two trumpeters their song to magnify.
And when the *rebbe's* fine musicians
Joined as one in their renditions,
It set the angels dancing there on high.
For the *niggun* pushed all sorrow
From today into tomorrow,
And the song all tomorrows will defy.

VII. SOFTLY SHINES THE MOONLIGHT

Softly shines the moonlight.
The nightingale sings up above.
But no song do we hear and no moon do we see
For tomorrow you leave, my love.

Softly shines the moonlight.
The breeze seems to whisper good-bye.
Who knows will you ever return to me?
Who knows yet the tears I will cry?

Softly shines the moonlight.
How quickly our moments do fly.
Now I'm all alone in the moonlight
And the nightingale echoes my sigh.

VIII. YOME, YOME

Yome, Yome,
Tell me, my pretty one,
What does my little girl want?
A new pair of shoes, some chocolate candy?
A party dress or cake made with brandy?
No, Mama dear, no.
You say you love me so,
But yet you do not know.

Yome, Yome,
Tell me, my pretty one,
What does my little girl want?
A kitten to play with, a purse made of satin?
A hat with a ribbon, a book all in Latin?
No, Mama dear, no.
You say you love me so,
But yet you do not know.

Yome, Yome,
Tell me, my pretty one,
What does my little girl want?
A coat trimmed with fur,
a gold pen for writing?
A cart and a pony,
isn't that exciting?
No, Mama dear, no.
You say you love me so,
But yet you do not know.

¹ *Shiraim* are the *rebbe's* leftovers, which, in some Hassidic traditions, are customarily distributed among his followers, who consider it an honor and meritorious to consume them.

² The *rebbe's* personal assistant.

Yome, Yome,
Tell me, my pretty one,
Who does my little girl want?
Do you want a groom and a wedding?
To the *shadkhn* [matchmaker]
we'd better be heading.
Yes, Mama dear, yes.
I really must confess
You need no more to guess.
Yes ...

IX. NO ONE ELSE

My mother, oh, she had three sons.
Three sons are all she bore.
Such rosy, round, red-cheeked sons
You never ever saw.
Now, one she called just Berele.
The second Khayim Shmerele.
And she did call the third one—
Late for every meal.
I played a trick on you.
I played a trick on you.
The third boy in our family
Is no one else but me.

On one fine day our family
Went to the sea to swim.
And guess what we three sons did see?
A whale with a mandolin.
He played a song for Berele,
And one for Khayim Shmerele.
But played no song for me-ee,
But played no song for me?
Now, why no song for me?
Well, anyone could see
That foolish whale he broke his tail
When he played do-re-mi.

A fond good-bye our family
Said to that poor old whale.
And guess what else we boys did see?
A seaside seashell sale.
We bought a shell for Berele,
And one for Khayim Shmerele.
But not one single seashell
Was left to sell to me.
No seashells did I see.

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No seashell did he see.
There were no seashells by the seashore
Left to sell to me.

My mother once brought home some jacks.
She bought them at the fair.
She brought the jacks in two black sacks
And gave them out with care.
She gave one jack to Berele
And one to Khayim Shmerele,
But one she would not part with,
She would not give away.
And if you ask of me,
How come no jack for me?
It's just because my mama's jack
Is no one else but me.



... AND DAVID DANCED BEFORE THE LORD

Sung in Hebrew and English
Translation from the Hebrew by Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

SHIR HASHIRIM

The Song of Songs, by Solomon.
Oh, give me of the kisses of your mouth....
Let me be a seal upon your heart,
Like the seal upon your hand.
For love is fierce as death....
The Song of Songs, by Solomon.

Translation: JPS Tanakh 1999

L'KHA DODI

REFRAIN:

Beloved, come—let us approach the Sabbath bride
and welcome the entrance of our Sabbath, the bride.

STROPHES 2, 5, 9:

Let us go, indeed hasten to greet the Sabbath,
For she is the source of blessing.
From creation's primeval beginnings that blessing has
flowed.
For on the seventh day—the end of the beginning of
creation—

God made His Sabbath.
But He conceived of her on the first of the days—
at the beginning of the beginning of creation.

Awaken, awaken!
Your light has come.
Arise and shine,
Awake, awake—
Speak a song! Sing a poem!
The glory of the Lord is revealed to you.

Sabbath, you who are your Master's crown,
Come in peace, in joy, in gladness
Into the midst of the faithful of a remarkably special
people.
Come, O Sabbath bride—
Bride, come!

BAR'KHU

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

AHAVAT OLAM

You have loved the House of Israel, Your people, with an
abiding love—teaching us Your Torah and commandments,
Your statutes and judgments. Therefore, O Lord our God,
upon our retiring for the night and upon our arising, we
will contemplate Your teachings and rejoice for all time in
the words of Your Torah and its commandments. For they
are the essence of our life and the length of our days. We
will meditate on them day and night. May Your love never
leave us. You are worshiped, O Lord (He is worshiped, and
His name is worshiped), who loves His people Israel. Amen.

SH'MA YISRA'EL

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

Choir:
Praised and honored be the very name of His kingdom
forever and ever.

Cantor:
And you shall love the Lord, Your God, with all your heart,
and with all your soul and all your might,

Soprano Solo:
and these words which I command you this day shall be on

your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children
and shall speak of them when you sit in your house, when
you walk by the way, when you lie down and arise up.

Cantor:
You shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they
shall be for frontlets between your eyes; you shall write
them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates,

Soprano Solo:
that you may remember and do all my commandments
and be holy unto your God.

MI KHAMOKHA

Who is comparable among the mighty to You, O Lord?
Who can equal the magnificence of Your holiness? Even
to praise You inspires awe, You who perform wondrous
deeds. Your children witnessed Your majesty, looking on
as You parted the sea in the presence of Moses. "This is my
God" they sang, and repeated "The Lord shall reign for all
eternity." And it has been said in Scripture: "For the Lord
has rescued Jacob and liberated him from a most powerful
foe." You are worshiped, O Lord (He is worshiped, and His
name is worshiped), You who redeemed Israel. Amen.

V'SHAM'RU

The children of Israel shall keep and guard the Sabbath
And observe it throughout their generations as an eternal
covenant.

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever,
That the Lord created heaven and earth in six days,
And that on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.

HATZI KADDISH

May God's great name be even more exalted and
sanctified in the world that He created according to His
own will; and may He fully establish His kingdom in your
lifetime, in your own days, and in the life of all those of
the House of Israel—soon, indeed without delay. Those
praying here signal assent and say amen.

May His great name be worshiped forever, for all time, for
all eternity.

Worshiped, praised, glorified, exalted, elevated, adored,
uplifted, and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One,
praised be He—over and beyond all the words of worship
and song, praise and consolation ever before uttered in
this world. Those praying here signal assent and say amen.

GRANT US PEACE

Grant us peace, Your most precious gift, O Lord, eternal source of peace, and enable Israel to be its messenger to all the peoples of the earth. Bless our country that it may ever be a stronghold of peace and its advocate in the council of nations. May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes. Strengthen the bonds of friendship and fellowship among the inhabitants of all lands. Plant virtue in every soul, and may the love of Your name hallow every home and every heart. Praise are You, O Lord, giver of peace.

YIH'YU L'RATZON

May my prayers of [articulated] words as well as the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, Lord, my Rock and Redeemer.

AN'IM Z'MIROT

Sweet songs will I sing You and hymns compose; Your wonder is near to my soul in repose; my being is stirred as the prophets of old in mystical visions Your love foretold. My lips speak Your praise; my heart glorifies Your essence, Your oneness. Your truth will reply, Accept, Lord, the silent pray'r of my heart. Creator of all and of all apart, my lips speak Your praise, my heart glorifies Your essence, Your oneness. Your truth will reply, I know not Your form nor can fathom Your ways. Draw near through my pray'r and on earth find Your praise, Sweet songs will I sing You and hymns compose, Your wonder is near to my soul in repose.

KIDDUSH

You are worshiped, O Lord (He is worshiped, and his name is worshiped), our God, King of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine. Amen.
You are worshiped, O Lord (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, O Lord (He is worshiped, and his name is worshiped), our God, who hallows the Sabbath. Amen.

8.559436

ALEINU

Let us adore the ever living God and render praise unto Him who spread out the heaven, established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world. He is our God. There is none other.

We bend the knee, bow in worship, and give thanks to the King of Kings, the Holy One, praised be He. On that ultimate day all will acknowledge that the Lord is the one God. And His name shall be acknowledged as "One."

ADON OLAM

Rabbi (spoken): May the Lord let His countenance shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Cantor and Choir:

Lord of the world, who reigned even before form was created,

It was when His will brought everything into existence— That His name was proclaimed King.

At the time when His will brought everything into existence,

Then His name was proclaimed King.

And even should existence itself come to an end, He, the Awesome One, would yet reign alone.

He was, He is, He shall always remain in splendor throughout eternity.

He is "One"—there is no second or other to be compared with Him.

He is without beginning and without end;

All power and dominion are His.

He is my God and my ever living Redeemer,

And the Rock upon whom I rely in times of distress and sorrow.

He is my banner and my refuge,

The portion in my cup—my cup of life Whenever I call to Him.

I entrust my spirit unto His hand,

As I go to sleep and as I awake;

For my body remains with my spirit.

The Lord is with me; I do not fear.



BAROQUE SUITE (excerpts)

Sung in Hebrew

Poetry: Yehuda Halevi (ca. 1075–1141)

III. COURANTE: HALOMI (My Dream)

My God, Thy dwelling places are lovely!
It is in vision and not in dark speeches that
Thou art near.

My dream did bring me into the sanctuaries
of God,
And I beheld His beautiful services;
And the burnt offering and meal offering and
drink offering,
And round about, heavy clouds of smoke.
And it was ecstasy to me to hear the Levites'
song,
In their council for the order of services.

I awoke, and I was yet with Thee, O God,
And I gave thanks, and it was sweet to thank
Thee.

IV. SARABANDE: ET SHIMKHA L'VAREKH

(Wake Me to Bless My Name)

Thou didst know me before Thou hadst formed me,
And so long as Thy spirit is within me, Thou keepest me.
Have I any standing ground if Thou drive me out?
Is there any going forth for me if Thou restrain me?
And what can I say, since my thought is in Thine hand?
And what can I do until Thou help me?
I have sought Thee: in a time of favor answer me,
And as with a shield, gird me round with Thy grace.
Raise me up to seek early Thy shrine;
Wake me to bless Thy name.

V. MINUET: KOL KOKHVEI VOKER (Morning Hymn)

All the stars of morning sing to Thee,
For the radiance of their shining is of Thee;
And the sons of God, standing by the watches
Of night and day, glorify the glorious name;
And the company of saints receive the word from them,
And every dawn, wake early to seek Thine house.

VI. FUGUE: HELKI ADONAI (The Lord Is My Portion)

Servants of time—the slaves of slaves are they;
The Lord's servant, he alone is free.
Therefore when each man seeketh his portion,
"The Lord is my portion," saith my soul.

Source: Brady 1924
Translation: Nina Salaman



About the Performers



The **FINCHLEY CHILDREN'S MUSIC GROUP** was founded in 1958 to give the first amateur performance of Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde*. It has pursued an ongoing commitment to the commissioning of new music for children's voices, including works by Brian Chapple, Malcolm Williamson, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Alex Roth, Piers Halliwell, and Christopher Gunning. The group has performed under such conductors as Kurt Masur, Matthias Bamert, André Previn, Vladimir Ashkenazy and their president, Sir Colin Davis. Recent appearances at the BBC Promenade Concerts in the Royal Albert Hall, London, include Alex Roth's *Earth and Sky* (2000) and Britten's *War Requiem* (2004), while other highlights have included Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, under André Previn, and High Mass at the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris on All Saints' Day 2003, performing Britten's *Missa Brevis*. FCMG has made recordings for television, radio, film, and disc—most recently for a 2004 TV musical of *A Christmas Carol* for NBC—and has led the singing in prestigious events such as the VE and VJ Day memorial celebrations before Her Majesty the Queen. Their 30th anniversary production of *Noye's Fludde* was the first fully staged Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, and in their 40th anniversary year they took part in the world premiere of the children's opera *Alexander the*

Great by David Blake, on the island of Lesbos. The group's music director since 2001 is Grace Rossiter.

Based at the North Western Reform Synagogue, the **JEWISH HERITAGE YOUTH CHORUS** draws its membership from among Jewish children throughout Greater London and presents a variety of liturgical and secular Jewish music. In 1990 the group sang at the Royal Festival Hall in Neil Levin's *Voice of Jewish Russia*, as well as at the Barbican Center in 1996 in the Holocaust oratorio *Vanished Voices*.



Nicholas Wilks rehearsing with the Finchley Children's Music Group

The English conductor **NICHOLAS WILKS** was born in Kingston, near London, and spent his childhood in Hampshire. He was a chorister of Winchester College Chapel Choir and a music scholar at Cranleigh School, and he studied English at Oxford University, where he formed the Oxford Philharmonia. He subsequently studied clarinet and conducting with Colin Metters and John Carewe at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and in July 2000 he made his highly successful debut at the BBC Proms. On that occasion he conducted the premiere of Alec Roth's *Earth and Sky*, with pianist Joanna

MacGregor, the percussion quartet Ensemble Bash, and the Finchley Children's Music Group, of which he was formerly music director and with which he has made a number of critically acclaimed recordings. He is a trustee for the Soweto string teaching project Buskaid, and in 1998 he led the Hampshire County Youth Orchestra's tour of South Africa, the first visit by a British youth orchestra since the fall of apartheid. Since September 2004 he has served as master of music at Winchester College.



Soprano **AMY GOLDSTEIN** was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. She attended the North Carolina School of the Arts and studied at the Manhattan School of Music with soprano Adele Addison. In addition to her many opera roles, Goldstein is also known for her dedication to new works and to Jewish music.

A native of Lincoln, Nebraska, baritone **DOUGLAS WEBSTER** studied at Indiana and Northwestern universities, the Banff Centre (Alberta), and in France. He made his debut in 1988 at Leonard Bernstein's seventieth-birthday concert at Tanglewood as the Celebrant in Bernstein's *Mass* and has performed it at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Vatican. Artistic director of the American Singer seminar in Breckenridge, Colorado, he is on the faculty of the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music, University of Memphis.



RAMON RICKER first began his musical studies on the clarinet at the age of ten. At sixteen, his interest in jazz led him to begin saxophone lessons as well. He received a bachelor of music education degree in clarinet from the University of Denver, a master of music degree in woodwind performance from Michigan State University, and a doctor of musical arts degree in music education and clarinet from the Eastman School. He is a featured saxophone and clarinet soloist and chamber musician in venues throughout Europe and North America, and since 1973 he has been a clarinetist in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, which he occasionally conducts.

Vibraphonist **CHRIS VATALARO** was born in Albany, New York, and graduated from the Eastman School of Music. He has performed and recorded with such artists as Stewart Copeland, Steve Reich, Joan LaBarbara, and the Albany Symphony. He has been a guest performer at Tanglewood, Bennington College, the University of Michigan, and Juilliard.

A native of Texas, pianist **HUBERT "TEX" ARNOLD** began his professional career in the late 1960s as a staff arranger for the United States Military Academy Band at West Point. He has worked with such artists as Ruth Brown, Margaret Whiting, Julie Wilson, and Barbara Cook, among many others. In June 2004 the United States Military Academy Band gave the first performance of his arrangement of the *Marcia*, the fourth movement of the *Serenade for Strings* by Dag Wirén.

Bassist **JEFF CAMPBELL**, an assistant professor of jazz and contemporary media at the Eastman School of Music since 1997, is currently completing a doctorate in musical arts in double bass performance and music education from the Eastman School.

Drummer **RICH THOMPSON** is an assistant professor of jazz studies and contemporary media at the Eastman School of Music. He has performed with the Count Basie Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic, and Tito Puente, among many others.

BRAD LUBMAN has conducted major orchestras and ensembles in the United States and abroad, including the New World Symphony, the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Speculum Musicae, the Steve Reich Ensemble, Bang on a Can's SPIT Orchestra, the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester of Berlin, and the New Millennium Ensemble. He has performed and taught at the Tanglewood Music Center, where from 1989 to 1994 he was staff conductor and assistant to Oliver Knussen. In May 2001 he was assistant conductor to Michael Tilson Thomas in performances of Steve Reich's The Desert Music with the San Francisco Symphony. Lubman is an associate professor of conducting and ensembles and music director of the Eastman Musica Nova Ensemble at the Eastman School of Music.



CHARLES DAVIDSON (b.1929)***A Singing of Angels (1967)***

Publisher: Ashbourne Music
Recording: The Warehouse, London, UK, November 1999
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes
Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

... And David Danced Before the Lord (1966)

Publisher: Ashbourne Music
Recording: Hale Auditorium/Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY, January 2001
Recording Producer: David Frost
Recording Engineer: David Dusman
Recording Project Manager: Richard Lee, Charles Davidson

Baroque Suite (excerpts) (1974)

Publisher: Ashbourne Music
Recording: The Warehouse, London, UK, November 1999
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes
Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

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