

Cover Art

Celebration of Israel

A MESSAGE FROM THE MILKEN ARCHIVE FOUNDER



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

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

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

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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 black ink that reads "Neil W. Levin". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being the most prominent part.

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 Composers



More than half a century after his premature death, the life and the art of **KURT WEILL** (1900–1950) continue to fascinate. On many levels he is sui generis among the émigré composers of the 1930s, and perhaps among all American composers—especially in his juxtaposition of styles. His music mirrors the various artistic, moral, political, and spiritual contradictions of his generation and his times.

Weill was born in Dessau, Germany, the son of a cantor and scion of a family of rabbis and rabbinic scholars whose Judeo-German roots have been traced to the 13th century. He began composing at age twelve; his first surviving piece is a setting of *mi addir* in Hebrew, a text sung at Jewish weddings, but his first substantial piece was a song cycle on poems (in German translation) by the great medieval Spanish-Hebrew poet Yehuda Halevi. While at the Berliner Musikhochschule, he studied with Engelbert Humperdinck and was briefly an assistant to the conductor Hans Knappertsbusch at the Dessau Opera. He then entered the master class of the legendary Ferruccio Busoni and became acquainted with the music of some of the composers who would become important leaders of the German avant-garde. During those years, Weill wrote his first stage work, as well as his first symphony, a string quartet, and other concert pieces.

In 1926 in Dresden, Weill enjoyed his first major theatrical success: a one-act opera with a libretto by George Kaiser, with whom he would collaborate on other important works. It was in Kaiser's home that Weill met his future wife, the singer Lotte Lenya, who is generally acknowledged as the pervasive propelling energy behind his work and certainly the champion of his legacy.

Weill began a collaboration with the left-wing, socially critical, and sympathetically communist poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht that would yield a half dozen musical theater works, including the full-length opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny) and the social satire *Die Dreigroschenoper* (The Threepenny Opera), which is based on John Gay's 18th-century *The Beggar's Opera* and is, to this day, regarded as Weill's greatest international success; it has been translated into eleven languages.

The social messages and leftist perspectives in Weill's works were sure to invite contempt from the Nazis and their followers, who viewed social reformers as the agents of Germany's defeat in the First World War and considered Weill's art an example of the quintessential "cultural Bolshevism" that was lethal to German society. This, together with his affiliation with the egregious communist Brecht, as well as the wider circles of Weimar's leftist avant-garde, made Weill a focus of efforts to discredit him and sabotage his performances. His so-called leftist sympathies, however, must be appreciated in the context of the universalist and pacifist orientations of his time and circle, rather than as a form of political commitment. When Weill's sense of artistic isolation drove him from Germany in 1933, it was probably less as a Jew at that stage and more for his unwillingness to reorient his work to an art devoid of social or political dimension.

After a sojourn as a refugee in Paris, Weill went to New York in 1935, initially to supervise the production of *The Eternal Road*, a unique amalgam of biblical pageant, music drama, Jewish passion play, and theatrical extravaganza in the service of a Jewish ideological message. His collaborators were director Max Reinhardt and playwright Franz Werfel. Inspired by the anti-Jewish measures of the new Nazi regime in Germany as well as by the ideals of the Zionist movement, the work was conceived to reflect the broad spectrum of Jewish history and persecution through biblical accounts in the context of—and related to—events of the modern era. It attempted to convey the perpetual homelessness of the Jewish people and to suggest an ultimate solution to their suffering and wandering: a return as a national entity to their reclaimed and rebuilt ancient home in Palestine—the Land of Israel.

The “American” Weill turned away from the opera house *per se*, even though some of his American musical theater works have been considered operatic—or even prototypes of a new form of American opera. He focused instead on commercial theater, becoming a leading figure in the revitalization of the Broadway musical and the exploration of a distinctly American musical-dramatic genre. Weill’s first full-fledged Broadway show was *Knickerbocker Holiday*, in which Walter Huston sang “September Song,” followed by other scores including *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Street Scene*, and *Lost in the Stars*. He was working on a musical based on *Huckleberry Finn* at the time of his fatal heart attack in 1950.

Although as an adult Weill shed his Judaism in terms of ritual observance or religious commitment, he never disavowed his Jewish roots. To the contrary, he was always proud of his father’s cantorial calling and his **8.559461**

distinguished rabbinical lineage, and he bemoaned the difficulty of active Jewish identity outside a communal context.

Of the major American musical theater composers and songwriters who happened to be Jews—among them Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, Jule Styne, and Stephen Sondheim—Weill was one of the very few, along with Leonard Bernstein, to write even a single synagogue piece. His imaginative setting of the *kiddush*, commissioned in 1946 by New York’s Park Avenue Synagogue for its annual Sabbath eve service devoted to new music, is today considered a liturgical masterpiece. And he expressed his willingness to compose additional Hebrew liturgical settings.

After *The Eternal Road*, Weill collaborated on two further large-scale Jewish pageants—*We Will Never Die* (1943) and *A Flag Is Born* (1946)—whose purposes, though ultimately unsuccessful, were to galvanize public support in order to effect changes in government policies. Weill’s literary partner for both was playwright Ben Hecht, who had published the first indisputable graphic evidence that the Holocaust and the “final solution” were already under way. *We Will Never Die* was conceived to bring the Holocaust to public attention and to provoke Allied action to save Europe’s remaining Jews. With an all-star cast and a chorus of 400 rabbis and cantors, it played to 40,000 people in a single day in two performances at New York’s Madison Square Garden, and then toured several cities.

A Flag Is Born had an even more overtly propagandist and militant aim in its support of the Revisionist Zionist cause, which thus separated it from a large part of American Jewry, including advocates in Washington, as well as from mainstream Zionist circles. Nonetheless,

with a high-profile cast that included Marlon Brando, Paul Muni, and Luther Adler, the production had 120 New York performances followed by a tour, and it raised respectable sums for its Revisionist sponsors and their faction in Palestine.

There may always be some debate about the extent and evolution of Weill's "Jewish identity," especially over whether his Judaically oriented works represent either a form of spiritual "return to his roots" or an awakening of a related ethnic-national consciousness—or, on some level, both. Certainly by the mid-1940s it would seem that the earlier universalist and pacifist Weill had become Weill the fervent Jewish nationalist. Many have been convinced that *The Eternal Road* represented his own personal "road back" to Jewish identification, while others have claimed that his Jewish works arose more simply from the feeling of solidarity among Jewish artists that was precipitated by Germany's war against the Jews and the enthusiasm for the Zionist enterprise as a response. On balance, though, it is difficult in retrospect to imagine Kurt Weill the composer as divorced from the genuine Jewish and humanitarian concerns expressed so artistically in his Jewish works.

HATIKVA

In 1947, when Kurt Weill's orchestral arrangement of *HATIKVA* received its world premiere in New York, it was still—as it had been for decades—the anthem of the modern Zionist movement, expressing the hope and determination of a dispersed people for a permanent national home in Palestine. Less than six months later, it had become the de facto national anthem of the new sovereign State of Israel.

Its words were first penned in 1877–78, originally as *Tikvatenu* (Our Hope), by Naphtali Herz Imber (1856–1909). Imber was a so-called *halutz* (pioneer settler in Palestine) poet of the First Aliya—the initial wave of Zionist immigration and settlement (1882–1903), mostly from the Russian Empire and other parts of eastern and east Central Europe. He was born in Galicia, and in 1882 he came to Palestine, staying there for six years before traveling extensively and settling eventually in America, where he lived out the remainder of his days.

Imber is known to have written at least the first draft of *Tikvatenu* while living in Jassy [Iași], Romania, and he is thought to have been inspired by news of the founding of the city of Petach Tikva (lit., gateway of hope) in Palestine. A literary parallel to the poem's theme of persistent national hope may be found in the words to an earlier Polish patriot song—"Poland is not yet lost while we still live"—which later became independent republican Poland's national anthem during the brief interwar period, and it has been suspected that those words might have served as a thematic source for Imber.

Soon after his arrival in Palestine, Imber shared his poem with farmers and other residents when he was living at the settlement Rishon L'tziyon, where he is said to have created additional stanzas, sometimes spontaneously at readings. Eventually the poem contained nine stanzas with a refrain (*od lo avda tikvatenu* ...), only the first two of which are retained in the present incarnation, the anthem *Hatikva*. His final revised draft was accomplished in Jerusalem, probably in 1884.

Imber included *Tikvatenu* in his collection of poetry, *Barkai* (Dawn), which he published in Palestine in 1886. Each poem or song text (without specific

corresponding music) in that volume was dedicated to a particular Palestinian settlement. An annotation to *Tikvatenu* indicates that it was composed “at the request of one of the known nationalists.” A report in the Hebrew newspaper *Hamelitz*, published in Russia, referred enthusiastically to the collection, boasting that in only those few years of resettlement the people had already acquired a song repertoire, and quoting in particular from *Tikvatenu*.

The history, chronology, and morphology of *Hatikva* have been traced with authority—and its stages of development established—by two Israelis: the amateur musicologist Eliyahu Hacohen, and the composer, scholar, and critic Menashe Ravina, who in turn drew partly upon a 1941 article by David Idelovitch, as well as from Imber’s own documents and other sources. Working independently, they seem to have come to the same basic conclusions. Leon Igli, a musician and settler in Zikhron Ya’akov who had studied at the conservatory in St. Petersburg, has been identified as the first to set *Tikvatenu* to music—devising a musical version in 1882 that apparently ignored the strophic structure of the poem and provided instead a through-composed version without musical repetition from one stanza to the next. In that form it proved difficult to sing communally, and it did not take off—despite token prizes offered to children who could learn it.

Numerous ungrounded assumptions and misunderstandings have surrounded the origins, derivations, and developments of the song we now know as *Hatikva*. The marriage between the present tune and Imber’s poem appears to have begun in 1888. That version of the song was quickly and permanently established—with the subsequent variations one could expect from any song that relied for its dissemination on oral transmission. Among the

settlers in Palestine who sang it during the First and Second Aliya periods, it was assumed to be an anonymous folksong, and there appears to have been little concern about its lineage. By the time of the *yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine under the British Mandate) and the Third and Fourth Aliya periods, when a portion of the population had some familiarity with European classical music repertoire, an assumption seems to have persisted in some quarters that the melody had been taken directly from the signature melodic material in the Bohemian composer Bedřich Smetana’s symphonic tone poem *The Moldau*, which was written in 1874—one of six constituent tone poems or movements of his larger orchestral work *Má vlast* (My Fatherland). (To this day, Jews are fond of “recognizing *Hatikva*” upon hearing *The Moldau* performed, and one can still hear the proudly voiced but naïve suspicion that Smetana might have borrowed his tune from the Jewish anthem—which, of course, could not have been the case.)

But the similarity between the two melodies applies only to the first two-part phrase of *Hatikva*, and it involves simply an ascending-descending pattern along the first six tones of the minor scale—with distinct rhythmic and ornamental divergences. That shared melodic pattern, however, may have its roots in Central European musical folklore sources—a common melodic skeleton or archetype that may be considered a member of what ethnomusicologists cite as a “tune family”—in this case comprising numerous incarnations throughout Europe that have been found in major as well as minor scale guises. The succeeding part of *Hatikva* (the refrain in the original multi-stanza poem), however, beginning with the words *od lo avda*, constitutes a complete departure from Smetana’s melody.

Others have been convinced that the *Hatikva* melody was derived from the Sephardi tune for the liturgical poem *tal* (dew), as it is sung in the Western or so-called Amsterdam Sephardi tradition. In that case, some of the shared skeletal features do extend into the refrain or second part of *Hatikva*, but only through its first phase.

The seminal Jewish music scholar and acknowledged pioneer in the field of Jewish musicology, Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882–1938), who settled in Jerusalem in 1906 and remained in Palestine until 1921, undertook a now-famous comparative consideration of the *Hatikva* tune in the context of perceived parallels. Obviously unaware of information that generated Ravina's and Hachohen's much later findings, he treated *Hatikva* strictly as an anonymous, unidentifiable, and evolved folk tune, whose application to Imber's poem—so he assumed—had been a consequence of folkloric evolution or spontaneous phenomena rather than the conscious effort of an individual. Idelsohn compared *Hatikva* not only with the aforementioned melodies of *The Moldau* and the Sephardi *tal* version, but also with a Spanish *canción*, a Polish folksong, a German folksong, two Basque melodies, and a well-known version of the hymn *yigdal* that was current in England as well as in other Ashkenazi communities. The common thread among most of those examples, however, still applies only to the first part of *Hatikva*. Nonetheless, Idelsohn suggested that the basic outline of the melody constitutes in the aggregate a single “wandering tune” that had traveled throughout western as well as eastern and east Central Europe, and even beyond. In that context, one could cite other cases that escaped Idelsohn, but in which any listener might legitimately and instantly recognize the first part of the *Hatikva* tune: a Giovanni Battista Viotti violin concerto, for example; or the Anglican hymn for the Holy Eucharist, “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,”

which is identified in the 1982 authorized hymnal for the Anglican liturgy as a 17th-century French carol and in some details bears closer resemblance to *Hatikva* than do other proposed examples and does span *Hatikva's* full octave range.

The pursuit of such “tune detection” between or among unrelated musical works or sources, although sometimes musicologically fruitful, can also be a risky undertaking without more evidence than two similar phrases. As the erudite composer and pedagogue Hugo Weisgall was fond of reminding would-be musical detectives, “There are, after all, only twelve notes available to us in Western music.” One may need more hard information than the audible similarity of two phrases in two distinct works to establish that anything more than coincidence is at play; and this may apply even if those two phrases are identical. Moreover, the fact that innocent listeners may be instantly reminded of a particular tune upon hearing its echo in an unrelated piece may be owed more to emotional associations than to the actual melodic history. (Dare we assert that a certain passage in Brahms's D-minor piano concerto indicates that he was even aware of the American song “Home on the Range”? Or that Verdi knew “The Yellow Rose of Texas” when he wrote *La forza del destino* or the Ashkenazi Hanukka tune for the hymn *ma'oz tzur* when he composed *Don Carlo*?)

In any case, even granting the likelihood that a skeletal tune archetype underlies a part of the *Hatikva* melody, it is because of the research of Ravina and Hachohen that we can now know the specific identity of the entire tune from which this version was drawn—as well as the circumstances surrounding its adaptation and application to Imber's words. It is Samuel Cohen, another First Aliya settler in Palestine from Moldavia

and a native of Ungeny, on the Romanian-Bessarabian border, who is now credited with the deliberate adaptation of a popular Moldavian-Romanian folk tune to which Romanian lyrics had been applied at some point prior to 1888 by G. Popovitz. The song, about a farmer carting his oxen to market, was known by then as *Carul cu boi* (Wagon and Oxen). Cohen, however, referred to it as *Hois! Cea!* (Right! Left!), the words of the refrain. (The song appears to have acquired at least one known early-20th-century parody variant, also in Romanian, which refers to a way of life enjoyed before the advent of motorcars.)

Already attracted to the poem *Tikvatenu* while still in Romania, when in 1887 his brother sent him a copy of Imber's poetry collection, Cohen fashioned the musical adaptation the next year, shortly after he arrived as a settler in Rishon L'tziyon, basing his version almost note for note on *Carul cu boi* as he had heard it sung by peasants and farmers in Moldavia-Romania. His new setting caught on almost immediately and was spread among the various settlements. But it did not remain associated with Cohen, and it soon took on, through its singing at meetings and other gatherings among the Jews in Palestine, the persona of folk property—a supposedly anonymous expression of Zionist aspirations. Insofar as we know, the earliest printed version of *Hatikva* with this melody dates to 1895, in Breslau.

Many of the more than thirty known variations, adjustments, and alterations that *Hatikva* has undergone since Cohen's initial adaptation—with regard to music as well as text—have occurred as unintended results of oral transmission and tradition. Other changes have been deliberate, in view of altered situations or out of literary considerations. There have also been unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the punctuation

and accentuation of the words with the standards of modern Hebrew. But it is a mistake to assume, as many critics have done, that the admittedly incorrect syllabic stresses in the accepted version are due solely to the poem's Ashkenazi Hebrew. Many of those stresses reflect incorrect Ashkenazi pronunciation and are not merely a matter of Ashkenazi as opposed to Sephardi or modern rules (*tikvatenu*, for example, where the suffix occurs on the downbeat). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, even many of the most learned, enlightened, and modern-oriented Ashkenazi synagogue and song composers (and cantors, for that matter) allowed purely musical considerations to govern and did not always concern themselves with correct syllabic stress, even when they would not have pronounced the same words incorrectly in spoken Hebrew. And the entire history of Hebrew contrafacts and other tune adaptations to Hebrew texts is fraught with cases of disregard for intelligent syllabic accentuation. The same fault, however, can be found in English and American music—not only in folk and popular song, but also in works by some of the most celebrated composers: Handel, for example, in his oratorios; or Gilbert and Sullivan, who thought nothing of shamelessly forcing words and entire sentences into melodies whose rhythm is at complete odds with their prosody—poetic license notwithstanding. But, like those examples, *Hatikva* simply would not stand up to syllabic correction and still retain its emotional power.

Contrary to popular assumption—which is enshrined as fact in many written accounts—there is no record that *Hatikva* (or *Tikvatenu*, as it was then known) actually was sung at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 or at the three subsequent congresses, although there is evidence that it was sung at a meeting in Vienna in 1896 in the presence of Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism. In fact, during that time frame there

were two announcements of competitions for the creation or suggestion of a Zionist anthem—one in the German Jewish journal *Die Welt* in 1898, and another at the Fourth Zionist Congress (1900) in London. Neither effort produced any submission that was deemed sufficiently meritorious. It is only at the Fifth Zionist Congress (Basel, 1901) that we know for certain that this song was sung, at the conclusion of one of the sessions. And at the Sixth Zionist Congress (1903) in Basel—the so-called Uganda Conference, at which the British Empire's offer of that African territory as a Jewish national home in place of Palestine, transmitted by Theodor Herzl himself, was roundly rejected with booing—dissenting factions appear to have sung it collectively, as if accepting it as an expression of common ground. The enthusiastic singing of *Hatikva* by the entire assemblage at the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905 is said to have confirmed its status as the anthem of the Zionist movement, and it was sung at all subsequent congresses as well as at most regional and local meetings and rallies from then on. Yet its formal adoption as the official anthem—despite its earlier proposal by David Wolffsohn—did not occur until the Eighteenth Zionist Congress in Prague (1933), by which time the title *Tikvatenu* had given way permanently to *Hatikva*. “The congress declares,” reads the resolution presented there by Leo Motzkin, “that following many years of tradition, the blue and white flag is the flag of the Histadrut Hatzionit (Zionist Federation, i.e., the Zionist movement), and its anthem *Hatikva* is the national anthem of the Jewish people.”

Hatikva also was sung unofficially as the de facto anthem of Jewish Palestine under the British Mandate—from the end of the First World War until 1947. Moreover, for many Jews in the Diaspora who were not necessarily committed members of Zionist organizations or active in Zionist circles but were



November 29, 1947. Jews in Tel Aviv celebrate the United Nations vote for the partition of Palestine.

nonetheless not opposed to the Zionist principles and ideals, *Hatikva* gradually became a sort of hymn of Jewish national solidarity, sometimes even on a politically neutral plane, and it came to be sung frequently at general Jewish functions, gatherings, and even services. And cantors in Europe would frequently insert the tune into passages of the liturgy that refer to messianic redemption, return to Zion, and other similar sentiments.

At the ceremony surrounding the formal declaration of statehood on May 14, 1948, *Hatikva* was sung by the assembly at the opening of the proceedings and played at the conclusion by members of the Palestine

Symphony (now the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra). Since then it has been the national anthem of the sovereign state, although that official status was not conferred on it formally by the Knesset until 2004! (That after-the-fact situation is not unique to Israel. “The Star Spangled Banner,” although it functioned unofficially as an American national anthem for years before its official adoption, was not formally declared as such by Congress until 1931. Other contenders for that role included “America the Beautiful” and, in some quarters, Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.”)

The revision of the refrain in Naphtali Imber’s published version of the poem to the present form of the text is credited to a teacher in Rishon L’tziyon who, in 1905, according to Hacohen’s chronology, emended the phrases *hatikva hanoshana* (the ancient hope) to read *hatikva bat sh’not alpayim* (the hope of two millennia), and *lashuv l’eret avoteinu l’ir bo david hona* (to return to the land of our fathers, to the city where David dwelt) to read *lih’yot am hofshi b’artzenu eretz tziyon viy’rushalayim* (to be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem). These emendations quickly became effective in Palestine, while the earlier words continued to linger for some time in the Diaspora.

In the decades preceding statehood and even afterward, not all Zionist factions, and not even all residents of Jewish Palestine and then Israel, have endorsed the designation of *Hatikva* as the Jewish national anthem. Over the years, more than a dozen musical as well as text alternatives (including another poem by Imber) have been suggested, out of political and religious as well as aesthetic considerations. During the period of the Second Aliya (1904–14), *Tehezakna (Birkhat am)*, a poem by Chaim Nachman Bialik, Israel’s national poet, was sung to a marchlike

tune reminiscent of some Russian revolutionary songs, and it became a popular rival candidate in Palestine for the Zionist anthem. For a while, newspapers there engaged in a running debate about the relative merits of *Tehezakna* and *Hatikva*. (Bialik himself seems not to have been involved in the controversy, and apparently he refused to join *Tehezakna* advocates in standing when that song was sung.) In the Diaspora during those years and even beyond, *Tehezakna* often spontaneously followed the singing of *Hatikva*.

On the other hand, there were objections to the melody at various times and from various quarters on the grounds that it was a foreign tune—i.e., not Jewish in origin or initial function—and that an original tune, created expressly for this purpose, would be more appropriate. Indeed, some new melodies were composed to the same poem, but they failed to dislodge Cohen’s adaptation and they became consigned to obscurity. Other objections even concerned the minor mode of *Hatikva*, on the erroneous assumption that the uplifting patriotic spirit of a national anthem requires major.

Some religious Zionist groups, already disaffected by the secular nature of the Zionist movement, lobbied for a biblical text. They usually proposed Psalm 126, *shir hama’alot b’shuv adonai et shivat tziyon* (A song of ascents: When God brought back those who returned to Zion ...), which refers to the restoration following the destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian captivity. For religious Zionists, that would at least have provided the desired acknowledgment of a Divine parameter to the modern Zionist enterprise. A musical version of it by Hazzan Pinchas Minkowski was often advocated. Some poets and composers wrote new songs altogether in the hope of acceptance as replacements. And after the Six-Day War, in 1967,

an extreme left-wing Knesset member, Uri Avenary—foreshadowing a kind of post-1990s Western “political correctness”—renewed his objection to *Hatikva* on the grounds that its Jewish particularity and emphasis unfairly excluded non-Jewish residents and citizens of the Jewish state. He introduced a bill to replace it with Naomi Shemer’s suddenly famous song *Yrushalayim shel zahav* (Jerusalem of Gold), which, although composed a few weeks before the war in an unrelated context, had been adopted virtually overnight as an ode to Israel’s swift victory and its reversal of Jordan’s nineteen-year occupation of the eastern part of Jerusalem—including the site of the remaining retaining wall of the Temple, and the ancient walled city *ir david*, the City of David. (On her deathbed, in 2005, Shemer revealed that her melody had been based subconsciously on an old anonymous Basque lullaby, although she had altered eight of its tones—a not insignificant departure.) Avenary’s bill was never put to a vote.

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The event that occasioned Weill’s *Hatikva* orchestration was a dinner and private concert at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria hotel on November 25, 1947, performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky’s baton in honor of Chaim Weizmann’s seventy-third birthday and to raise funds for his pet project in Palestine: the Weizmann Institute of Science, in Rehovot, founded in 1944.

Weizmann was a renowned British chemist—born in Russian Poland—whose scientific discoveries had aided munitions productions by the Allies in the First World War and whose influence in England played a role in the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. He had been president of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) since 1920, and

by 1947 he was the acknowledged elder statesman of modern mainstream Zionism. Although it was far from certain that evening, he was soon to become the newborn State of Israel’s first president.

Weizmann was especially committed to the dual role of pure science and practical scientific research vis-à-vis international understanding, and to the connection between science and statesmanship. He envisioned the institute as a means to advancement and prosperity for the entire Near East, and for forging links between its scientists and those of the Western world. “Science can be a most potent force toward achieving the unity of mankind,” he observed in his address that evening, expressing the hope that the institute would play a part “with all other men of good will and scholarship among all nations and creeds toward the shaping of a new age of knowledge, justice and peace.” By then the institute already counted among its patrons Albert Einstein; former New York governor Herbert H. Lehman; broadcast mogul William S. Paley; and Henry Morgenthau, Jr., former secretary of the treasury (under President Franklin D. Roosevelt), who introduced Weizmann as no less than the “spiritual leader of the Jewish people.” The event succeeded in raising an estimated half million dollars for the institute. But the tribute also turned into something of a quasi-political rally for Weizmann (or had it been so designed?), not only with Morgenthau’s introduction, but also when the chairman of the reception committee referred to him presciently but prematurely as “the first president of the new Jewish state” and was applauded enthusiastically by the assemblage of two thousand people.

There was an especially heady atmosphere at that dinner and concert, which occurred at an auspicious moment in Jewish history. The fledgling United

Nations was in session in New York that very week, and on its agenda were the twin issues of the partition of Palestine and Jewish statehood. The previous day, at the meeting of the U.N.'s Palestine Committee at Lake Success, the partition proposal had lost by a single vote. But the full United Nations was yet to vote, and that night the future of the state hung in the balance as the Boston Symphony followed "The Star Spangled Banner" with Weill's brand new *Hatikva* score. "I would not like to prophesy," Weizmann told the audience, "but maybe tomorrow night the nations of the world will cast their vote in favor of a Jewish state. I hope that tomorrow we will at last stop dreaming." Indeed, by November 29, 1947, his hope had become prediction.

In the spring of 1947, Weill had visited his parents in Palestine, where they had emigrated from Germany in 1936. He had met Weizmann at his house there, introduced by the American Zionist leader Meyer Weisgal. Weisgal had conceived and produced Weill's *The Eternal Road* a decade earlier in New York—receiving one of the first donations for its production fund from Weizmann as his friend as well as his personal representative in the United States—and had since become an ardent admirer of Weill's gifts. As the plan for the November testimonial event took shape, Weizmann personally requested that Weill be invited to create an orchestral arrangement of *Hatikva* for the occasion, clearly in expectation that it would eventually become Israel's national anthem.

Weisgal, the executive vice chairman of the American Friends of the Weizmann Institute of Science, was entrusted with the necessary communications with Weill. In one letter, he transmitted Koussevitzky's permission to use "percussions [sic] as much as you want." In Weizmann's post-event letter of thanks to Weill, he expressed the wish

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that his arrangement would be "adopted by the Jewish state to be played on the occasion of the first opening of Parliament." (It was not. The standard harmonization and orchestration in Israel was made in 1948 for the Israel Philharmonic by the Italian conductor Bernardino Molinari. Other Israeli composers, such as Paul Ben-Haim, have made orchestrations as well.)

There was probably more than would have met most eyes to Weizmann's invitation and to Weill's quick acceptance in the midst of time-consuming commitments to other projects. For it is not generally known that during the preceding decade, Weill had become intrigued with the Zionist cause. Although, as a work aimed at broad public appeal, *The Eternal Road* was clothed in biblical guises and perhaps even the veil of its Jewish playwright's (Franz Werfel) personal Roman Catholic and Evangelical leanings, the production—from Weill's and Weisgal's perspectives—had been at its core a Zionist expression. To the age-old plight and problem of eternal forced Jewish wandering and persecution, it suggested the Zionist solution in its dialogue and in its conclusion—when the entire cast proceeds upward to its land (*aliya?*), accompanied by the singing of Psalm 126, *Shir hama'alot* (in English translation). Composing that work had probably sparked Weill's own reawakening to his Jewish identity in the context of modern secular Zionism. And he appears to have become increasingly committed to Zionist sympathies—not least through his subsequent association with the outspoken Revisionist Zionist adherent, writer, and playwright Ben Hecht. His two subsequent propaganda-oriented Jewish pageants with Hecht, *We Will Never Die* (1943) and *A Flag Is Born* (1946), promoted belligerent courses of action that Weizmann and the mainstream Zionism leadership did not endorse, even on behalf of Jewish survival and Zionist aims. *A Flag Is Born* was presented

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by the American League for a Free Palestine, Peter Bergson's American fund-raising front for the Irgun; and the Revisionist-affiliated Committee for a Jewish Army in Palestine was associated with both pageants. *A Flag Is Born* had advocated wresting Palestine from the British by Jewish military force if necessary. Now, however, with the British at least outwardly ready to accept the partition plan and to vacate the region, the possibility of statehood seemed closer and more real than ever. So it would have been natural for Weill to welcome the opportunity for this role, small as it was, in tribute to the man who might actually become the first president of the sovereign state.

Inexplicably, Weill's *Hatikva* arrangement is not really an accompaniment conducive to communal singing. It seems more like a purely orchestral version—perhaps a brief overture or interlude based on *Hatikva*—which is how it has been recorded here. The introductory passage gives no clear indication of when the anthem should begin. The melody line becomes buried or otherwise obscured by the harmony in some places. And there is an unexplained “surprise” interlude before the repetition of the final phrase, which will throw off anyone not expecting it.

Granted, the printed program refers to the “playing” (i.e., not singing) of *Hatikva* (followed by Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony*, and Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* and *Eroica Symphony*). And Weisgal had provided the text of the program page to Weill in advance for his approval, which might unintentionally have misled him. Yet surely Weill would have known that upon hearing the first strains of *Hatikva*, all assembled there would have jumped spontaneously to their feet and begun singing the anthem. (Actually, since it followed the American national anthem, they would already have been standing.) Could this have been a recycled,

if minimally tweaked or expanded, instrumental piece from *A Flag Is Born*? Perhaps an interlude or an accompaniment to some form of choreography? Until all of the musical materials from that pageant can be located, assembled, and scrutinized, that can at best be a supported guess. And so the mystery remains.



JULIUS CHAJES (1910–1985) was a highly accomplished virtuoso concert pianist as well as conductor who settled in America as a refugee from the Third Reich in the wake of the Austrian electorate's vote for annexation to Germany in the infamous plebiscite of 1938. But it was as a composer that he made his most enduring contribution to the music of American Jewry—to the American Synagogue, largely in the Reform milieu but also in many Conservative synagogues, as well as to the secular Jewish concert repertoire of his adopted country.

Chajes was born in Lemberg [L'vov], Galicia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburg Empire, but now Poland), to a cultured upper-middle-class family. He began piano lessons at the age of seven with his mother, Velerja Chajes, a well-recognized concert pianist. His succeeding teachers included Julius Isserlies, Hedwig Kanner-Rosenthal, and one of the legendary pianistic giants, Moritz Rosenthal, in Vienna—where a distant relative, Hirsch (Tzvi) Peretz Chajes, was the chief rabbi from about 1918 until his death, in 1927.

At the age of nine Julius gave his first piano recital and wrote his first piano piece, followed by a string quartet when he was thirteen; and at fifteen he performed his own piano concerto (*Romantic Fantasy*) in Vienna. His second string quartet was performed by the famous Rose Quartet, and later he was awarded an important prize at the First International Piano Competition there in 1938.

Beginning in 1934, Chajes lived for about two years in Palestine, where he chaired the piano department of the Beit L'viyim music academy in Tel Aviv and also became interested in studying Jewish musical sources in antiquity and some of the accumulated folk music of the region. During his stay in Palestine he was influenced by the emerging melos—especially the so-called Mediterranean style—being developed by other Jewish composers who had also come from Europe. This, together with his exposure to Arabic and Hebrew Palestinian folk and folk-type tunes and to the song repertoire of the settlers, made an indelible imprint on many of his future compositions.

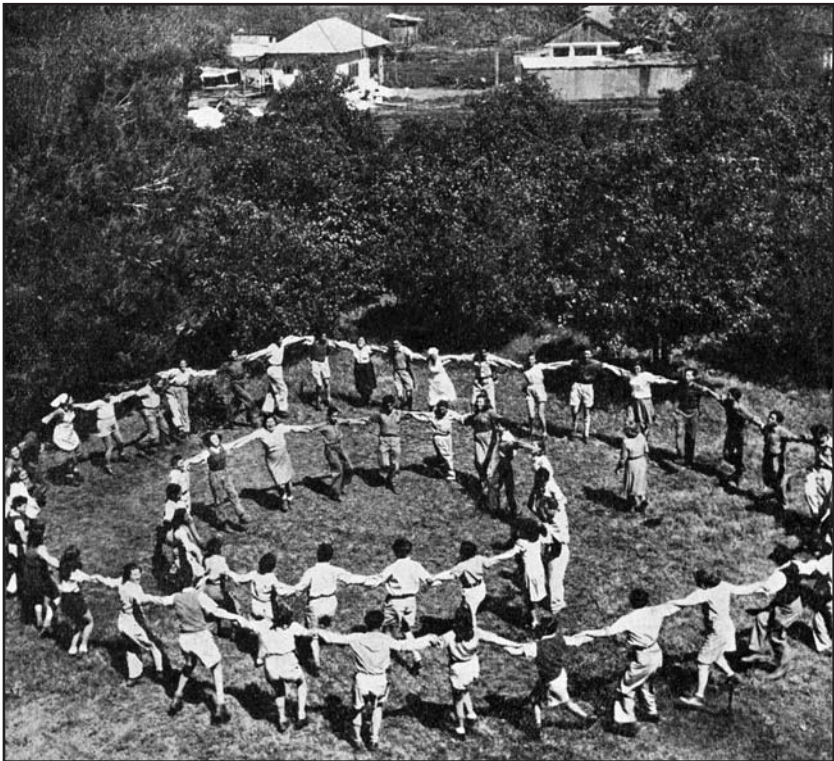
Chajes came to America in 1938, following his receipt of two prizes from the Jüdische Kulturbund in Berlin for choral works the previous year. His American reputation quickly took root, and his Psalm 142 for mixed chorus and organ was performed at the 1939 New York World's Fair; at the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations 1942 convention; and at the annual meeting and concert of the American Guild of Organists in 1944. In 1940 he settled in Detroit, where he became an important figure in the musical life of the Jewish community and the city in general. He founded a symphony orchestra of the Jewish Community Center there, which gave sophisticated programs on a regular basis for many years. He was the music director at Temple Beth El, 8.559461

and beginning in 1950, he served on the faculty of Wayne State University. Meanwhile, he maintained his pianistic concert career, with performances that included playing his own piano concerto with the Detroit Symphony conducted by Paul Paray. He was also chairman and cofounder of the local organization HASHOFAR—Society for Advancement of Jewish Music—and he cochaired the Detroit Round Table for Catholics, Jews, and Protestants.

Chajes's catalogue ranges from works for full symphony orchestra to concert choral settings—a number of which were widely performed throughout the United States during the 1940s and 1950s by Jewish choral ensembles—to chamber pieces and numerous songs; and some of his prayer settings became standard fare in synagogue services. His operatic cantata *The Promised Land* was written to commemorate Israel's tenth anniversary, and his three-act opera, *Out of the Desert*, spanning Jewish history in the Near East from the biblical account of the exodus from Egypt to the modern State of Israel, received its world premiere in 1966.

HEBREW SUITE, ADARIM, and OLD JERUSALEM

Chajes's *HEBREW SUITE* is exclusively an instrumental piece. Its title, which might suggest only a language, refers to what was then often called "Hebrew culture"—the folkloric, literary, and artistic expressions that sprang from modern Zionist-oriented sensibilities and represented the new, youthful, and optimistic guise of Jewish identity. The first movement, *Prayer: Tranquilo*, is a continuous unfolding and development of the opening clarinet statement, giving the impression of a soulful longing for the ancient Jewish homeland and all it has represented for more than two millennia



Hatzim dancing the hora on a kibbutz

in terms of a spiritual gravitational center, and as the focus of much of the liturgy. The overall character of this movement is more eastern European than Near Eastern in its cantorial-like lines and ornaments—in the clarinet and violin solo passages, and especially in the cadenza that concludes the movement.

The second movement, *Walls of Zion*, in reference to the walled ancient part of Jerusalem (*ir ha'atika*, or “the old city”), begins with a mystical contemplation that serves as an introduction to an echo of a lively Hassidic tune. This could be interpreted as a depiction of Hassidim dancing at the walls of or within the old city, since some Hassidic groups inhabited Jerusalem long before statehood and even before the modern Zionist movement. But it could also represent one of the many Hassidic or Hassidic-type tunes that were brought from Europe to Palestine by some of the early secular-oriented settlers and adapted to Zionist lyrics to become *halutz* (pioneer) songs. *Hora*, the third movement, which refers to the best-known Israeli folk dance, is a clever canonic treatment of a folksong that was at one time familiar in America as an “Israel-related” song.

Hebrew Suite was originally composed in 1939 as a chamber work for clarinet, piano, and string quartet, and was revised for orchestra in 1965. The chamber ensemble version, in which *Walls of Zion* is the final movement, contains an additional movement that Chajes removed for the orchestral piece: *Galiil*. That movement was based on a popular Palestinian-Israeli folksong, *El yivne hagalil* (God Will Rebuild the Galil [Galilee]), which probably dates from the Second Aliya period and may be part of a series of songs from that time that were deliberately fashioned by Jewish settlers in imitation of Arabic songs. Chajes turned it into a four-part round and published it separately as a choral version. It was probably one of the most

widely performed Hebrew choral pieces in America during the mid-20th century, not only among high school and college choruses throughout the country but also by such esteemed conductors as Robert Shaw and Margaret Hillis. Said to have generated more in royalties for Chajes than all his other works combined, the arrangement was performed by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir at one of its conferences and was used in the sound track of the film *Ben Hur* in 1959.

ADARIM and *OLD JERUSALEM* are two of Chajes's most beloved songs. Both reflect typical, admittedly romanticized perceptions of the aura and spirit of Jewish Palestine from early *aliya* (immigration) periods until statehood, and even afterward. Both songs were standard repertoire at Jewish concerts throughout America during that time frame, and were among the most conspicuous representations of modern “Jewish music”—especially in relation to Israel—on general concert programs. Both reflect the kind of aural exoticism that used to be attached to images of the region. Both songs exploit elements and clichés of the Arabic *hijaz* mode, with its characteristic lowered seventh degree and augmented second interval; and both expressions alternate stately, lyrical, and contemplative sentiments with sparkling dance figures.

Adarim is an artistic setting of a Palestinian shepherd song whose lyrics are by Assaf Halevi to a melody by Shlomo Weissfish. Chajes originally set it in 1939 with an accompaniment of oboe and piano, and then he created the orchestral version in 1950; but the oboe is still used to represent the quintessential shepherd's pipe, and the pastoral quality is maintained by orchestral economy.

Old Jerusalem is a setting of Psalm 134 to Chajes's original melody, to which he gave the flavor of a Palestinian folksong. The structure is basically A–B–A, where the

B section interrupts the preceding flowing reverential statement with sharply defined staccato rhythmic impulses that reflect rejoicing at the opportunity to worship and praise God, as the Psalm suggests, in Jerusalem—and to be blessed by God “out of Zion.”



HERBERT FROMM (1905–1995) was one of the most prominent, most prolific, and most widely published composers of synagogue and other serious Jewish music among those German- and Austrian-Jewish musicians who found refuge from the Third Reich in the United States during the 1930s and who became associated principally with the American Reform movement—a circle that also included Isadore Freed (1900–1960), Frederick Piket (1903–74), Julius Chajes (1910–1985), and Hugo Chaim Adler (1894–1955).

An accomplished organist and conductor as well as a composer, Fromm was born in Kitzingen, Germany, and studied at the State Academy of Music in Munich—with, among others, Paul Hindemith. After a year as conductor of the Civic Opera in Bielefeld, he held a similar post for two years at the opera in Würzburg. After 1933, when Jews were prohibited from participation in German cultural life, he was an active composer and conductor in the Frankfurt am Main section of the Jüdischer Kulturbund in Deutschland, which provided the only permitted artistic opportunities

for Jewish musicians during the Nazi era until 1939. It was in that context that he began to employ Jewish themes and texts in his compositions.

Fromm immigrated to the United States in 1937. He assumed the post of organist and music director at Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo, New York, followed by a similar appointment at Temple Israel in Boston, where he remained until his retirement, in 1972. In 1940 and 1941 he worked once again with Hindemith, privately as well as during summers at Tanglewood, refining his technique and style and developing a highly individualistic approach to music for Jewish worship and music of Jewish expression—judiciously modern, yet imaginatively respectful of tradition and never on the fringe of the avant-garde. In 1945 he won the first Ernest Bloch Award for *The Song of Miriam*, and he was later awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Lesley College.

Among his large opera of liturgical and liturgically related works are several full services and numerous individual prayer settings—many of which became part of the standard repertoire in Reform synagogues—as well as Judaically based pieces geared for concert performance. Among his outstanding non-synagogal and secular works are *Memorial Cantata*, *The Stranger*, three string quartets, a violin sonata, a woodwind quartet, and many songs. Fromm also authored three books: *The Key of See*, a travel journal; *Seven Pockets*, a volume of collected writings; and *On Jewish Music*, from a composer’s viewpoint.

Fromm was known for his insistence on high aesthetic standards and his harsh criticism of the populist trends and the raw, mass-oriented ethnic elements that could be found increasingly in American synagogue music. Composer Samuel Adler (Hugo Adler’s son), his lifelong friend and colleague, has recalled that it was

not so much those musical elements, per se and on their own appropriate turfs, that angered Fromm as it was his view that such adulterated synagogue music “hindered the worshipper from being able to face the highest in life.” And in that context, Adler remembers that Fromm challenged himself and his work with the Hebrew admonition contained in *Pirkei avot* (Sayings of the Fathers), a part of the Mishna: *Da lifnei mi ata omed*—“know at all times before Whom you stand.”

PIONEERS (ḤALUTZIM)

When the famous conductor Arthur Fiedler invited Fromm to compose a work for the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1971, Fromm chose to create this brief musical depiction of the resettling and rebuilding of the Land of Israel. Basing the piece in part on his earlier *Palestinian March* (1942), which he revised and adapted, he titled the new work **PIONEERS (ḤALUTZIM)**—in programmatic reference to the early Zionist pioneer-settlers in Palestine in the decades preceding the founding of the state, in 1948. The initial theme quotes from *Na’ale l’artzenu b’rina* (We Will Go Up to Our Land with Joy), a well-known anonymous ḥalutz song dating at least to the Third Aliya, or the immigration period of the early 1920s. It is a marchlike tune of unknown origin that appeared in a number of Jewish songster publications from the late 1920s through the 1940s. It was printed in America as early as 1929 in such a community songster, published by the Board of Jewish Education in Chicago. Fromm also adapted the same tune independently for a synagogue hymn, with English words by the American Jewish poet and hymnist Penina Moise (1797–1880), which he published in a small hymnal in the late 1940s.

The *Na’ale l’artzenu* tune is expanded and elaborated through the first section of this orchestral piece. A second theme, which reflects a perceived Near Eastern character, is introduced by the flute and developed by the woodwinds. The trumpet introduces a third theme, followed by a reprise of the ḥalutz song. Following a brief reappearance of part of the second section, a short coda brings the piece to an enthusiastic, optimistic conclusion.

YEMENITE CYCLE

Fromm’s **YEMENITE CYCLE** stems from his first visit to Israel, in the autumn of 1960. In addition to renewing his acquaintance with many friends and colleagues who had emigrated there from Germany and Austria during the 1930s—such composers as Joseph Tal [Gruenthal] and Paul Ben-Haim [Frankenburger], who were by then in the forefront of the Israeli music world—Fromm had the opportunity to hear a good deal of sacred as well as secular Near Eastern, Arabic, and North African Jewish folk music for the first time. As was true for even well-educated and Judaically cultured American and European Jews at that time, particularly those not specifically or professionally immersed in Israeli culture through Zionist activities, those foreign sounds and exotic flavors were a revelation to him, and those discoveries both intrigued him and broadened his consciousness of Jewish musical tradition and expression. Despite the fact that these traditions had flourished for a long time in their respective lands of origin, it is primarily owing to the emergence of modern Israel and the ingathering (*kibbutz galu’yyot*) there of communities that many of these oriental Jewish repertoires first came to the attention of the West—apart from a handful of scholars. (The wealth of commercial recordings that reflect musical traditions

of the many oriental Jewish communities in Israel—ethnomusicological documents as well as popular and even entertainment-oriented arrangements—had yet to become readily available in the United States.)

Fromm was drawn in particular to the modalities, rhythms, and other features of Yemenite Jewish folksong, some of which—although various Yemenite tunes had been adopted by the early settlers in Palestine—had become an integral part of the overall Israeli folksong culture ever since the wholesale resettlement of Yemenite Jewry in Israel beginning in 1949–50.

Shortly after his return from that trip to Israel, Fromm wrote this group of settings of traditional folksongs. He preceded them by a brief instrumental introduction, which incorporates perceived Near Eastern clichés but not any specific traditional folk material. Only two of the four sung melodies and two of the texts are actually of Yemenite provenance, but the title is used liberally to suggest the overall Near Eastern character of all four songs. Except for the concluding one, *Shalom l'vo shabbat*, the tunes are left intact in the vocal lines, without imposed variations, alterations, or extensions. But the accompaniment—which Fromm assigned to modern instruments that have, or are believed to have, ancient counterparts or forerunners in biblical references and archaeological-organological findings—follows his usual neoclassical style.

The text of *Yom ze l'yisra'el* belongs to the category of songs known as *z'mirot shel shabbat*—songs that traditionally are sung at the Sabbath table before, during, and after each of the three festive meals on Friday night and Saturday. Most of those texts date to within a century of the Middle Ages, while a few have earlier roots. But each has accumulated countless tunes among the numerous Jewish geographical, regional,

and cultural traditions. The poem *Yom ze l'yisra'el* was for a long time attributed to ARIZAL, the acronym for Rabbi Yitzhak Luria (1534–1572), an important Kabbalist whose name is contained in the acrostic—even though most of his poetry is in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. Recent scholarship, however, has confirmed not only an earlier suspicion that not all stanzas are by Luria, but also that the entire poem was written instead by Yitzhak Hendeli, a 16th-century poet living in Crimea. Obviously the same name in the acrostic could account for some of the previous confusion. Moreover, the eminent Israeli musicologist and acknowledged authority on Sephardi music, Edwin Seroussi, has found the poem to be modeled on a secular Spanish poetic form of that period. This particular musical version is an anonymous Yemenite tune, a variant of which appears in the monumental *Thesaurus of Hebrew-Oriental Melodies* by the aforementioned Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, in the volume devoted to Yemenite tunes. There, however, it is attached to the words of an unrelated and obscure Sabbath song.

Bammidbar is Fromm's title for the song *Lammidbar sa'enu*, the words of which were written by Alexander Penn (1906–1972) to an anonymous Arabic folk tune. Fromm treats it canonically, with the flute and harp in imitation of the basic rhythm of the vocal line.

Zamm'ri li is an anonymous Yemenite Hebrew folksong that first appeared in print in *Mishirei ha'aretz* (From Songs of the Land), a rare collection published in 1932 by the Keren Kayemet (Jewish National Fund). Adapted by Menashe Ravina [Rabinovitz], the song expresses the longing for return to the ancient homeland.

Shalom l'vo shabbat is a Yemenite ode to the Sabbath and its aura of peace and respite from weekday cares and concerns. The words are frequently attributed to the

17th-century Yemenite Hebrew poet Shalem Shabazi, but contemporary Israeli scholars maintain that the author was Se'adyah, a 16th-century Yemenite poet whose name appears in the acrostic. The melody here is also an anonymous Yemenite tune, which is printed in this same variant in Idelsohn's *Thesaurus*. The text was adapted to this melody originally by Sara Levi-Tannai, a choreographer who was born in Jerusalem to Yemenite parents. In 1949 she founded the world-famous Inbal Dance Theater, which is devoted especially to Yemenite folklore in song and dance. Fromm has added phrases to the original vocal line before the final strophe, where he calls for the simple recitation of the word *shabbat*. And the rhythm has been altered in the counterpoint between the vocal and instrumental lines. *Yemenite Cycle* received its premiere at one of Fromm's annual music festivals at Temple Israel in Boston.



Born in Radzin [Radzyn], Poland, composer, choral conductor, and educator **MAX HELFMAN** (1901–63) arrived in America at the age of eight. He soon became a sought-after boy alto in New York orthodox synagogue choirs, and he acquired a traditional religious education. His musical gifts became increasingly

apparent, and he began experimenting with choral conducting and composition on his own, eventually studying at the Mannes College of Music. Although he never had a formal university education, he became a self-taught intellectual, familiar with the canon of both secular Jewish and Western literature and philosophy.

At the age of twenty eight, Helfman was awarded a three-year fellowship at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where he studied piano, composition, and conducting with Fritz Reiner. From then on, his activities reflect a constantly evolving musical, cultural, and social orientation, manifested in three major areas of commitment. One was his intensive involvement with religious music as both conductor and composer. For many years, until his permanent relocation on the West Coast, in 1952, he was a renowned chormaster and music director at leading New York area synagogues. He wrote settings for Sabbath, High Holy Day, and Festival liturgies, as well as for other services. His secular works were premiered at Carnegie Hall.

Helfman was also heavily involved in Yiddish choral circles, primarily as director of New York's largest unabashedly leftist Yiddish chorus, the *Freiheits Gezang Verein*, which he took over in 1937 and which combined with similar groups to form the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus. This ensemble and others like it were commonly known as "communist or communist-leaning Yiddish choruses." Whether that identification actually represented party commitment or cultural attraction to communism on an emotional plane is difficult to ascertain. The phenomenon must be understood in the context of the times, which involved general working-class concerns, utopian sentiments, and, simply, antifascism—but not always political anti-Americanism or anticapitalism. Helfman also headed the Jewish Workers Music Alliance, an organization of affiliated choruses in nearly thirty cities, and he published arrangements of songs of the labor movement and of international proletarian class struggle.

It is not clear whether Helfman's directorship of the *Freiheits* chorus reveals particular ideological sympathies or merely represented another good choral

opportunity, since it was considered a fairly prestigious position at that time. Nonetheless, the association did unfairly color some people's views of him, at least until he shed most of his Yiddishist interests in favor of Zionist and Hebrew cultural perspectives.

In 1945 the Histadrut Ivrit of America and the American Zionist Youth Commission established a Jewish Arts Committee to promote Zionist/Palestinian-oriented Hebrew culture and arts in the New York area. Its goals were to stimulate an ongoing dialogue with artistic life in Jewish Palestine, to attract American Jewish youth to Zionist ideals through artistic expression, and to establish ties between the two communities. Helfman was appointed the Arts Committee's artistic director and conductor of its Hebrew Arts Singers.

This new chorus and the Arts Committee's focus on Hebrew cultural expression and the nationalist perspectives associated with Zionism were fundamentally different from the worldview articulated in the Yiddish choral idiom that the *Freiheits* chorus espoused. For Helfman, the new endeavor marked the beginning of yet a third and different artistic and pedagogic direction, which culminated in a significant part of his contribution.

He soon came into contact with Shlomo Bardin, the Zionist Youth Commission's executive director; their relationship would have far-reaching consequences. Inspired by Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, who was deeply concerned about the alienation of Jewish youth from their heritage and who sought to make Judaism meaningful to the new generation while not detracting from its full participation in American society, Bardin established a cooperative-type institute based on the cultural aura and idealistic spirit of the *kibbutz*. Seeking a highly competent

faculty committed to Jewish consciousness, he engaged Helfman as the new music director of the Brandeis Camp.

The Yiddish musical idiom was relevant neither to the goals nor the student makeup of the camp. Instead, the musical program there was to relate to the new and exciting endeavor in Palestine (and soon Israel)—music evoking the return to an ancient homeland and songs about building the new society. This reoriented Helfman's entire focus: the music of Jewish identity shifted for him from songs of proletarian class struggle to the nationalist-oriented music of Israel, Zionism, and the newly resettled land. Much of his creative effort would now be devoted to composing and arranging according to a Near Eastern and Hebrew Palestinian melos.

Helfman began his work at the Brandeis Camp in Pennsylvania and moved to the new California campus near Los Angeles in 1947. There he sought to create what he called a Jewish Renaissance through music, which he perceived as the ideal mediator between tradition and identity on one hand and rational modernity on the other. As he remarked:

Some think there is a wall between Jew and gentile; but the real wall is between the Jew and himself: the young Jew who has been turning away from his heritage and in doing so has turned his back on a rich creative past....

At the camp, Helfman conducted choirs and ensembles, inspiring enthusiastic participation with his infectious personality. He composed and arranged secular music as well as modern, youth-oriented prayer services. Through these activities, the students became conversant with the rich musical atmosphere,

dance expressions, and song repertoire of the *yishuv*—the Jewish settlement in British-mandated Palestine—and of modern Israel.

Almost immediately Helfman envisioned another project: a sort of “Jewish Interlochen,” or version of Tanglewood within the Brandeis framework, where artistically gifted and technically accomplished Jewish composers, writers, performers, conductors, and dancers could be trained for leadership within the cultural life of contemporary American Jewry. The new institute would also provide a forum for established Israeli and other Jewish composers to share their experience with young American artists.

The Brandeis Arts Institute opened in the summer of 1948 and was held for five consecutive summers concurrently with the regular Brandeis Camp. Its distinguished resident-artist faculty included leading composers as well as important figures from the worlds of dance, drama, and fine arts. Among the many young composers who eventually became prominent contributors to American music, and for whom this experience was a turning point, were Yehudi Wyner, Jack Gottlieb, Charles Davidson, Gershon Kingsley, Raymond Smolover, and Charles Feldman.

The Brandeis Arts Institute lasted only through the summer of 1952, but Helfman directed the music program at the Brandeis Camp for seventeen years. During that time he influenced and inspired an entire generation of young people and sparked its awareness of the breadth of Jewish music. He also continued to compose. Apart from music for camp performances, he produced theatrical scores, a Hanukka operetta, art songs, and music for wedding ceremonies. In the last decade of his life, Helfman served in various academic posts in Los Angeles and as music director of Sinai Temple.

Helfman was not extremely prolific: he could never quite determine his own artistic priorities, and he was first and foremost a pedagogue who devoted his time and energy to working with youth and to lecturing. He also allowed his passion for choral organizing and conducting to take precedence over composing, and many of his pieces remain in manuscript. However, his estimable body of works—especially his synagogue music—reveals a polished and refined use of classical techniques in a completely fresh-sounding guise. His liturgical music has an absolute aura of originality, yet it contains references to traditional modes, motifs, and patterns—elements he relied on as seeds, not confinements. Nearly every one of Helfman’s liturgical works is a miniature masterpiece, and in the aggregate they form one of the most significant contributions to the American Synagogue.

Helfman kept no reliable catalogue of his works; nor did he even date most of his manuscripts. After his premature, sudden death at sixty-two, many of his unpublished compositions and sketches had to be collected from various sources—a process that remains uncompleted.

At first glance, Helfman represents a cluster of contradictions:

- The master liturgical composer whose pieces reveal the deepest liturgical nuances, yet who was not very religious in the traditional sense.
- The conductor of one of the most left-wing, antinational Yiddishist choruses and the arranger of passionate songs extolling an international workers’ order, yet the champion of Zionist and nationalist modern Hebrew culture.
- The advocate of Jewish identity for youth, yet the universalist.

Viewed in perspective, these were not contradictions, but rather tensions that strengthened his art.

Composer Jack Gottlieb remembers him as “a Pied Piper; a Svengali—a shaper of men.” Rabbi William Kramer summed up the Helfman phenomenon: “Max was a happening, and he caused other people to happen.”

ISRAEL SUITE

ISRAEL SUITE is a palpable reflection of Helfman’s shift, in the 1940s, to the cultural aesthetics, song, and spirit of modern Israel. The *Israel Suite* comprises six from among his dozens of original arrangements of songs of Hebrew national expression and Zionist idealism, optimism, and determination—songs that were sung by the Jewish pioneers (*halutzim*) and settlers in Palestine during the decades prior to statehood, which eventually became part of the composite Israeli song repertoire.

In a succession of several distinct waves of immigration (*aliyot*) from Europe beginning in the 1880s, those settlers came to reclaim, rebuild, reestablish, and take up permanent residence in the ancient Land of Israel as the reborn Jewish national homeland. As a historical principle of Zionism, however, *aliya* implies more than simple immigration. It has always signified the primary mode of commitment to the realization of the Zionist ideal and to modern Jewish cultural as well as national rejuvenation. The term *aliya* translates literally as “elevation” or “ascending,” connoting—even in biblical literature—an ascent rather than merely a relocation or a return. In modern Zionist ideology it refers to such immigration to the land of Israel (whether pre- or post-statehood) as a form of hands-on participation in Jewish national rebirth. The *halutzim* could, therefore, be considered to be elevating themselves to assume

a direct role in the reconnection to Jewish political antiquity and in the embryonic stage of development of the modern Jewish polity.

Beginning with the First Aliya (1882–1903), which was not yet even wedded indelibly to political Zionism, and extending through three successive waves of *aliya* (1904–14; 1919–23; and 1924–28), the *olim* (immigrants) were propelled naturally toward fashioning and singing secular Hebrew songs that incorporated the ideals of their “new” Jewish identity, their new social and cultural values, and their commitment to rebuilding the land—agriculturally as well as spiritually. This aggregate Hebrew song repertoire, which enjoyed its ripest maturation and evolved to its fullest beginning with the Third and Fourth Aliyot, includes modern Hebrew adaptations of transplanted European (mainly Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish, as well as Yiddish) folksong, Hassidic melodies, formerly liturgical tunes, and even Russian operatic excerpts; indigenous Arabic, Turkish, and Druze airs; old Near Eastern and oriental Jewish tunes; and original songs—newly composed in the *yishuv* (the Jewish settlement, or community, in Palestine under the British Mandate) by ordinary settlers as well as by professional musicians and recognized poets. These songs, which were often learned within Zionist youth movements and schools and at gatherings even prior to immigration, have been called—depending in part on origin and initial association—Songs of Zion (as those of the First Aliya were called), Hebrew Palestinian songs, songs of the *halutzim*, *aliya* songs, and *shirei erez yisra’el*, or the adopted folksong genre of modern Israel.

Helfman’s arrangements of those songs were fashioned initially for students at the Brandeis camps, and they were published in a collection issued by the Brandeis Youth Foundation as part of the Brandeis Camp

Institute of Music Series. On certain occasions Helfman would string together several of the arrangements and present them as a suite, sometimes connected by narration or poetry readings and even accompanied by dance or other choreographed movements—as a type of unified artistic expression. Prior to the formal establishment and proclamation of the State of Israel in May 1948, those suite performances usually contained the reference “Palestinian” in their program titles, and the particular constituent songs varied from one performance to another. For a Carnegie Hall concert on June 13, 1948, however—only a month after Israel’s birth as a sovereign nation—what had been programmed as *A Suite of Palestinian Melodies* was quickly retitled *Israel’s Song* for the printed booklet, with the earlier title as a subtitle in parentheses.

Especially curious that night, as well as encouraging, was the rendition of the Israel-associated suite by the left-wing Yiddishist chorus that Helfman had formerly directed (which he guest conducted for that concert), the *Freiheits Gezang Verein*, or Jewish People’s Philharmonic Chorus. Perhaps to soften the edge of its known leftist orientation for so public an event in the political climate of the day in America, the Yiddish name of the chorus was absent from the printed program, which listed the ensemble a bit more neutrally as the People’s Philharmonic Choral Society. That celebration of the chorus’s twenty-fifth anniversary also included *Di naye hagode*, Helfman’s large Yiddish cantata about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and several Yiddish—and even Soviet-Yiddish—songs from its usual repertoire, along with other offerings. That this chorus was willing to sing the *Israel’s Song* suite might have been a sign that the enthusiasm, solidarity, and pride associated with the new Jewish state could not help but extend even to some of its choristers and to a part of their

audience at that euphoric time in Jewish history. For others, the suite could simply have represented another aspect of Jewish folk culture without political ramifications—which might well have been Helfman’s personal attitude. *Hatikva*, it should be noted, was not programmed—at a time when virtually every Jewish concert began with it. Instead, the evening opened with Helfman’s setting of *Ani ma’amin* (I Believe), the adaptation of the twelfth of Moses Maimonides’ “Thirteen Articles of Faith” (“I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah ...”). The melody of Helfman’s arrangement was correctly listed as a “ghetto song,” in reference to its believed origin in the Warsaw Ghetto, which by then was perceived as a statement of Jewish defiance and survival in the context of the Holocaust. For the Yiddishists in the chorus and audience, that would have been its primary association. But for anyone sympathetic to the Zionist cause that evening, it could also have been interpreted as a validation of their decades-long brand of faith in the ultimate success of the national struggle; and in that sense there was an added connection to the songs of Israel later in the program.

The melody of *Hamisha*, the opening song in the present suite version, is by Mordechai Zeira (1905–68), who was born in Kiev and emigrated to Palestine in 1924—where he wrote his first song in 1927. His songs in general reflect modern Israel’s history and development and are considered to be at the core of *shirei erez yisra’el*. The words are by Shin Shalom (1904–1990), the nom de plume of Shalom Joseph Shapira, a highly intellectual, mystical, and versatile Hebrew poet, author, and dramatist who also translated Shakespeare’s sonnets into Hebrew. The scion of a distinguished family of Hassidic *rebbs* (rabbinical-type patriarchal leaders of particular Hassidic groups), he came to Palestine in 1922 after living for eight

years in Vienna, where his grandfather's and father's court relocated from Galicia in the first year of the First World War. (Shalom was born in Parczew, eastern Poland.) Much of his poetry is religiously and theologically oriented, as well as biblically and morally driven. But some of his poems also give voice to Israel's revival, for even before his immigration he had been imbued with religiously centered *aliya* by his family, many of whom emigrated to Jerusalem and some of whom later founded a Hassidic colony in the Valley of Jezreel. In 1968 he was elected chairman of the Hebrew Writers Association of Israel.

Ha'misha was written in 1937 in memory of five workers who were murdered by Arab assassins while paving the road to Jerusalem near Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim. Today, Kibbutz Ma'ale Ha'amisha commemorates those workers in its name. Helfman has established a recurring pattern in the accompaniment that mirrors the hammering and clanging in the text; and the percussive, accented chords give the impression of the gunshots that felled the workers. The setting fades to nothingness—death—at the end. A countermelody drawn from the principal tune provides some contrapuntal effects, as do the echoed entrances in the accompaniment.

Laila had'mama paints a romantically peaceful nocturnal scene on a kibbutz. The melody is by Moshe Bick (1899–1979), who was born in the Russian Empire and emigrated to Israel in 1921. He was a teacher and composer, and conducted the Worker's Union Choir. His most famous song is best known as *Nivne artzenu* (We Will Build Our Land) with lyrics by A. Levinsohn. Naomi Brontman is credited with the authorship of the words to *Laila had'mama*. Occasional raised 6th degrees of the minor scale and tonality give the tune a feeling of the Dorian mode, and interesting

ornamentation lends the song a Near Eastern–Mediterranean flavor—which Helfman advances through his use of open fifths in the harmonization.

The tune of *B'yom kayitz* is by Moshe Dafna (died ca.1965), who studied at the David Yellin Teacher's Seminar in Jerusalem, where he supervised the department of music education. He composed a number of children's songs, including *Ura im shahar yeled hen*. (The different arrangement of the same song that was published in Chicago in 1929, however, was by A. Saphir, who was erroneously credited by Helfman with the original melody.) The poem is by Chaim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934), certainly the most famous and the most celebrated of modern Hebrew poets associated with cultural—and, later, political—Zionism, and a major contributor to the movement to modernize and rejuvenate the Hebrew language. Bialik, who was born in Volhynia, a region in the northwest Ukraine, lived in Odessa from 1900 until 1921, where he not only wrote poetry but also edited learned journals (e.g., *R'shumot*), and in Berlin, before immigrating to Palestine in 1924. Bialik is acknowledged as Israel's poet laureate.

Laila pele is an ode to the “motherland” of Israel by Yitzhak Shenhar [Shenberg] (1902–1957), a poet, playwright, translator, and editor who was born in Volochisk, the Ukraine, and came to Palestine in 1921. The melody is by Shalom Postolski (1898–1949), who came there in 1920 among the first settlers of Ein Harod—one of the first kibbutzim in the Valley of Jezreel [Isreel]. He was one of the first composers of the kibbutz movement, and most of his music was written for kibbutz celebrations and festivals.

Ma yafim hallelot was a famous and familiar Hebrew Palestinian folksong from the early periods of settlement. The words, set to an anonymous Arabic folk tune from

the Galilee, are by Yitzhak Katzenelson (1886–1944), with anonymous additions, and are believed to have been written by him in 1925 during one of his several visits to Palestine. Born in Korelichi, near Novogradok, in the Czarist Empire (now in Belarus), Katzenelson was a prolific Yiddish as well as Hebrew poet and dramatist. He joined the Jewish partisan organization D'ror in the Warsaw Ghetto, where he witnessed the German murder of his wife and two of his sons. His Hebrew diary, known as the *Vittel Diary* after the camp in occupied France where he was also interned before his final deportation and murder at Auschwitz, provides a rare account of the entire period. It was at Vittel that he also completed his poem *Dos lid fun oysgehargetn yidishn folk* (Song of the Murdered Jewish People), considered one of the most important literary Holocaust expressions. In addition to his serious poetry, connected to the tragic events and aspects of his life, his light verse and song texts for children formed a significant part of his reputation. *Ma yafim halleilot* is one of his many poems that were set to music and became widely accepted as part of the Israeli folk repertoire. It was sung regularly by the various Zionist youth movements until the 1950s and, in the 1980s, entered the general repertoire of *shira b'tzibbur* (communal singing).

Zeira's and Shenhar's *Sisu v'simfu*, whose actual title apart from Helfman's arrangement is *Am s'gula* (A Treasured People), is drawn from and based on biblical phrases and sentiments rejoicing in the people of Israel's endurance and having to do with the harmonious coexistence of peoples. Its exuberant character, intensified by Helfman's clever counterpoint, rhythmic syncopation, and intertwined and crossed vocal and accompanimental lines—which give the feeling of a procession in the bass line—makes this a fitting conclusion to the suite.

* * * * *

Israel Suite shows Helfman having reoriented himself—at least culturally and aesthetically—from the universalist view of a new Jewish world order that his earlier choral activities had espoused, to this newer, seemingly more youthful, but equally nonreligious approach to Jewish renaissance. Formerly his arrangements had concerned songs about such things as the May Day celebration of the International Workers' Order, international labor struggles, Birobidzhan (the Jewish autonomous region in the Soviet Union), the Bolshevik Revolution, sweatshops, utopian Soviet communes, and even the *Red Army Ballad*. Now the repertoire he had come to champion involved songs that spoke to a Jewish national-cultural identity, heroism of the pioneers in Palestine and Israel, and acknowledgment of Zionist ideals.

The spontaneity and freshness of these arrangements and the others he fashioned for the Brandeis camps show Helfman in his most transparent artistic element—preserving and emphasizing the natural euphoria and optimistic spirit of the songs through judicious manipulation, without obscuring their innocence or folk character. Together they provide an illustration of his ability to apply inventive—and even restrained polyphonic—treatment to simple melodies. At the same time, the playful imagination in the accompaniments elevates the songs from simple folk monody to an unpretentious artistic plane, highlighting their Near Eastern and Mediterranean elements.

Helfman had always intended to orchestrate these song arrangements, and the 1948 Carnegie Hall performance, as well as others, featured a two-piano accompaniment. But he died before he could realize that objective. The present song suite was orchestrated expressly for the Milken Archive's 2000 recording in Vienna by **CHARLES DAVIDSON**, a distinguished composer, cantor,

cantorial educator, author, and professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary's H. L. Miller Cantorial School and College of Jewish Music. Davidson was a student of Helfman's at the Brandeis Arts Institute in 1949 and also attended other Brandeis camps, where he sang these very songs under Helfman's direction. He fashioned these orchestrations according to his detailed recollections of Helfman's aesthetic objectives and style, and he filled them with extraordinary imagination, appropriate instrumental and textural economy, coloristic effects that clearly derive from the piano parts and further delineate the contrapuntal suggestions, and overall orchestral effects that amplify both the sentiments of the lyrics and the flavor of the vocal lines.



WALTER SCHARF (1910–2003) was a prominent Hollywood and television composer and conductor for more than half a century. Born in New York City, he began his career in the early 1930s as a Broadway arranger—where he orchestrated *Girl Crazy* for George Gershwin. He went to

Los Angeles in 1934 as an arranger for the orchestra of the popular crooner Rudy Vallee. During his early years there under contract to Twentieth Century Fox, he received six Academy Award nominations for such film scores such as *Mercy Island* (1941) and the *Hit Parade* series (1940–43)—with others to come in succeeding years for *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952), *Funny Girl* (1968), and *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate*

Factory (1971); and his title song for the film *Ben* (1972) won a Golden Globe award and became a hit for singer Michael Jackson. Scharf became equally known for his work for television with the popular series *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, and he received an Emmy award for his score for an episode of *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau*. His work on more than 200 film and television scores—as composer, arranger, and orchestrator—included twenty-eight hours for the Cousteau series; five films with Elvis Presley (starting in 1957 with *Loving You*); *Holiday Inn* (1942); and many other well-remembered as well as now-forgotten films. Scharf also wrote two books: *Composed and Conducted* (1988) and *The History of Film Scoring* (1988). After his retirement from Hollywood, he composed a large-scale choral and orchestral work on commission from Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles—*The Tree Still Stands* (1989), about the development of a Jew through five stages of his life, from adolescence through adulthood, beginning with his bar mitzvah. That work drew on Hebrew texts from the Bible, supplemented by contemporary lyrics. His plan to write an opera on the life of Maurice Ravel, the classical composer he most admired, was unfulfilled at his death.

THE PALESTINE SUITE

THE PALESTINE SUITE, which dates from Scharf's first decade in Hollywood, preceded the birth of the State of Israel; hence, its title. When his grandmother died, in 1941, Scharf was inspired to write a Jewish work in tribute to her memory. She had been active in charitable work on behalf of disadvantaged and needy Jews on New York's Lower East Side and was chairman of *MOYSHE K'TANA* (lit., Little Moses), the Hebrew Orphan Society. Scharf composed this suite that year, on his return to California following her funeral, while he was working at Twentieth Century Fox Studios.

There is little attempt here to mirror any Palestinian song motifs. The first movement, *River Jordan*, calls forth the expanse of that river not only geographically, but across time. The music depicts its undulating waters, at once calm and majestic, with a kind of ancient, biblical authority. The second movement, *Andante*, suggests, in its continuous restful chant, strains of Yiddish lullabies from eastern Europe rather than any Near Eastern melos. The overall jubilation of the third movement, titled *Celebration*, presents exciting orchestral gestures—but again, against quintessential rhythms of eastern European Jewish wedding bands (klezmerim) and fused with tune fragment and modal-scalar clichés that could have emanated from the pits of Second Avenue theaters where his mother, Bessie Zwerling, was a star of the Yiddish stage. These two minutes are, however, no raw klezmer improvisation, but an expertly and tastefully crafted miniature. *The Palestine Suite* was given its premiere under the baton of Werner Janssen over CBS radio in 1941. Leopold Stokowski later conducted it at the Hollywood Bowl.



Although he excelled in a number of musical genres, sacred as well as secular, classical as well as commercial, **SHOLOM SECUNDA** (1894–1974) will always be remembered primarily for his illustrious association with the American Yiddish musical theater. He established himself as one of the preeminent composers and songwriters in that arena of mass popular entertainment known as Second Avenue, which flourished among Yiddish-speaking immigrant generations from the late 19th century through the 1940s.

Born in Aleksandriya, the Ukraine, to a father who was an amateur *badkhn* (folk entertainer and singer at Jewish celebrations), the young Secunda became a coveted boy alto soloist in major synagogue choirs and soon gained a reputation as a brilliant wunderkind boy *hazzan* (cantor). He immigrated to America with his family in 1907 and, until his voice changed, was known in the New York area too as “the prince of the young *hazzanim*.”

By 1913 he was engaged as a chorister in Yiddish theater productions, for which he also began writing songs. A year later he began studies at the Institute for Musical Art (now The Juilliard School), and shortly afterward, together with Solomon Shmulevitz, a well-established songwriter and lyricist for Yiddish theater and vaudeville, he wrote his first full-length score—*Yoysher* (Justice). In that same period, the legendary prima donna Regina Prager introduced one of his songs, *Heym, zise heyim* (Home Sweet Home), which became his first real success.

Nonetheless, after his studies at the Institute, his interest in classical expression remained. When he became acquainted with the music of Ernest Bloch, he was struck by the high artistic level to which Jewish music could be elevated, and he took lessons with Bloch for about a year.

After working in Yiddish theaters in Philadelphia for three years, Secunda saw his first operetta with his own orchestration, *Moshka*, produced in New York (Brooklyn) in 1926. As his composing for the Yiddish theater increased, he began simultaneously turning his attention to serious Yiddish poetry with a view to writing art songs. But the lure of the theater remained paramount for him in those years, along with opportunities in Yiddish radio programming and broadcasting. Between 1935 and 1937 alone, Secunda wrote scores for at least seven shows and also began to experiment with more serious incidental music for Maurice Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theater.

In the late 1930s Secunda began a rewarding artistic association with Cantor Reuben Ticker, who subsequently became the international star opera tenor Richard Tucker and reigned for many years at the Metropolitan Opera House. Secunda composed and arranged a considerable amount of Hebrew liturgical music for Tucker's cantorial services, recordings, and concerts; and Tucker became the principal advocate for Secunda's synagogue music. In addition, for twenty-eight years Secunda served as music director of the Concord Hotel, one of the two leading upscale resorts in the Catskill Mountains north of New York City with a Jewish clientele. In that post, which in fact constituted a serious musical opportunity, he conducted holy day synagogue services and summer concerts with full orchestra.

All told, Secunda wrote more than eighty operettas, melodramas, and musical shows for the Yiddish stage, in addition to numerous independent songs. By the 1940s, Second Avenue audiences were beginning to shift from an immigrant-based to a nostalgia-oriented group, which led to increasing amounts of English interspersed with the Yiddish. Although he claimed to have concluded his Second Avenue career after *The Kosher Widow*, in 1959, he was still writing for Yiddish shows in the 1960s. His final musical—produced as late as 1973, long after the thriving days of Yiddish theater had become memory—was *Shver tsu zayn a yid* (It's Hard to Be a Jew), a musical version of a well-known Sholom Aleichem play that was first presented in New York in 1921.

Without question, his most famous song from his entire career was—and will certainly always remain—*Bay mir bistu sheyn* (In My Eyes You're Beautiful), which he wrote for his 1932 musical comedy, *M'ken lebn nor m'lost nit* (One Could Really Live, but They Won't Let You)—officially subtitled in English as *I Would If I Could*. The song, an instant hit in the Second Avenue milieu, was shortly thereafter catapulted onto the international scene as an overnight commercial sensation, and over the years has generated gargantuan sums in royalties and revenues. Its recording by the Andrews Sisters, with English lyrics by Sammy Cahn that bear little relation to the original Yiddish words (except for the four words of the title), led to the ASCAP award for the most popular song of 1938. It was subsequently given further new treatments and arrangements in renditions by dozens of singers and orchestras—including Ella Fitzgerald, Tommy Dorsey, Guy Lombardo, the Ramsey Lewis Trio, the Barry Sisters, Judy Garland, Rudy Vallee, Kate Smith, and many others. The best-known “swing” version was

introduced by Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall, and the English version has been translated into dozens of languages. Even though it survives primarily in its English or English-based version, it can still be asserted safely that *Bay mir bistu sheyn* is simply the world's best-known and longest-reigning Yiddish theater song of all time—familiar among non-Jews as well as Jews.

From the 1960s on, Secunda accelerated his energies toward serious concert music. His collective output includes a string quartet, a violin concerto, and an orchestral tone poem, all recorded for the first time by the Milken Archive. His two major cantatas, *If Not Higher*, on a familiar story by Yehuda Leib Peretz (also recorded for the Milken Archive), and *Yizkor*, were sung at live performances and on television broadcasts by Richard Tucker. Secunda made no secret of his hope that he might be remembered primarily for those classically oriented accomplishments rather than as a Yiddish theater composer. That hope, however, in view of his overriding fame on Second Avenue, will probably go unfulfilled.

YOM B'KIBBUTZ

For a symphonic concert piece about modern Israel, the origins of Secunda's **YOM B'KIBBUTZ** (A Day on a Kibbutz) might seem curious. By 1952, the popular American Yiddish theater of Second Avenue had already passed its zenith. With diminishing numbers of immigrant-era Yiddish-speaking audiences, and despite fervent denials by old-time aficionados and actors, it was already in its decline in the postwar period. Nonetheless, in October of that year, Secunda's new Yiddish musical, *Uncle Sam in Israel*—with lyrics by Second Avenue veteran Chaim Tauber and a book by Benjamin Ressler—opened at New York's Public

Theater in the heart of the Second Avenue district. Starring Michael Rosenberg, Fyvush Finkel, Shifra Lehrer, and Bella Meisel, among others, it centered around the zealous commitment and selflessness of the pioneers and settlers in Palestine and the young State of Israel as they labored to rebuild a permanent Jewish homeland through agricultural settlements in the northern regions. The predictably banal (even for Second Avenue) plot concerned an American Jewess from Kentucky who, on a visit to Israel, becomes fired with idealism and decides to remain there with a group of immigrants—while her father arrives with grandiose plans for “civilizing” Israel in short order. Two months later, bowing to the changing demographics of potential audiences, and in an effort to attract younger crowds, the show was revised and reproduced afresh by Herman Yablokoff at the same theater in an English-language adaptation, with Yiddish punch lines and a few words of Yiddish as well as Hebrew sprinkled here and there.

Later, after the show's run, Secunda extracted music from it to use as the basis for his tone poem *Yom b'kibbutz*, adding new musical material and reorchestrating for a much larger ensemble. The piece was intended to depict programmatically—and of course romantically—life on a typical kibbutz.

Despite its title and perhaps even its composer's intent, this piece suggests more than kibbutz-related images, extending to a reflection of the resettling, rebuilding, and defense of modern Israel in general. Actually it appears to be a series of moments—intense, ecstatic, and even heroic, as well as pastoral. There are echoes of imagined night scenes on kibbutzim in the Galilee, replete with the expected strains of a distant Arabic shepherd flute—with which the piece opens and which recurs with variations—and modal hints of early

Text Translations

settler songs that were adopted from Arabic folksong. But these give way to bombastic passages that could easily be heard as fierce battle scenes from the War of Independence or even earlier skirmishes, even if they were drawn from more thinly orchestrated kibbutz festival dance scenes or marches to the fields in the earlier Yiddish show. There are moments of calm but deliberate toil, others of fiery determination, and still others of cliff-hanging confrontation—all of which could be imagined as accompanying parts of a large-scale epic film. It is worth noting that Secunda once aspired fervently to compose for Hollywood and visited there in pursuit of that dream. But he was rebuffed by the studios and by influential Jews in the industry, in part because they felt that his music and his Yiddish theatrical persona were too ethnically oriented and too narrowly Jewish to resonate for the wider American cinema audiences of that time. In a way, though, what began here as Second Avenue pit music became something of a filmless film score that, with the right corresponding cinematic images, could probably have appealed to the general public a generation later.

—Neil W. Levin

The Milken Archive expresses its appreciation to Professor Edwin Seroussi, Dr. Natan Shahar, and Dr. Talila Eliram of the Jewish Music Research Centre of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for sharing their research and scholarly expertise in the field of Israeli folksong and related fields.

OLD JERUSALEM

Julius Chajes

Sung in Hebrew

Translation: JPS Tanakh 1999

PSALM 134

Now bless the Lord,
all you servants of the Lord
who stand nightly
in the house of the Lord.
Lift your hands toward the sanctuary
and bless the Lord.
May the Lord,
maker of heaven and earth,
bless you from Zion.



ISRAEL SUITE

Max Helfman

Sung in Hebrew

Translation: Eliyahu Mishulovin

HAMISHA

Five went forth to build a homeland,
Five ...
Back home they left mothers and sisters,
Babies and wives ...

They struck their hammers amidst the mountains,
Hammering.
Five stood there paving and dreaming of
New paths and roads ...

Shots suddenly sliced the morning air;
Shots!
With hammers in their hands, with pure hearts,
The five bodies fell ...

And they rose ...
And at night, when the fires lighted the mountains
in the hills,
The hammers were being struck anew—
And they have not been silent since ...

And there are those who weep for a moment,
sigh and
Mutter ...
At home they left behind mothers and sisters,
Babies and wives ...
But not for one moment do their hands rest ...
Five went forth to build a homeland.
Five ...

LAILA HAD'MAMA

It is night; stillness
Surrounds me.
The cows are sleepy,
The path to the *kvutzah* [collective]
Is not short, nor is it long;
To the light of the moon then rising
Memories flicker up in me:
I have had good days;
I have had mostly nights.

B'YOM KAYITZ

On a summer's day, a hot day, when the sun is on high
And the heavens are ablaze like the oven of day,
The time when the heart seeks a quiet corner in
which to dream—
Come to me, come to me, weary friend!

LAILA PELE

A thousand nights and then another night
Pay tribute to her,
To this tiny land of mine,
Yet that is not enough for her!

A thousand wonders and yet another wonder
On every mountain and on every rock!
You, my little land,
Allow me a pause.

Night of wonder, wonder of night
This is the reward—a home!

MA YAFIM HALLEILOT

How lovely are the nights in the land of Canaan,
They are fresh and clear.
The stillness bursts out a song,
And my heart responds with singing.
The jackals' sad wailing
Rips through the silence of the night.

SISU V'SIMHU

Rejoice and be happy in the people of the Lord
Indeed, the people of Israel still lives!
Who amongst the nations is so treasured, who?
Who from the far corners of the world will go toward
redemption, who?
Yes, brothers dwell together
Blessed and assured,
Beloved and connected,
A treasured people.



ADARIM

Julius Chajes

Sung in Hebrew

Translation: Eliyahu Mishulovin

On the mountains
Herds and flocks are
Roaming and wandering.
Playing and pasturing,
Me, me, ma, ma!

On the mountains
The shepherd lives;
There they blow their pipes,
And an echo of their tone is heard there:
Hu, hu, ha, ha!

On the mountains
They dance; they sing there.
With the evening sun
They clap their hands:
Lu, lu la, la!

On the mountains
The shepherd lifts his voice:
To me, my flock; to me, my riches;
To me, my mountains; to me, my joy.
Li, li, li, li!

NOTE: Biographical sketches of the performers on this recording can be found on the Milken Archive Web site: www.milkenarchive.org

YEMENITE CYCLE

Herbert Fromm

Sung in Hebrew

Translation unless otherwise noted: Eliyahu Mishulovin.

YOM ZE L'YISRA'EL

(Fromm's setting includes only four stanzas, and not in their original order.)

This day for Israel is a day of light and joy,
a Sabbath of rest.

You gave us Your commandments at Sinai:
to observe the Sabbath and Holy Days for all times.
Restore our Temple and remember our ruins;
Your goodness, our Savior, bring to the dejected.
You sanctified and blessed it more than all other days;
In six days You completed the work of the world.

BAMMIDBAR [LAMMIDBAR]

Carry us to the desert.
Keep playing your flute.
The shepherds are sleeping,
And at night on the path the stars hint the way.
Carry us to the desert on the humps of camels,
On their necks large bells will be ringing.

ZAMM'RI LI

Translation: Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

Sing to me, innocent and pure dove,
Sing to me with the joy of Yemen: onward to Zion.

SHALOM L'VO SHABBAT

Peace to the coming of the Sabbath,
peace and happiness.
Welcome to you, Sabbath, the day of rest.
Rejoice, children of Jacob,
for the seventh day has come....
In this day I shall find good, joy, and happiness.

Kurt Weill: Hatikva (1947)

Publisher: European American Music
Recording: Centre Cultural de Sant Cugat,
Barcelona, May 2000
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Bertram Kornacher
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Julius Chajes: Old Jerusalem (1974)

Publisher: Transcontinental
Recording: Sala Sinfonica del Auditori,
Barcelona, Spain, June 2001
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Bertram Kornacher
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

**Herbert Fromm: Pioneers (Hlutzim):
March on Israeli Motifs (1971)**

Publisher: Transcontinental
Recording: Slovak Radio Hall, Bratislava,
Slovak Republic, June 1998
Recording Producer: Elliot McKinley
Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

Max Helfman: Israel Suite (1949)

Orchestration: Charles Davidson
Recording: Casino Zoegernitz,
Vienna, Austria, May 2000
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes
Recording Project Managers:
Paul Schwendener/Neil Levin

Julius Chajes: Hebrew Suite (1939, rev. 1965)

Publisher: Transcontinental
Recording: Centre Cultural de Sant Cugat,
Barcelona, May 2000
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Bertram Kornacher
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Julius Chajes: Adarim (1939)

Publisher: Transcontinental
Recording: Sala Sinfonica del Auditori,
Barcelona, Spain, January 1999
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Bertram Kornacher
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Walter Scharf: The Palestine Suite (1941)

Publisher: EMI Music
Recording: Centre Cultural de Sant Cugat,
Barcelona, May 2000
Recording Producer: Simon Weir
Recording Engineer: Bertram Kornacher
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Herbert Fromm: Yemenite Cycle (1961)

Publisher: Theodore Presser
Recording: Kilbourn Hall/Eastman School of Music,
University of Rochester, NY, February 1998
Recording Producer: David Frost
Recording Engineer: David Dusman
Recording Project Manager: Samuel Adler

Sholom Secunda: Yom b'kibbutz (1952)

Publisher: Williamson Music
Recording: Jesus Christus Kirche,
Berlin, Germany, December 2000
Recording Producer: Wolfram Nehls
Recording Engineer: Martin Eichberg
Assistant Recording Engineer: Susanne Beyer
Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener
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