

Cover Art

Lukas Foss

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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A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



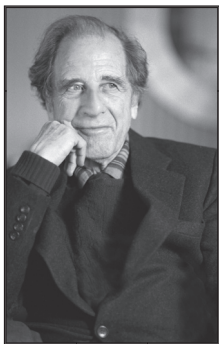
The quality, quantity, and amazing diversity of sacred as well as secular music written for or inspired by Jewish life in America is one of the least acknowledged achievements of modern Western culture. The time is ripe for a wider awareness and appreciation of these various repertoires—which may be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

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

Neil W. Levin
Neil W. Levin

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



LUKAS FOSS (b. 1922) has achieved remarkable distinction as a composer, a conductor, and a pianist, and he is universally regarded not only as one of America's leading 20th-century composers but also as one of the major forces on the American music scene generally. In 1974 Aaron Copland referred to his works as "among the most original and stimulating composi-

tions in American music." Yet many observers have continued to characterize him as overly eclectic—even as once having aspired to the role of *enfant terrible* of American music—and as never having found a convenient artistic niche. That is, however, a reputation in which Foss takes great pride. Not only does his music defy classification, but he himself refuses to be categorized. His work has quite deliberately embraced a wide range of styles, techniques, influences, and approaches: from Copland-type Americana to the neoclassicism of Stravinsky, from aleatoric and graphic to precisely notated music, from tonality to rigorous serial techniques, and from stabs at his own brand of minimalism (long before it was fashionable) to the so-called postmodern composite variety—and much in between. But he has made each influence his own, and his works usually bear the unmistakable stamp of his hand.

Born Lukas Fuchs in Berlin, he was soon recognized as a child prodigy. He began piano and theory lessons with Julius Goldstein [Herford], but following the German electorate's "surrender" to the National Socialist Party, the installation of the Nazi regime with the appointment of Hitler as chancellor, and the commencement of state persecution of Jews, his parents emigrated swiftly to Paris in 1933. He continued his studies there: piano with Lazare Levy, composition with Noël Gallon, orchestration with Felix Wolfes, and flute with Louise Moyses. In 1937 his family resettled in the United States, where Foss continued his studies at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, with Isabelle Vengerova for piano, Rosario Scalero and Randall Thompson for composition, and Fritz Reiner for conducting.

During his first year in America, Foss met Aaron Copland, who had a decisive influence on him and his musical direction. As Foss later recalled, "I had fallen in love with America because of people like Aaron," and he once wrote to Copland, "Yours is the only American music I have performed consistently over the years." Foss continued his composition studies with Paul Hindemith at Yale (1939–40) and his conducting studies at the Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood) during the summers of 1939–43 with Serge Koussevitzky, who engaged him in 1943 as the pianist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until 1949.

Foss's initial acclaim as a composer came with his cantata *The Prairie*, on a poem by Carl Sandburg, which he wrote for soloists, mixed chorus, and orchestra. It was performed in 1944 in New York by Robert Shaw and his Collegiate Chorale, and it received honorable mention by the Music Critics' Circle of New York. Over the next several years he achieved several further distinctions: In 1945 he was the youngest recipient

to date of a Guggenheim fellowship in composition; and from 1950–52 he was in residence in Rome on Fulbright grants and as a Fellow of the American Academy. A year later he was appointed a professor of music at the University of California at Los Angeles, in both composition and conducting.

During his California tenure, Foss also was active as a performer, directing the Ojai Festival and conducting twelve marathon concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, each devoted thematically to a single composer or geographic region. This was the beginning of his lifelong dedication to the music of contemporary composers and his recognized championship of new music. He founded the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble in 1957 at U.C.L.A., which provided expanded opportunities for experimentation both in his own music and for other composers.

In 1963 Foss became music director and conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic. Although some criticized his excessive programming of new music there (he was even dubbed the “would-be Boulez of Buffalo” in reference to Pierre Boulez’s troubled tenure as music director of the New York Philharmonic, where his attention to contemporary music was not always welcomed by conservative audiences), he brought the Buffalo Philharmonic into the limelight of the 20th-century music world and thereby introduced the public to a broader range of new music. While there, he also founded the Center for Creative and Performing Arts at the State University of New York.

Foss’s appointment in 1970 as conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonia (now the Brooklyn Philharmonic) inaugurated a two-decade tenure during which he became especially known for his inventive programming, which also included a balance between the old

and the new. He foreshadowed many of the future trends in programming: thematic programs, single-composer marathons (he opened his first season in 1971 with a four-and-a-half-hour Bach marathon), pre- and postconcert discussions and symposia (“Meet the Moderns”), and specialized new music events. From 1972 until 1976 Foss was also the conductor of the Kol Yisrael (state radio) Orchestra in Jerusalem (now the Jerusalem Philharmonic), and from 1981 until 1986 he was the music director of the Milwaukee Symphony—after which he was named its conductor laureate. Meanwhile, he continued to guest conduct major orchestras throughout America and Europe, and he has taught and been a composer-in-residence at such universities and conservatories as Harvard, Yale, Carnegie Mellon, Boston University, Tanglewood, and the Manhattan School of Music.

“Our recognition of originality is awfully primitive at times,” he has remarked. “When we think of a composer, we put him in a cubbyhole, where he doesn’t belong.” Perhaps the admittedly overused word *eclectic* does aptly describe Foss in some respects, but his is a multilayered and highly personal brand of eclecticism. He insists that his available creative tools include “all the techniques”—and that the greater variety of techniques he employs, both within a single piece and from one work to another, the richer his musical vocabulary becomes; and he is quick to differentiate that from “style.” He also maintains that he can be as adventurous and “wild” in tonal music as he has been in his nontonal and even his improvisatory works. Whatever the technique, and whatever the influence, the “trick,” he reminds us, “is to make it your own.” And he is fond of quoting Stravinsky: “You must always steal, but never from yourself.” If a composer “borrows” from himself, Foss believes—i.e., if he confines himself to particular techniques and stylistic approaches—he never grows as an artist. For Foss,

therefore, one compositional technique or language must not be considered in lieu of another, and the influences are unimportant: "It's what I do with them that is important."

The composer David Del Tredici also views Foss's eclecticism as an artistic advantage: "In a sense, pluralism is his style. Foss has the ability to take disparate materials, fracture them, and put them into one piece," as a child would "break the toy and put it back together again—cracked!" In fact, much of Foss's music has been described as childlike by others as well—childlike, but in no way childish, suggesting the sense of wonderment and freshness he brings to his music.

Time Cycle, a work for soprano and chamber ensemble (1959–60) on English and German texts by Auden, Housman, Kafka, and Nietzsche, won the New York Music Critics' Circle award and remains one of Foss's best-known and most frequently performed pieces. *Echoi* (1963), for four soloists, was one of his first "experimental" pieces, fusing serial technique with aleatoric elements. In some of his later works he combined experimental aspects with more traditional elements in a single piece. His clarinet concerto (1989), for example, written for Richard Stoltzman, is nearly neoclassical in its second movement, while the third movement is an aleatoric exposition that could easily have come (but didn't!) from his 1960s phase. Indeed, that concerto is now considered one of the most original and important contributions to the clarinet repertoire—an example of the underlying healthy tension between tradition and innovation that is found throughout much of Foss's work. His flute concerto, on the other hand, utilizes Renaissance musical idioms, and in fact he calls it *Renaissance Concerto*. Foss also resists the current fashion of "image building," which he deems dangerous for any composer: "That means you're stagnating—stuck with that

image! A composer must keep learning, which is the opposite of image building." Had he thought of music as career, he has mused, he might have been more competitive. "But music to me is just work!" Indeed, Foss eschews the term *career*—or even *profession*—with regard to music, or any high art for that matter. If composition in that perception is "just work," it is a form of sacred work—a calling, not a career.

Foss perceives a subconsciously Jewish character not only in his directly Judaic pieces (sacred or secular), but also in much of his work in general. For him it is not a religious matter or even a religious influence, but a matter of identity. "I think that identity comes to the fore in many pieces." Yet he stresses the importance of the unconscious, uncontrived influence. "I feel that it is a great asset to be deeply rooted in the soil of one's people," he responded in the 1940s to a query about the relationship between nationalism and music, "but never must one consciously seek it." He was referring both to the American and to the Jewish parameters of his art as a so-called American Jewish composer. "I am very much conscious of my place in the world as Jew, but I never ask myself whether or not I write 'as a Jew.' "

But just as Foss has addressed Americana transparently in certain works of his, he has also written a significant number of specifically Judaic, or Judaically related, pieces. In addition to those presented on this recording, they include *Song of Songs*, his second solo biblical cantata, written for soprano and orchestra and premiered by Serge Koussevitzky in 1946; *Behold I Build an House* for chorus and organ or piano, with the text drawn from Chronicles; *Psalms* for chorus, orchestra, and two pianos; *De profundis*, also a choral setting from the Book of Psalms; and the *Salamone Rossi Suite* for orchestra, based on music by the late Renaissance/ early Baroque Italian Jewish

composer Salamone Rossi (ca. 1570—ca. 1630), who composed, among much other music, the first known Hebrew liturgical settings in the style of the Italian Renaissance.

Foss has always considered his Jewish and his American identities a twin badge of honor, more or less ignoring his European birth and childhood from an emotional perspective. Shortly after the Second World War he returned to Berlin to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic. When a reporter asked him how it felt to “be home,” Foss replied that he would be home when he got back to New York.



ROBERT BEASER was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1954 and spent his youth in a nearby suburb. He received his B.A., master of arts, and doctor of musical arts degrees from Yale University, where he studied with Jacob Druckman, Otto-Werner Mueller, Arthur Weisberg, William Steinberg, and others. He won the Prix de Rome shortly after receiving

his undergraduate degree (the youngest person up to that time to receive that award), and he studied in Italy with Goffredo Petrassi. Upon his return to the United States, he was appointed co-musical director and conductor of the contemporary chamber ensemble at Musical Elements, based at New York City’s 92nd Street YMHA. During his twelve years in that capacity, Beaser was responsible for presenting premieres of more than 200 contemporary chamber works.

From 1988 through 1993 he was a composer-in-residence with the American Composers Orchestra’s “Meet the Composer” program, and he has served since then as the artistic advisor for the ACO. That orchestra has performed a number of his works at Carnegie Hall, including *The Heavenly Feast* (with soprano Lauren Flanigan), *Chorale Variation*, *Seven Deadly Sins*, and his piano concerto, the last two of which were recorded by the ACO conducted by Dennis Russel Davies and released together on a London/Argo CD. *Gramophone* magazine called the music on that CD “dazzlingly colorful, fearless of gesture; beautifully fashioned and ingeniously constructed.” Among his other recorded works are *Song of the Bells*; *The Old Men Admiring Themselves in the Water*; *Notes on a Southern Sky*; a piano version of *Seven Deadly Sins*; *Mountain Songs*; and settings of Psalms 119 and 150. Beaser has a particular affinity for the Book of Psalms, which he connects most directly to his perception of Judaically related music. “I associate Jewish music with Psalms,” he explained in a recent interview.

In addition to the Baltimore Symphony (*The Heavenly Feast*) and the ACO, he has received commissions from the New York Philharmonic (for its 150th anniversary celebrations), the Chicago Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, Chanticleer, and the American Brass Quintet. His works have been performed by the Aspen, Berlin, and Lockenhaus festivals, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the New World Symphony, the Seattle Symphony chamber series, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Chicago Contemporary Chamber Players, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—among many other groups. Soloists and conductors who have performed his music include Leonard Slatkin, Richard Stoltzman, James Galway, Gerard Schwarz, and David Zinman. His one-act opera *Food of Love*, with a libretto by Terence McNally, was com-

missioned jointly by New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera and was premiered in 1999. It formed part of the “Central Park Trilogy,” which was telecast the following spring on an Emmy-nominated segment of PBS’s *Great Performances*.

Beaser’s music has been characterized as a synthesis of “spatial clarity and epic sweep,” and is known for its fusion of European traditions with “American musical vernacular.” In his evocation of American hymn styles, critics have drawn comparisons to Copland and Barber: in 1982 a *New York Times* critic wrote that he possessed “a lyrical gift comparable to that of the late Samuel Barber,” and the *Baltimore Sun* hailed him as “one of this country’s huge composing talents.” He is often considered among a group of “New Tonalists”—with contemporary American composers such as Lowell Liebermann, Aaron Jay Kernis, and Richard Danielpour—whose aesthetic approach involves adapting late-20th-century tonal language to serve more recent artistic leanings. “I am often called a ‘new tonalist,’” Beaser mused in a recent discussion, “which is somewhat baffling to me because I don’t think tonality is really new!” Rather, he sees his brand of tonality as both a continuation and a musical approach that, for some, might have faded and then was reborn. “There was, for my generation,” he admits, “a sort of sense that we had inherited a rather confining world of contemporary music. And then many of us went on to investigate other avenues. I was interested in recovering elements that I felt had been lost in music; and one of them is simply the ability to tell a story.” He sees his own musical language as evolving stylistically from one piece to another.

The American Academy of Arts and Letters honored Beaser in 1995 with a lifetime achievement award and with a citation stating that “His masterful orchestrations, clear-cut structures, and logical musi-

cal discourse ... reveal a musical imagination of rare creativity and sensitivity ...” His other awards and honors include fellowships from the Guggenheim and Fulbright foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts, a Charles Ives Scholarship, and an ASCAP Composers Award. Beaser has lectured at many conservatories and universities, and he currently teaches composition at The Juilliard School.

—Neil W. Levin

Program Notes

SONG OF ANGUISH

Lukas Foss

Song of Anguish is a biblical solo cantata for baritone and orchestra (although one critic called it “less a cantata than an impassioned plea”) based on the composer’s own selection of verses from Isaiah and adapted by him from the English translation found in the King James Bible—or the Authorized Version. But Foss reordered them freely according to his own thematic and artistic concept. Some of these verses represent Isaiah’s castigation of the all-encompassing corruption, decadence, and perfidy into which the Jewish people in the Kingdom of Judah had fallen. They address the people’s perversion of moral values, their arrogance and self-righteousness, their adherence to false leadership, their dishonesty and self-delusion, and their hypocrisy and outright malevolence. In Foss’s reordering, these denunciations are punctuated by predictions and promises of Divine retribution against *all* perpetrators of evil—whether in Judah or the other nations. Isaiah assures the people of God’s unfailing and unabated anger until all evil will have been rooted out and destroyed, “until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.” Collectively, those verses portray a deep, penetrating

anguish—the anguish of the prophet as he painfully observes and enumerates the people’s unalloyed wickedness and evil; the anguish of the situation and of the doom the people has—or will have—brought upon itself; and perhaps God’s own emotional anguish, out of which derives His anger, for the God of Israel is known and described in Scriptures as “abundant in mercy, long-suffering, and slow to anger.” It may be worth considering that despite its transparent references to Divine anger, this work is titled *Song of Anguish*, not *Song of Anger*.

The Book of Isaiah is one of the eight books of the Prophets (*n’vi’im*), which constitutes the second of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible (surrounded by the Torah—the Law, or Teaching—and the Sacred Writings). It is generally accepted that Isaiah had been developed into its present form by 180 B.C.E. A statement in the Talmud (Bava Batra 15a) indicates that Hezekiah was the actual writer, or perhaps editor, of the book, which is considered a record of Isaiah’s teachings, preaching, admonitions, warnings, and prophecies. For a long time it was accepted by the rabbis and sages that the Book of Isaiah was the work of a single author or represented the words of a single prophet: Isaiah (*Y’shaya* in Hebrew, meaning God’s help or deliverance), son of Amoz, who, according to a tradition recorded in the Talmud (Meg. 10b), was the brother of Amaziah, a king of Judah. Isaiah was both a statesman and a prophet as well as an impassioned public orator, and he was a contemporary of the prophet Micah. He followed shortly after Hosea and Amos, who preached in the Northern Kingdom.

It is now nearly universally acknowledged in the world of biblical scholarship that Isaiah should be viewed as the composite work of at least two distinct authors or prophets. According to this conclusion, I Isaiah (First Isaiah) includes Chapters 1–39 and refers to the known

Isaiah (ben Amoz) whose diplomatic-political, prophetic, and preaching activities in Jerusalem are believed to have occurred in the second half of the 8th century B.C.E.—viz., between ca. 740 and 700 B.C.E. Chapters 40–66 are generally attributed to another prophet who lived and prophesied later, during the Babylonian captivity, but who is otherwise unknown. He is designated as Deutero-Isaiah, or II Isaiah, and his prophecies and pronouncements pertain to the Babylonian Exile (ca. 540 B.C.E.). Many biblical scholars also assign a third author altogether to the closing chapters (56–66)—a Palestinian prophet, Trito-Isaiah (Third Isaiah), who is thought to have been active after the return from Babylonian captivity. Yet some fundamental traditionalists reject modern biblical criticism from both literary and historical angles and prefer to adhere to the older rabbinic axiom of single authorship. They accept the explanation that the exilic and postexilic oracles and pronouncements—which obviously would have occurred long after Isaiah’s lifetime, and which have been held to depart from Chapters 1–39 in details of literary style and tone as well as in religious and political circumstances—are Divine predictions of the future that were nonetheless transmitted and voiced through the same prophet Isaiah.

All of the verses Foss chose for *Song of Anguish*, however, are from the section of Isaiah that comprises the first thirty-nine chapters. Thus, this cantata reflects and musically interprets Isaiah’s warnings and predictions *before* the projected calamity of the Babylonian captivity and exile.

Isaiah’s career and prophetic role coincided with one of the most critical periods in ancient or biblical Jewish history, when the Northern Kingdom of Israel collapsed and when the very existence of the Kingdom of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem, were threatened by the most powerful empire of the day. A part of

Isaiah's prophetic activity lay in diplomatic and political counsel with regard to the wisdom or ill-advised nature of alliances and other purely military or political strategies, and his conviction that ultimately, Judah's protection lay in Divine hands rather than in human schemes. The political, foreign policy, and military issues and events formed the historical backdrop to Isaiah's deeper concern for the spiritual and moral state of his people and its internal life, social consciousness, and religiously related and divinely mandated adherence to a code of moral and ethical behavior.

Isaiah began his prophecies at a time when Judah was experiencing great abundance and prosperity. But the kingdom was also rife—perhaps in some respects as a consequence of that prosperity and the self-righteousness and insensitivity it may have bred—with social and political injustice, economic class oppression, and moral decay. He depicts a disillusioned scene of a nation where bribery could acquit the guilty, where orphans went undefended, where the poor were looted to provide further riches for the prosperous, where the innocent could easily be convicted to suit their accusers, where idolatry had reemerged, where materialism triumphed over the spirit, where the successful worshiped their own accomplishments rather than God, where sanctimonious religious ritual was disconnected from moral values and actions, where outward religious practice had no effect on conduct, where adultery was tolerated, and where even murder could go unpunished.

Isaiah stressed the following: Divine holiness and unswerving reliance on God rather than on human tactical endeavors in the pursuit of Israel's destiny; the inviolability of Jerusalem as the holy city and as the ultimate site of universal acknowledgment of God and Divine Truth; the assurance of ultimate justice and

redemptive peace under the leadership of a messianic ruler, even though only a remnant of Israel would remain after the predicted doom; and the moral and ethical parameters of religious teaching. His central admonition was that ultimate disaster and destruction could be averted only by the dual course of trust in God and His wisdom—and renunciation of the wholesale national corruption and evil, which God's Law had been given in order to prevent.

Foss composed *Song of Anguish* in 1945. Its first performance included a solo dance element and was given with piano accompaniment at Jacob's Pillow, a festival in the Berkshire Mountains, in the summer of 1948. The premiere of the full orchestral version in 1950 was sung by Aron Marko Rothmüller together with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer.

The work is in the form of a single movement that courses over six distinct sections that follow one another without audible break. After the initial section, which corresponds to an orchestral prelude that previews some of the thematic material, the vocal line resembles an almost continuous incantation that is also an integral part of the orchestral texture. Yet there is often a contrast offered by more sustained vocal passages set against greater orchestral motion, which facilitates a degree of transparency of the words. The dramatic and deliberate vocal entrance at the beginning of the second section, for example, sustains over sharply delineated disjunctive intervals in the orchestra, which immediately engages the listener—just as Isaiah's words might have jolted his audience. The third section is built largely around another, more sedate orchestral figure; and section four is almost a recapitulation of the second, with accompanimental variations. The fifth section is the longest, and it is characterized by continuous development and

alteration of repetitive motives, and by motoric, almost nervous activity in the orchestra. Although the continuous development and unfolding of material deliberately ignores the poetic structure of the text, the angry and even violent mood of the words are aptly mirrored by the throbbing pace of the music, which is infused with pungent and pulsating rhythms that can seem reminiscent of Copland—especially his ballet music—bringing a strange but intriguing flavor of aesthetic Americana to an otherwise biblically oriented work.

A reminder that God's anger is "kindled against His people" and is "not [yet] turned away" (repeating parts of a verse sung earlier) forms the transition to the sixth and final section, which opens with the prophet's question: "How long?" sung in an imploring vein. The Divine reply to Isaiah ("Until the cities be wasted ... and the land be utterly desolate.") has an eerie quality about it, both in the vocal line and in the calm but resolute orchestral flow with which the voice sounds are intertwined. The short concluding orchestral gesture leaves no doubt and no opportunity to remonstrate; it signifies the finality and resignation of that judgment.

ELEGY FOR ANNE FRANK

Lukas Foss

As virtually all the conscious world knows, Anne Frank was a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl who—together with her own and another family (the Van Pels) and one additional refugee (Fritz Pfeffer) whom they took in later—lived for two years in hiding from the Germans and their Dutch collaborators in a secret, semi-sealed nest of rooms and attic in German-occupied Amsterdam, until their inevitable discovery, seizure, and deportation in 1944 to concentration and death camps, where all except Anne's father, Otto, were murdered by the Germans. During those two years,

Anne kept an extraordinarily perceptive, eloquently cadenced, and touching diary, in which she had begun to write just prior to the implementation of her father's decision to take his family into hiding. That decision was his ultimately futile—and, in some clinically dispassionate postwar judgments, unwise, unduly naïve, and even delusional—response to the German's commencement of their roundup of Dutch Jews, which began for the Franks when Anne's older sister, Margot, received her call-up notice to report for deportation (ostensibly to a forced-labor camp).

The Franks were prosperous but basically nonreligious and unaffiliated German Jews who had lived in Frankfurt am Main until 1933. Shortly after the German elections resulted in the invitation to the National Socialists to join the government, and their subsequent attainment of power with Hitler's appointment as chancellor, the state persecution and disenfranchisement of Jews began in earnest, and the Franks sought refuge and a new life in Amsterdam. Otto Frank reestablished himself successfully in business, and the family resumed its comfortable life until the German invasion and occupation of Holland, in 1940. During the two years in hiding, as Anne's diary records, the family attempted to preserve as large a measure of normalcy as possible, with the children continuing their daily secular studies under their parents' tutelage. The occupants lived not only in obvious fear of capture but also with the unrealistically optimistic, almost contrived assumption that the accelerating maelstrom outside would somehow soon be reversed and their plight would be resolved—presumably, that Germany's defeat, or at least the arrival of the Allies, would precede their detection, after which they would emerge intact and be able to resume their former lives.

The Franks thus sequestered themselves, unarmed, in an annex above Otto Frank's former place of business,

where the entrance staircase was concealed behind a movable bookcase. There was no other escape route. During business hours the warehouse and offices below were occupied by non-Jewish Dutch workers. The Franks and their housemates were aided by several compassionate and courageous Dutch people—*hasidei ummot ha'olam*, or “righteous among the [non-Jewish] nations,” as non-Jews who aided Jews during the Holocaust are known—the best-known of whom is Miep [Hermine] Gies, a friend and former employee of Otto Frank. Her husband was also a member of the Dutch underground. At great risk to their lives, these people provided the secret inhabitants with smuggled food and other necessities (including shares of their own limited wartime rations), and they provided the only link to news from the outside. Eventually the occupants were betrayed to the Gestapo, probably by a worker in the warehouse, or perhaps by a thief. (More than one putative betrayer has been identified, and the issue remains in dispute.) The Gestapo raided the annex and deported all eight inhabitants to camps. Mr. Van Pels was gassed upon arrival at Auschwitz, and his wife was murdered in the Theresienstadt KZ camp in Czechoslovakia. Their son, Peter, was murdered at Mauthausen after a forced march from Auschwitz. Fritz Pfeffer was murdered at Neuengamme concentration camp, and Anne's mother was slain at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Anne and her sister were murdered at Bergen-Belsen, where, fatally weakened by deliberate and systematic starvation, they succumbed to the unrestrained presence of typhus that was encouraged by the camp's conditions. Only a few weeks later, Bergen-Belsen was liberated by the British.

When Otto Frank returned to Amsterdam after the war, Miep Gies gave him Anne's diary. She had retrieved it from the debris of the raid before the Germans had a chance to destroy the annex's contents,

and she had kept it in the hope that Anne, too, might return. Although publishers were initially reluctant to consider it, the diary was published in 1947 in Dutch and, shortly afterward, in a few other languages—although in abridged and expurgated form, with certain passages deleted in accordance with Otto Frank's legally entitled demands. The complete, uncensored edition was not published until 1986. Meanwhile, the “authorized” abridged version was published in an English translation in the United States in 1951, as *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, with an introduction by former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt. It was an almost immediate literary as well as commercial success, gaining a wide American readership and quickly climbing to best-seller lists on both coasts.

For the general reading public, the sudden revelation of so young and so helpless a victim, coupled with the discovery that such precocious literary gifts and promise had been brutally extinguished by the consequences of sheer evil, naturally inspired spontaneous sympathy. Whether appropriately or not, Anne Frank the child—as separate from Anne Frank the author—was soon adopted as the most palpable symbol of the collective German atrocity against European Jewry, which only later came to be perceived in more complex terms and to be enveloped under the questionable rubric of “the Holocaust.” By extension—also whether aptly or not, in view of the historical uniqueness and particularity of the Holocaust as a Jewish and Jewish-related phenomenon—she also became, for the world at large, a symbol of the wider potential dangers of ethnic, religious, racial, or national bigotry, prejudice, and hatred. In both those roles, the book eventually made its way onto assigned reading lists in schools throughout the country and abroad. Over the ensuing half century it was translated into more than fifty languages, and estimates of its sales have approached twenty-five million.

Meanwhile, in 1955, a play based on the diary, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, with a distinguished cast that included Joseph Schildkraut, Susan Strasberg, Jack Gilford, and Lou Jacobi, opened on Broadway and became—despite its inherent dramatic weaknesses, trite sentimentality, banal platitudes, and at best marginal Jewish connection—a major success of that New York theatrical season. It played for more than a year and a half (717 performances), toured many other cities, and, by the mid-1960s, was already also being seen in hundreds of amateur presentations as well as high school and college productions throughout the United States. Those staged versions extended Anne Frank's exposure and proliferated her familiarity and symbolism well beyond the reading or literary public. A 1959 feature film based on the play was less successful artistically as well as commercially, but it succeeded in further expanding that general recognition.

Taken together, the book and the play offered the general public its first real and personalized glimpse into the Holocaust. The earlier news reports of camp liberations and coverage of the postwar trials at Nuremberg had ignited a brief reaction of shock and outrage, especially at a handful of individual so-called war criminals, who many assumed—or wanted to assume—represented isolated cases of bestiality. But those revelations were more generally tied in common perception to war crimes and wartime collateral atrocities than to independent genocide on a national level. And, by their nature, the news media disclosures had a much shorter shelf life than a human-interest story, especially in a society that, never prone to linger over the past, was eager by the 1950s to put the war behind it, to refocus its anger toward its new enemy in the cold war, and to grasp at some faith in humanity. Moreover, not even the ghoulish photographic evidence that accompanied journalistic reporting—with graphic depictions of thousands of

mutilated and starved corpses stacked for disposal, crematoria filled with bodies, and mass graves—had the personal immediacy or the lasting emotional resonance that a story relating to a single child could generate. To those who saw them in magazines, newspapers, or Movietone newsreels, the corpses in those pictures had neither names nor personae; Anne Frank had both. Thus she became the first vehicle through which millions were first introduced to the very subject of the genocide of European Jewry.

On a relative plane, though, and apart from Anne Frank's diary and story, the Holocaust was only minimally discussed during the 1950s, even in Jewish circles outside the more circumscribed ones of survivors' and victims' families (where in many cases it was de-emphasized as well). It was not much mentioned in Jewish school settings—or at most in passing—and was certainly not the subject of formal study there. Nor was the Holocaust the focus of sermons to anywhere near the extent it was from the 1960s on. Much less was the attention paid to it in the non-Jewish world, and few Holocaust-related books received wide public attention prior to Anne Frank's diary. It was not until the Eichmann trial in 1961–62 in Jerusalem that Americans—and most of the world—even began to gain any real awareness of the extent of the Holocaust: its systematic planning, its scope, its actual horrors, its manifestation of pure evil, and the sheer size of its cast of perpetrators and collaborators. And still, even those internationally followed courtroom proceedings, despite the reporting and literature they generated, eluded many segments of the population. It took much more time until the unbridled horrors and barbarous details were addressed uncushioned in serious feature films, documentaries, and television programs. But by then Anne Frank was already so firmly entrenched as the most familiar personal Holocaust symbol that no other alternative one could dislodge her.

Thus, even in view of our vastly more sophisticated factual knowledge since the 1950s about so many facets of the destruction of European Jewry, and with the identification through popular as well as intellectual literature of many other truly heroic victims—including children—whose stories might render them more appropriate (not necessarily more sympathetic) symbols of the genocide and its aggregate suffering, Anne Frank remains the primary associative personification of the Holocaust in international popular imagination. Such was the case in 1989, when Foss responded to a request for a work related to her legacy. And no other single individual has inspired as many Holocaust-related musical expressions, from symphonic works such as *From the Diary of Anne Frank* by Michael Tilson Thomas, to song cycles such as José Bowen's *Songs from the Attic*. Yet over the course of the past four decades, serious reservations have been voiced concerning the wisdom of assigning to Anne that role.

The diary itself is necessarily an *indirect* Holocaust-related document, in the sense that it cannot have described the actual horrors or sufferings associated with ghetto confinement, institutionalized torture, camp incarceration and starvation, and wholesale slaughter. Nor could it have addressed such Holocaust-related issues as the historical course of European Christian anti-Semitism and its twisted “philosophical” justifications that, in some respects at least, may have facilitated and culminated in the Holocaust’s eventuality. That, of course, was not Anne’s intent, even as she mused on the destructive and self-destructive nature of man:

There is in people simply an urge to destroy—an urge to kill, to murder and rage. Until all mankind undergoes a great change, wars will be waged. Everything that has been built up, cultivated, and

grown will be destroyed and disfigured... after which mankind will have to begin all over again.

No one could want to belittle those thoughts or to dismiss their writer. But her words apply more to the war than to the planned annihilation of Jewry. And they could apply to countless episodes throughout history. Those words—even if unintentionally—avoid both the specifically Jewish particularity and the demonic purposelessness (even in so-called Nazi “ideology”) of the German enterprise against the Jews as Jews. That avoidance was deliberate in the play, however. And that very indirectness, with its universal tone, has been seen as fostering and encouraging the acceptance by 1950s audiences of Anne Frank as their symbolic and sympathetic acknowledgment simply that, in a relatively vague sense, something terrible had happened to many European Jews “during the war.” The book and the play were thus received as a generic moral warning of the consequences of inhumanity, at a time when the general public was even less comfortable than it is today about engaging either the horrible details or the underlying reality of what the Holocaust signifies in terms of Jewish and European history.

Overall, the diary is an exceedingly discerning and open-pored account of adolescent growing pains and of interpersonal family relationships, conflicts, tensions, and emotions—magnified by the increased loneliness endemic in such total confinement and concealment from the outside world, as well as from daylight itself. In many respects, although the diary is punctuated by the occupants’ ever-present fear of discovery—usually neutralized by Otto Frank’s almost inappropriately optimistic reassurances and paternalistic resoluteness—it represents an uncannily mature young teenager’s commentary on human nature from universalistic perspectives, with only occasional refer-

ences to Jewish identity. At times Anne expresses naïve faith in the goodness of human nature, although she usually reminds us that she only wishes it were so. At the same time, the diary records the family's urgency to continue, to every extent possible, living life as before.

The diary shows Anne as a keen youthful psychological observer, who, by many critical assessments, would likely have become an important introspective writer. If the diary and its unwritten postscript of the family's subsequent physical suffering and murder cast her as a helpless victim who died for nothing and to no purpose—rather than as a heroic figure whose death might have had some meaning and some purpose, however small—that of course cannot be her fault. To question the appropriateness of Anne Frank the helpless victim as the foremost Holocaust symbol—even with regard to the one million murdered children—or as a symbol of Jewish history, is not, therefore, to diminish either the poignancy of her plight or the quality of her literary talent. Indeed, the book can still stand as a significant document of humanistic literature about internal as well as outer daily life, lived under the continual if not always articulated threat of doom.

Not so for the play, however, which, together with its cinematic version, must nonetheless be considered and acknowledged for its central role in confirming the primacy of the Anne Frank symbol in mass consciousness. For it cannot be denied that it trivialized the diary itself and the horrors, as well as the implications, of the Holocaust. The play was confined for the most part to excerpted charitable sentiments and orientations that the playwrights and producers thought the audiences wanted to hear, thereby providing an overdue but minimal brush with the Holocaust through a relatively painless theatrical experience,

without forcing anyone to confront its realities head-on. (The play that reached Broadway and beyond, by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, and directed by Garson Kanin, was neither the only nor the first one based on Anne Frank's diary; but it was the only one accepted by producers as commercially viable. An earlier dramatization by the well-known journalist and novelist Meyer Levin, for example, was rejected as too direct, too provocative, and too Judaically infused. "You simply can't expect an audience to come to the theater to watch on stage people they know to have ended up in the crematorium," he was told when he first conceived his idea for a play. At least, for the producers, the Goodrich and Hackett version muted that projected discomfort.)

In the Goodrich and Hackett play, Anne and her family are "Americanized" and accordingly portrayed in typical family situations—including a manifestly American-type and superficial Hanukka observance—all of which, apparently, were designed to render them more appealing to American audiences. They are stripped of any real Jewish identity, even though the diary does reflect the admittedly assimilated family's recognition of its plight as a Jewish one, and even though the diary contains Anne's own reference to martyrdom. Allusions in the diary to news of the camps and to imminent doom were omitted. An overall state of denial is, in effect, celebrated through the optimistically passive waiting for the eventual capture and death that the audience knows will occur. And when it does, Otto Frank's "consolation" to the occupants that, having lived for two years in fear, they can *now* live in hope, almost suggests their deportation as an opportunity. Through its agenda-driven selection of Anne's comments, the play also seems to suggest that some redemptive truth can be gleaned from the Holocaust experience, some measure of hope for mankind. But in fact, one of the

most significant aspects of the Holocaust, one that denies it any analogue in history, is that it can contain no benefit of lessons, no such reaffirmations, no message of hope—and, in the end, no meaning. “Auschwitz destroyed all meaning,” declared one of its most eloquent survivors. To allow it the tiniest degree of meaning, to grasp idealistically at some potential lesson, is to accord it a measure of beneficial status for humanity, which is the least acceptable memorial to the millions who were murdered for nothing—for no cause, to no purpose, to no benefit to their murderers—for no meaning.

Nonetheless, the playwrights co-opted a child’s innocent faith in humanity’s goodness—“to serve,” as the Holocaust literary critic Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi observed, “the defense of American liberal optimism against the evidence of pure evil.” Most offensive of all is Anne’s concluding line in the play, which the audience hears in audio flashback at the end of the epilogue, *after* learning of her and her family’s murder, which her father reads for the first time in her diary (taken out of order and out of context) on his return to the annex after the war:

“In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.”

It is almost as if the audience is supposed to be relieved and consoled. But with those words, Anne Frank has been turned into one of the first Holocaust deniers. For if that statement is true, then the Holocaust did not happen. “If all men are good at heart,” responded the Freudian psychologist and author Bruno Bettelheim, then “there really never was an Auschwitz.” And that faith in ultimate human goodness relieves us from any fear of its recurrence.

Regrettably, it was precisely that theatrical pandering to the collective amnesia of 1950s America—through those very distortions, simplicities, and omissions—that drew increased public admiration for Anne Frank. And ironically, her popularization, as suggested by Alex Philip Sagan in his study of the phenomenon, “depended on limiting the depiction of her persecution.”

Central to the objection to Anne Frank as the predominant Holocaust symbol is the unflattering and false image of the Jew as a defenseless and passive victim of persecution, an image that has pervaded misconceptions about Jewish history in general, which some historians have suggested might have encouraged the Germans to predict that their planned genocide could be accomplished easily and with little risk of resistance. Bettelheim, himself a survivor who was probably the harshest critic of the Anne Frank symbol (but in no way of Anne herself), went further than others in asserting that the family’s doom was sealed by unrealistic hope when Otto Frank put them in so defenseless a position, and when family preservation took precedence over individual survival. Bettelheim suggested that a more determined resolution of survival would have required facing the dangers of the new situation more squarely, which (if indeed it was too late for even some of the family to escape Holland altogether) in turn might have dictated breaking up the family and placing each member separately in one of the many Dutch homes that were willing to hide Jews. That strategy, he maintained, which other families did pursue, would have increased the odds for survival of at least one, if not more of them. Apart from the decision to go collectively into hiding, he reproached the Franks for not devising any escape route from the annex in anticipation of the inevitable event of their discovery. And he faulted them for not taking with them defensive weapons,

so that even if all would have died in a battle with the arresting Gestapo, they might have “sold their lives for a high price” if even one of the Gestapo had been killed as well. In that case, their deaths could have had a measure of meaning. But he also allowed for the possibility that at least one of the family might have been able to escape in the confusion of such a fray, while the Gestapo would be momentarily detained at the entranceway. Although opposing viewpoints have interpreted the Franks’ refusal to readjust their values as a form of admirable, even noble, defiance, for Bettelheim, those failures represented a basic denial of reality and of the severity of the dangers of the new situation in Amsterdam, which signified the lack of a necessary will to survive. The universal acceptance of the Anne Frank symbol therefore implied—by extension—unwarranted and unwanted admiration for the flawed strategy the Franks chose for dealing, or not dealing, with the threat to their lives.

Many other students of the Holocaust, however, have found Bettelheim’s judgment of the Franks, and others who responded similarly, overly severe, even as they acknowledge his contribution (with the wisdom of hindsight) in pointing to alternative responses to persecution and danger. Indeed, it may be not only impossible but also entirely inappropriate for any of us to judge, or to imagine how we might have reacted under such unprecedented circumstances, for which no psychological preparation might have been adequate. The Jews’ inability to comprehend the reality has also been analyzed as a function of sheer disbelief in the extent to which insidiousness and pure evil could have overtaken the Germans or any other people, for evil’s sake and no other reason. And even though Jewish martyrdom historically implies a situation in which Jews have a choice to save their lives—which the Germans did not give them—by renouncing their religion instead of dying willingly

“for the sanctification of God’s name,” we know that as long ago as the Middle Ages, Moses Maimonedes formulated the doctrine that all Jews who are killed because they are Jews *do* thus ipso facto sanctify the name of God. Anne Frank would, in that view, qualify as a martyr, as would all the six million murdered Jews. But that does not necessarily make her the most widely chosen symbol, and Bettelheim’s and others’ repudiation of the Anne Frank *symbolism* can retain its validity without condemnation of the victims.

“We still don’t understand what happened to the Jews of Europe,” declared the Holocaust writer Isaac Rosenfeld in his commentary a few years after the war, “and perhaps we never will. There have been books, magazine and newspaper articles, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, documents. . . . By now we know all there is to know. But it hasn’t helped; we still don’t understand.” Unfortunately, the story of Anne Frank does nothing to help us understand, as Rosenfeld could easily have added.

Yet despite all those serious reservations, we must accept by now that the Anne Frank symbol is not going to give way to any other. That the 60th anniversary of her birth as recently as June 1989 occasioned a major observance and commemorative concert, entitled *Remembering Anne Frank*, at New York’s Episcopal Cathedral of Saint John the Divine—the seat of the American episcopate, the American branch of the worldwide Anglican Communion—is testament itself to its endurance. That concert, jointly sponsored by the cathedral, the American Friends of the Anne Frank Center, and the International Center for Holocaust Studies of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, was a centerpiece of “Anne Frank in the World: A 60th Anniversary Retrospective,” which comprised a monthlong series of events, new publications, an international symposium, the introduction of a cur-

riculum for secondary schools and a teacher-training conference, a nationally televised round table hosted by Bill Moyers, and an exhibition of 600 rare photographs and documents. Admirably, that exhibition did not shy away from including a history of both Dutch anti-Semitism and Dutch collaboration. Speakers included the Dean of the cathedral, The Very Reverend James Parks Morton, actresses Claire Bloom and Liv Ullman, and Eva Schloss, a childhood friend of Anne Frank's, whose mother married Otto Frank after the war. The Brooklyn Philharmonic was featured under Lukas Foss's baton, and in addition to works from the standard repertory, Foss was invited to compose a piece for the concert that would relate directly to Anne Frank. The result was *Elegy for Anne Frank*, performed that night in its purely instrumental version (piano obligato and chamber orchestra), but with an alternative version in which a narrator reads excerpts from the diary. Critics have generally preferred the uninterrupted instrumental version, in which the piano part represents Anne Frank, and which Foss later incorporated into his third symphony as its second movement. The independently published *Elegy* allows for some variation in the instrumentation, with the minimum stipulation of solo piano, two brass (one high, one low), one percussionist, and strings. Optional additional instruments include two B-flat clarinets, two bassoons, and two additional brass instruments.

"It is one of the most soulful things I've ever done," Foss reminisced in a 1998 interview, in which he took no position on the suitability of the Anne Frank symbol. He had merely responded to specific requirements of the commission, and he acquitted himself admirably—especially in the compactness and freshness of the piece, in which he avoided both his aleatoric and his serial sides, describing it as a surrealist picture of Anne Frank's story. A mournful, elegiac opening is followed by a simple childlike motive in the

piano—presumably referring musically to the young Anne Frank—played over an underlay of haunting string timbres. There are rhythmic punctuations in the percussion, and manipulated fragments of the German national anthem that lead to an ominous climax followed by an abrupt cessation—after which the music returns to its initial mournful mood coupled with a reminder of the childhood motive.

LAMMDENI

Lukas Foss

During Foss's tenure from 1972 to 1976 as music director of the Kol Yisrael Orchestra in Jerusalem, he learned from Israeli musicologists about the existence of the two oldest-known Hebrew manuscript fragments containing musically notated prayer texts. Believed to date to the 12th century, these manuscripts—one of which had been discovered within only a decade of Foss's Jerusalem period—constitute our oldest written or musically notated evidence of Judaic music of any type. Authorities have now confirmed (also only as of the 1960s) the attribution of their notation or inscription to a medieval convert to Judaism known as *Ovadia ha'ger*, or Obadiah the Proselyte.

Foss was fascinated with the antiquity of these manuscripts, and with their historical as well as spiritual ramifications. Necessarily subjective and interpretative but scholarly sound modern transcriptions made by Israel Adler, one of Israel's foremost musicologists, were shown to him in Jerusalem. These transcriptions inspired Foss to fashion a contemporary, highly personal, and imaginative work around them. The result was *Lammdeni*, an aleatoric piece for mixed chorus together with a selection of percussion or quasi-percussive-sounding instruments to be made by the conductor—all preferably amplified. While the published score (1975) specifies "plucked and beaten sounds (any mixture)," Foss—after considerable

prodding—articulated his current suggestion of mallet instruments for the Milken Archive recording in 2000, still leaving the precise designation to us. Although he wholeheartedly endorsed our ultimate selection, it would hardly be out of character for Foss to arrive at yet a new vision of a preferred battery of instrumental forces for any future performance.

The journey of these two obscure and long-dormant medieval manuscript fragments from oblivion to publication—and from esoteric scholarly scrutiny to contemporary artistic expression—forms an intriguing detective tale. Both documents lay hidden for centuries among the contents of an Egyptian repository, the Cairo Geniza, and were not even known to exist until their discovery in the 20th century. A *geniza* (lit., storing or storage, or hiding place, whose Hebrew root in turn derives from a Persian word meaning “treasury,” and whose Hebrew root corresponds to “conceal,” “hide,” or “preserve”) is a concealed repository of discarded sacred books and other writings, as well as ritual objects that have become unusable owing to wear or damage, which, according to Jewish law, cannot be destroyed because of their sacred references or content—especially if they contain God’s name. Over many centuries, such items have therefore been placed in these repositories to prevent further profanation either by intentional destruction or inadvertent mutilation. Additional rationales for *geniza* storage included the preservation of meritorious items from harm and the prevention of dangerous items from causing harm. Books considered heretical, for example, have therefore also been hidden in *genizas*. It has long been customary to designate an unused room of a synagogue as a *geniza*, from which, periodically, the contents (at least some of the most sacred ones) are supposed to be removed and buried. That practice, however, has not always been observed, and it was not done so with regard to the

Cairo Geniza—undoubtedly the most famous of all such repositories.

Although the Cairo Geniza (in Fostat [Fuṣṭāṭ], Old Cairo) had been seen and reported by a few European travelers to the Near East as early as 1753, it was in effect rediscovered by the celebrated scholar Solomon Schechter (1847–1915) at the end of the 20th century. The early visitors were not permitted to examine its contents, apart from occasional exceptions when small numbers of items were sold—unofficially or without permission—to various collectors. In 1896, upon viewing a few purchased fragments shown to him by two Christian travelers, Schechter became aware of the overwhelming significance and scholarly potential of the Cairo Geniza, and he traveled to Egypt for an intensive exploration. There, in the *geniza*, he found an immensely rich treasure trove of Hebrew manuscripts that far exceeded previous expectations. In 1897–98 he succeeded in transporting to Cambridge University, England, where he held the rank of Reader in Rabbinics, a substantial portion of its holdings—estimated to be the equivalent of 100,000 to 140,000 items or pages. Subsequently, researchers discovered approximately another 100,000 pages or leaves, which are now preserved in a number of libraries.

One of the visitors to the Cairo Geniza who preceded Schechter was the Judaic bibliophile Elkan Nathan Adler (no relation to Israel Adler), who was permitted to take a much smaller but still significant number of its items to Cambridge in 1896. Circa 1918–20, the manuscript fragment that—more than fifty years later—became the basis for Foss’s third movement of *Lammdeni* (which is now preserved in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, in New York) was found in a folio leaf in that Elkan Nathan Adler collection of Cairo Geniza items. It was observed to contain a theretofore unknown *piyyut* (liturgical poem, often

inserted or interpolated into the regular order of liturgy) inscribed in Hebrew characters together with medieval neumatic musical notation on a four-line staff. Its adopted title was assigned later according to its opening words, *mi al har ḥorev*.

During the period roughly framed by the 8th and 14th centuries, neumatic musical notation appertained in the Western Church. This is its most common connotation and association, even though such neumatic notation also applied to other, similar Eastern Christian chant systems, such as those in the Byzantine and the Armenian Church during that same time frame. Neumatic notation preceded the development of our modern musical notation; and it involved the use of notational signs, or “neumes,” which provided for fixed singing or chanting of Christian liturgies, or plainsong. The aggregate inventory of these signs included neumes for single tones as well as those denoting groups of two, three, or more tones. Their rhythmic parameter poses more complicated issues of interpretation, which have been the subject of focused scholarly debate.

Prior to the discovery of this manuscript, no such aesthetic joining of Hebrew with what was, for all practical purposes, church music notation had come down to us; nor was it known to have occurred. The document therefore ignited a modest thunderbolt in the academy. That single fragment—hereinafter referenced as MS.I—and the other subsequently discovered folio (MS.II) that Foss also used for the first and second movements of *Lammedni*, have generated hundreds of pages of scholarly discourse over the ensuing years, with much still likely to come. (A second version of the text of MS.I was also discovered later.)

Shortly after its discovery, which presented an immediate enigma and challenge to scholars of medieval

Judaica, MS.I was sent for possible elucidation to the Benedictine fathers of Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight. During the Third Republic, owing to religious persecution, they had been forced to relocate there in 1903 from their monastic community at the abbey of Solesmes, in France, which was long known for its restoration of authentic Gregorian chant and for its scholastic expertise in that field. They responded with a finding that the neumes in MS.I dated from the 13th, or possibly the end of the 12th, century and were of the type derived from the southern Italian school, then labeled Lombardic—and later, more accurately, Beneventan (developed by the monks of Benevento)—notation. (Israel Adler has since cautioned that the erroneous use of the term *Lombardic* in place of *Beneventan* has often resulted in the incorrect classification of southern Italian manuscripts as northern Italian.) When, more than four decades after the discovery of MS.I, scholars also arrived at the identity of its scribe, it was confirmed—from the chronology of his life and the maximum reasonable extent of his life span—that both MS.I and MS.II date to no later than the early 13th century, and probably to the 12th century. Some scholars then revisited the typology of the neumes and questioned the Beneventan designation altogether. The Israeli musicologist Hanoch Avenary, for example, preferred to describe them as the Norman type that had been transplanted to southern Italy in the 11th century—on the grounds that the region in which Beneventan script was used was still north of the scribe’s birthplace. In any case, the neumes on this manuscript are written backward, to accommodate the Hebrew. (The *virgas*, however, are written normally—i.e., with note stems still to the right, not to the left, of the heads.)

Apart from the consultation with the Benedictine fathers, and apart from some preliminary study of MS.I by A. M. Friedlander, attention was first called to its

existence by Elkan Nathan Adler in an appendix to a catalogue he published in 1921. He appropriately described the text as a eulogy for—or on the death of—Moses.

On the basis of the double acrostic form of the poem of MS.I, Adler also suggested that it was the creation of Abu-'Amr Ibn Sahl (died ca. 1124), although that attribution has been challenged subsequently and is no longer universally accepted. Various articles about MS.I were written and published in the following four decades, including some attempts at deciphering the musical riddle posed by the unusual clef: the Hebrew consonant letter *daleth*, which is the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet and corresponds in sound to the Roman character D. Varying opinions about the significance and meaning of that clef and which tone of the scale it represents resulted in differing transcriptions, and thus in opposing propositions of how the music might actually sound when reconstructed. But the source of the melody, whatever its equivalent in modern notation—and whether or not its scribe was also its composer—could only be supposed. And the identity of that scribe remained even beyond conjecture until the 1960s.

Further mystery resided in the observation that, although the neumes were Italian in style and therefore ecclesiastically associated with the Western Church, the manuscript itself (MS.I) eventually appeared to paleographers to have come from, or been inscribed in, the Levant. The style of the Hebrew characters withstood no paleographic association with southern or western Europe. Indeed, they were determined to exhibit oriental, or eastern, Hebrew handwriting. The paper was traceable to Egyptian origin and was identified as a type often found among *geniza* manuscripts. Thus MS.I could be seen as representing a fusion of eastern Hebraic and western Christian

musical characteristics—the first known evidence of any such phenomenon of that period. Still, the question of why an eastern Hebraic manuscript would contain clearly western Christian musical notation remained a vexing and seemingly insoluble puzzle. In fact, until the identity of the scribe and his Near Eastern sojourns were known, it was still reasonable for some historians to place the manuscript's origins entirely in Europe, notwithstanding its acknowledged eastern parameters. Among them was the Moravian-born American musicologist Eric Werner, one of the leading Judaic music scholars of the 20th century. Despite its Cairo terminus, and even though he assessed the Hebrew script as reflecting Byzantine influence, Werner imagined that the manuscript might have originated in or near Ravenna, Italy—a stance from which he naturally retreated when contrary information was later revealed.

Moreover, accepting Elkan Nathan Adler's attribution of the text to Ibn Sahl, Werner went further to suppose that the poet had also “probably” composed the music, since many *paytanim* (authors of *piyyutim*) did in fact fashion tunes for their own poems—a position he also later abandoned. But he also seized upon the apparent raw stylistic and generic similarities between the musical parameter of the manuscript and Gregorian plainsong, noting that the former was “very much akin to the more elaborate types of Gregorian chant.” That comparison fitted neatly into Werner's overall thesis that Western Church chant in general had drawn heavily, if not predominantly, upon the earlier liturgical music practices and modal systems of ancient Israel.

The poem of MS.I is strophic, comprising rhymed couplets set to a repeated melody that shows only slight variations among its repetitions. Each couplet leads into the refrain, *k'moshe* (“like Moses” or “as Moses”);

and there is an unrelated nonstrophic epilogue whose text is nearly a direct quotation from the Book of Isaiah (60:1). As suggested by the Benedictines, the pause symbols at various points might have been intended to signify responsorial chant (solo vs. choir)—a format that Foss followed liberally.

Opposing opinions about the geographic origin of the poem have included both southern and northern France, and Italy. The text, which celebrates Moses as the transmitter of the Law (“Moses the Lawgiver”), is believed to have been created as a supplementary liturgical expression either for the Festival of Shavuot, which commemorates the revelation and giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai following the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt, or for Simḥat Torah, the holiday that, immediately following the Festival of Sukkot, marks the completion of the annual cycle of readings from the Torah in the synagogue. In either case, the connection to Moses as both teacher and transmitter is clear.

In 1964, suddenly and coincidentally, the scribe of MS.I was identified beyond all doubt by two scholars who had been working independently of each other: Alexander Scheiber (1913–85), an authority on oriental Hebrew Judaica who was also director of the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest; and Norman Golb, a professor of medieval Jewish studies at the University of Chicago. By comparing MS.I with an autograph fragment of a 12th-century prayerbook in the Cairo Geniza holdings at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati—whose scribe had already been established as Ovadia *ha’ger*—both realized that the handwriting and script of both documents are identical. The colophon of that prayerbook reads “Obadiah the Norman Proselyte who entered the covenant of the God of Israel in the month of Elul, in the year 1413 of [the era of] documents [i.e., 1102 C.E.], which corresponds to 4826 [on the Jewish calendar] of Creation,

he, Obadiah the proselyte, has written [this book of prayers] in his own hand.” (It remains uncertain, however, whether or not Ovadia authored any of the book’s liturgical texts as well.) Moreover, examination of the script in substantial extant fragments of Ovadia’s autobiographical memoirs, which are written in biblical Hebrew, confirmed Scheiber’s and Golb’s conclusions. Generally known as the “Scroll of Obadiah,” those memoirs recount Ovadia’s birth and youth in southern Italy, as well as his journeys in the Near East following his conversion to Judaism. It remained, however—and remains still—to determine Ovadia’s role, if any, in the actual composition of the music, apart from its inscription. But once Ovadia was thus identified as the scribe of MS.I (and soon afterward, of MS.II), the earlier apparent paradox—oriental Hebrew script and paper combined with western Christian musical notation—evaporated. Even in the absence of certainty concerning the chronology of the various stages that resulted in the manuscript, it was at least logical to suspect that Ovadia could have combined the musical notation he had learned in Europe before his conversion with the Hebrew writing he learned later in the Near East.

The scion of a distinguished noble Norman family, Ovadia was born in Oppido, Apulia (now Lucano), Italy—not to be confused with the present Oppido Mamertina, Calabria—sometime during the third quarter of the 11th century. Various specific years of his birth have been proposed (Golb gives it as ca. 1070). His given name was Johannes, or Giovanni [Jean?], both of which he spelled in Hebrew characters in his memoirs, and his father’s name was Dreu(x) or Dracos (also both spelled in Hebrew in Ovadia’s account). Since his older (“older twin”) brother pursued a professional military life, as was common for the eldest in those circumstances, Ovadia was directed toward the clergy. It was a typical path for the sec-

ond son among European nobility of that era—not always necessarily or primarily out of purely religious motivations, but because it often provided the only substantive means to higher learning—not least because books and other writings resided chiefly in monasteries. It is therefore probable that Ovadia was associated at some point with a monastery—perhaps even as a monk or friar—where he would also have acquired his knowledge of both musical notation and chant idioms. We do not know where his 1102 conversion occurred, at which time he adopted the Hebrew name Ovadia *ha'ger* (Italy and Constantinople have been suggested), but such conversion by a prominent European Christian, even a clergyman, was not without precedence in the 11th and early 12th centuries—a phenomenon for which there is ample documentation in at least several instances.

Following his conversion, Ovadia left Europe and traveled extensively in Babylonia, Syria, and the Holy Land, after which he apparently settled in Fuṣṭāṭ Misr sometime after 1121. The factors that prompted his quick exodus from Europe are uncertain, but it is generally assumed that his conversion from Christianity, especially given his monastic affiliation, could have cost him his life as a capital crime, and that he anticipated Jewish hospitality in communities of Moslem-dominated lands. In addition, Werner conjectured that he might have gravitated eventually toward Egypt, not only because of its thriving Jewish population but also because the Crusaders had no foothold there.

Ovadia did in fact obtain Jewish communal support in Baghdad, probably his first stop in the Near East, where he learned to read and write Hebrew while engaging in biblical studies in a class or school together with orphaned boys. We do not know the date of his death, although it is reasonably assumed that it

could not have been later than ca. 1150. Thus, while MS.I was initially estimated to date to the 13th or late 12th century, the discovery of Ovadia as its scribe also reestablished its date (and that of MS. II) as the first half of the 12th century.

The other of our two manuscript sources (MS.II) for *Lammedni* was discovered early in 1965 by the Israeli scholar Nehemiah Allony. Also among the Cambridge holdings from the Cairo Geniza, each of the two sides of this folio represents only a fragment of a larger whole whose other parts are no longer extant. But Allony viewed the text content of the two sides together as a single “poetic entity,” even though they do represent distinct poems and melodies or chants, which suggests that, in their original entirety, one was intended to lead into the other in vocal rendition. Like MS.I, this manuscript contains liturgical or quasi-liturgical text inscribed in Hebrew characters together with neumes. Since the handwriting as well as the style of the neumes matches up precisely with MS.I, this second discovery was immediately recognized as another inscription by Ovadia *ha'ger*.

The recto (the side of a folio leaf corresponding to a “first side”) begins with the words *va'eda ma* (And so that I would know), which are believed to begin the last part of an unknown poem. In its entirety that poem apparently consisted of biblical verses, references, or paraphrases that commenced on preceding folio leaves. But the text in general seems to have been inspired largely by Psalm verses that refer to God as teacher and guide. This surviving fragment is a simple request to God to let the petitioner know what (or how) to speak and how to conduct himself in the “place of judgment”—i.e., probably a court of law. Hence, the concluding word, *lammedni* (teach me)—which also forms the final cadence and from which the title of Foss's piece is drawn. Hanoch Avenary

has compared the surviving text fragment with Psalm 25 as its possible model. Indeed, the word *lammdeni* occurs in similar contexts in a number of places in the Book of Psalms. The phrase *va'eda ma* derives from the Torah and also appears with a slight variation in Psalms 39:5.

Like MS.I, the musical parameter of the recto of MS.II follows the stylistic features of medieval western monody. Even though these actual melodies or chants are not found per se in Gregorian or other European chant sources (such as Byzantine), they do exude an overall aural ambience that can be generically reminiscent of Church chant, and Israel Adler has even discerned in the recto of MS.II a few typical Gregorian formulaic elements. Golb's first impulse was to assume that these melodies were in fact Gregorian chants that Ovadia had adapted to fit the Hebrew texts, and consultation with a few American musicologists initially did not dissuade him. He even imagined that a European convert in Moslem lands might deliberately have wanted to introduce some of the aesthetic elements of his former religion to his newly adopted one, in which case it is entirely possible that Jewish audiences in the Near East—for whom the negative connotations and associations of Western Church aesthetics might have appeared less distasteful than to European Jewry—might have been ready to receive such fusions as a welcome bit of exotica from the European world. It is more likely, however, that those Gregorian or quasi-Gregorian characteristics and flavor simply reflect the aesthetic frame of reference and the natural musical influences that were exerted either on Ovadia (if he was the composer) or on any other composer or *paytan* who might have lived or grown up in a European environment where these aesthetic features were ubiquitous even beyond the confines of specific Christian worship. Moreover, both Eric Werner and Israel Adler doubted that Ovadia, as a convert

who had renounced his former Christianity, would have reverted by consciously borrowing a Church chant—or even Church elements—for Hebrew expression in his new life. Yet that view might presuppose more modern sensibilities vis-à-vis a sometimes overzealous attitude toward discarded past orientation by converts to Judaism. Ultimately, either scenario is plausible with regard to the perceived Church chant flavor of these melodies, and further judgment might depend on knowledge about an individual personality to which we have no access.

Whereas both MS.I and the recto of MS.II belong to the *piyyutim* category, the verso (the reverse side of a folio leaf) of the MS.II fragment, which begins with the words *barukh haggvev* (Blessed is the man [who trusts in the Lord]), contains a type of psalmody or cantillation of various actual biblical verses. The *custos* (a sign such as a check mark, mordant, or other symbol at the end of a line to indicate the first pitch of the next) at the end of the last staff tells us that there was a continuation on a succeeding folio leaf, so that this is probably not the entire text.

The music notation on the verso is not considered an actual composition. Rather, it has been shown to relate musically to earlier Hebraic psalmody or cantillation, and it may even be a written record of a traditional eastern synagogue cantillation that Ovadia learned in the Near East. Israel Adler has maintained that by Ovadia's time, it may already have represented a part of Jewish tradition that dated to antiquity. Skeletal similarities have been discerned in the preserved modern-era chant patterns in certain oriental and Mediterranean Jewish communities. And parallels have been drawn by various observers to a cantillation of Syrian Jews for the Book of Proverbs; to psalmody among oriental Sephardim; to a Hebrew psalmody on the island of Djerba; to cantillations for

Jeremiah and for the *b'rakha* prior to the *haftara* (prophetic readings) in some Italian traditions; and to a rendition of the Hymn of Moses as heard in Florence. Although these do not constitute precise note-for-note or pitch-for-pitch correlations, they do suggest an umbrella “cantillation family” whose arch and skeleton are properties held in common. And in this case the vocal line differs from Gregorian chant or plainsong in a number of significant details; it represents in several respects a recitation according to psalmody more than a chant. Avenary went so far so as to propose that with regard to this verso, “Obadiah has noted down a genuine Jewish melody that was common in his days.”

The precise liturgical occasion for which MS. II (recto and verso) was intended has not been established with certainty. Allony has suggested that it was sung on Shavuot, on the basis that the biblical verses have in common the principal theme of praising faith in God and the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Avenary has pointed to the penitential season (the days leading up to Rosh Hashana and between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur) as another possibility.

Foss reversed the order of the recto and the verso in the sense that he utilized the verso for the opening movement, *barukh hagever*, and built the second movement on the recto—*va'eda ma*. Since Israel Adler, whose transcriptions he used, had no doubt that the side containing *va'eda ma* was indeed the recto, we must assume that Foss's order of movements represented a purely artistic decision.

The first mystery of the tripartite puzzle—the identity of the scribe and the age of his manuscripts—was solved when Ovadia was identified. But the solution to the second mystery—the interpretation of the *dalet* clef—remains subject to opposing viewpoints. Yet no

transcription for modern performance can be accomplished without a reasoned position on the matter. Apart from Israel Adler, other opinions or theories have included assigning the *dalet* clef to (a) the tone *re* (according to the system of solfeggio), the second tone of the scale; (b) the specific pitch D as the fourth tone of a scale beginning on A; (c) *sol*, the fifth tone of the scale, which Werner embraced at one time without explanation. Much later, Werner also informally raised the question whether yet another possibility should at least be considered: that the *dalet*, with its numerical equivalent of 4, might have been intended to stipulate the fourth Church mode in the medieval ecclesiastical chant system. Adler, however, transcribed the manuscripts according to his firm conviction that the *dalet* should be interpreted as *fa*, the fourth tone of the scale. *Lamm deni* is therefore wedded to that premise in its specific succession of pitches and intervals. Even if this does not represent the sole and unchallenged solution, it is nonetheless one well-grounded solution.

But the third mystery concerns the composer(s), even if we accept that *barukh hagever* was notated from oral tradition. That mystery remains unsolved, open only to reasoned speculation.

Still, if we eliminate the possibility of borrowed or adapted Church chants from Europe, notwithstanding that it is well known that adoption for the synagogue of tunes sung for Christian liturgies did occur during that time frame—and that the practice was the subject of rabbinical discourse—at least four other possibilities remain:

1. That Ovadia did compose one or both of the chants as original settings, even if his style was influenced by the aesthetics of his earlier Christian environment. If so, he might have done so either

for *hazzanim* (perhaps with unison choirs) in the Near East, who were constantly in search of new tunes and might have been especially intrigued by the “foreign” sound; or for himself, in the event that he might have functioned as a *hazzan*—as did many European immigrants to the Near East then.

2. That one or both of the chants were composed by the authors of the poems expressly for their own vocal renditions, since it was common for *paytanim* also to fashion tunes for their own *piyyutim*, as well as to function as cantors. In that case, those cantors or *paytanim* could have been refugees from Europe as a result of the Crusades, which would at least account for their basic familiarity with the sound of western chant. In any case, since few if any would have known musical notation during that period, Ovadia would have been in demand as a notator for such creative cantors or *paytanim* who fashioned their tunes orally.
3. That one or both of the chants were composed by yet a third party, for poems written by others, and that Ovadia notated them as he heard them in the Near East.
4. That Ovadia had learned or heard one or both chants in Europe together with their texts—which would probably mean that the poems originated there—and that he notated them from memory in the Near East after he had learned to write Hebrew in Baghdad. On the basis of our fragmentary evidence, however, this seems the least likely scenario.

Lammdeni was composed in 1973 for Testimonium, an Israeli music festival, and was premiered in Jerusalem the following year. It is dedicated to Recha Freier (1892–1984), the founder of an

organization that rescued thousands of children during the Holocaust and brought them to Palestine.

Foss treated the chants with bold imagination, relying on them primarily as a nucleic basis for an array of deliberately jumbled and overlapping entrances, vocal echo effects, whispers, and almost intoxicating rhythmic figurations in the unusual accompanying instrumental underlay. The aleatoric nature of the piece provides freshness to each performance and invites the conductor and even the choir in on the compositional process.

ADON OLAM

Lukas Foss

The liturgical poem *adon olam*, which is attributed to Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021/22—c. 1055), occurs within the body of the traditional morning liturgy independently of its widely accepted role as a concluding hymn of (actually, following) formal Sabbath and other holy day morning and evening services. But that role gives it its broadest familiarity and provides the function to which Foss's setting applies. Although the text is commonly assumed always to have been sung congregationally to a variety of simple tunes—a perception that persists throughout the American Synagogue—its rendition as a strophic, repetitive, and monodic congregational hymn dates only to the emergence of the so-called radical Reform synagogue format in Germany in the first half of the 19th century. In that revised context, such texts as this answered the sudden need for a few familiar Hebrew texts with theologically universal and accessible sentiments, suitable for communal singing, to supplement either newly crafted or adapted German hymns in congregations that wanted to retain an aesthetic echo of Hebrew. But even in German Liberale (the nonorthodox but still traditionally oriented mainstream in the modern era in Central Europe, sometimes dubbed

“moderate reform”) and modern orthodox synagogues among German-speaking Jewry throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, *adon olam* was most frequently performed formally as an artistic statement—sometimes even an elaborate composition that gave a resolute “finale” to the service. The printed as well as the manuscript evidence indicates that this typically was the desiderata in eastern Europe as well, even if not everywhere attainable, while *other* texts did provide opportunities for purely congregational singing.

Foss was invited to compose his *adon olam* setting by Cantor David J. Putterman and the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York, as part of its program of commissioning new music—by composers who were already devoted to synagogue music and by those, like Foss, whose reputations resided in the general music world—in order to expand and enhance the repertoire of music for Jewish worship. This was Foss’s first (and his sole) excursion into Hebrew liturgical music, and it was premiered at the Park Avenue Synagogue in 1947 at its annual service of new music. Its style will appear even more remote to many Jewish worshippers today than it did at the time, for not only does it avoid the superficial pompous character of many settings found in Reform-oriented hymnals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it is also entirely free of the kitsch and even vulgarity that has become attached to the singing of this text in many late-20th–21st-century services—Reform or traditional—a senseless and embarrassing fashion that probably could not have been imagined in 1947. Rather, its devotional and ethereal quality is an apt interpretation of the poetic expressions of faith contained in the text. With its exquisite vocal lines and stately, sometimes other-earthly mood, the music mirrors admirably the dignity, majesty, and elegance of the words. Indeed—albeit probably unwittingly, since Foss pursued his task with complete

artistic freedom—this setting at once actually follows and advances the Central European tradition as manifested in classic *adon olam* settings by many of the 19th-century masters of European synagogue music.

THE HEAVENLY FEAST

Robert Beaser

Robert Beaser describes *The Heavenly Feast* as “essentially an interior monologue at the gravesite of Simone Weil,” the eccentric and enigmatic French philosopher, theosophist, anti-Fascist activist, and mystic who in 1943, at the age of thirty-four, starved herself to death in a sanitarium in Kent, England, under the delusion (or so she claimed) that the food she rejected could be provided instead to her comrades in the French Resistance behind enemy lines in German-occupied France.

The catalyst for this work was a commission from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and its conductor, David Zinman, for an unspecified solo vocal–orchestral piece for the celebrated American soprano Dawn Upshaw. After perusing and considering a number of texts, Beaser turned to the poetry of Gjertrud Schnackenberg, an American poet of his generation whom he had met in 1983 while he was in residence at the American Academy in Rome. In her collection *The Lamp-Lit Answer*, he found her 1982 poem “The Heavenly Feast,” which contemplates Weil’s grave in Ashford, Kent, and addresses the strange phenomenon of her suicidal refusal of food or any substitute nourishment and her accompanying hallucinations. To her gravestone was attached a small plaque, written in Italian, which translates: “My solitude held in its grasp the grief of others till my death.” Schnackenberg had seen the plaque, and she paraphrased those words liberally in her poem. “As soon as I read that poem,” Beaser later recalled, “I knew immediately that I was going to set it.”

For a time during the 1960s Weil enjoyed a degree of posthumous mystique and popularity among Western intellectuals—especially those on the political left—who saw in her life a symbol of the highest order of devotion to social and political struggles in the name of oppressed peoples and classes. In fact, the first substantive biography of Weil (1973) nearly canonized her. But more recent and more sober assessments have considered a complex of mental illnesses—even a diluted degree of sanity—that may have included manifestations of self-martyrdom and masochistic self-denial to no rational purpose; self-disgust; sexual revulsion; and a form of anorexia that she may have sought irrationally to disguise by placing it at the service of social benevolence and humanitarian aid, all of which long preceded her ultimate suicide.

Weil was born into a Parisian Jewish family that had no religious affiliation or traditional Jewish observances. A child prodigy in academic pursuits such as languages and mathematics, she became a protégée of the French philosopher Alain, and eventually a professor of philosophy—acquiring early in her career a basically antiauthoritarian persona. Her direct involvement in labor protests evolved into her working in a factory for a year, in itself a form of protest against what she perceived as the insular theoretical pontificating by leftist intellectuals of her circle. She was not, insofar as we know, specifically a Communist, and she gradually separated herself from the aspirations toward actual revolution that some in those circles proclaimed. Almost paradoxically, she espoused a twin doctrine of anticolonialism and pacifism. The latter position was confusing, because while she was vocally against French intervention in the Spanish Civil War, she volunteered to fight with the Spanish anti-Fascists. Meanwhile, also paradoxically, at least on the surface, Weil became intrigued by the spiritual dimen-

sions of Christianity and especially by the mysteries of faith associated with Roman Catholicism, and she pursued a complicated involvement with the Church that must have appeared strange indeed in her leftist and intellectual worlds.

As a pacifist, Weil initially proclaimed a preference for appeasing the Germans. But she embraced the Resistance wholeheartedly once Germany had occupied France and the Vichy regime had been installed, and she became actively involved with the Resistance efforts. Her parents, whose congenital Jewishness was, of course, sufficient to place them in mortal danger despite their disavowal of religion, sought refuge in America, and she went along with them. But her urgency to participate directly in the cause of Fighting France—the “Free French”—brought her back across the Atlantic to its London base, where she petitioned to be dispatched behind enemy lines as a leader of “combat nurses.” Though she was unsuccessful in so absurd a scheme, the effort itself was probably another manifestation of both her longing for suffering and her suicidal tendency. Eventually she contracted tuberculosis and was confined in the sanitarium in Kent.

At times Weil could show rational political perceptiveness—when, for example, she became disillusioned with the Soviet Union and its totalitarian dangers. At the same time, however, she was convinced that France could emerge triumphant only if it would take the moral high ground by unilaterally relinquishing its colonial empire—a notion that had no basis in military or political reality at that time.

Throughout her life Weil seemed obsessed with purposeless asceticism, a desire for persecution, and self-affliction, apparently thinking that partaking directly of the hardships and suffering of the very people whose cause she championed—especially through

physical labor in spite of her own frailty—was the real path not only to social redemption, but to inner philosophical truth. She subjected herself to periods of fasting, allegedly so that more food could be provided to those in need—which, of course, it could not. And even before her diagnosis of tuberculosis, she refused to eat anything that amounted to more than the meager rations provided to both French soldiers and civilians in wartime France. Hers was an “almost pathological receptiveness to the sufferings of others” as well as “a strong tendency to cultivate her own,” wrote Francine du Plessix Gray in her 2001 biographical study of Weil.

Weil developed a marked antipathy toward Judaism and, typical of Judaic ignorance common even among intellectuals, toward the frequently misunderstood notions of Jews as a “chosen people” and of the nature of the Divine as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible. She even appears strangely to have lent her support to Vichy’s prohibition against Jewish teachers in state schools. Although her first biographer, Simone Petrement, who was also a personal friend, interpreted that stance simply (and perhaps apologetically) as Weil’s rejection of the idea of a Jewish people—viz., a Jewish physical (racial, in the lingo of the time) or national identity apart from a religious following—Gray saw it as a form of self-hatred connected to her desire to separate herself from the Jewish people that she claimed had no distinct existence.

Acknowledging the possibility that Weil’s sanity might not have been fully intact, Susan Sontag wrote nonetheless that in some instances “sanity becomes compromise, evasion, a lie . . .,” and that even one whose life story we might regard with a mixture of “revulsion, pity, and reverence” could also in the end be “truth-giving, sanity-producing, health-creating, and life-enhancing.” Yet for many, the paradoxes of Weil’s

life and death are not so eloquently explained away, although undoubtedly they contribute to the mystique. None of this detracts from the aesthetic beauty of Schnackenberg’s poetry, nor from the powerful images, the raw compassion, and the hallucinatory deathbed flights of fantasy that Beaser could not resist artistically. The birds are heard singing Weil’s purported words: “Send it [the food she rejected] to them, it is theirs.” And the poem concludes with natural images that are clearly reflected in the music: birds, which symbolize Weil’s obsessive focus; moths, which “carve our tortuous paths” in the air; stones; soil; and grass that drew only enough nourishment from the soil to be able to “gain a fraction inch.”

“I tried to understand the psychological meaning of the words,” Beaser has explained, “and throughout the composition of this piece I felt somewhat possessed by them; I felt I had to live up to them.” But he often found that difficult, and he struggled for a solution. When, toward the end, Weil ascends to the heavens accompanied by the birds, Beaser found that image so striking and moving that he was initially at a loss to fashion his musical expression: “I felt almost unequipped to illustrate that.” But ultimately his artistic solution involved responding to the words with a degree of musical simplicity. “The language of this piece is probably the simplest tonal language I’ve ever used,” said the composer. He employed simple canonic phrases, which, he recalls, seemed “almost embarrassing when I began writing the work.” But as he delved more deeply into the text, he realized that structured simplicity was the key to faithful interpretation. “The images in the poem are striking,” he explained, “but also strikingly simple.” Just as those images are recycled throughout the course of the poem, so the musical material constantly evolves through a sort of recycling process: phrases recur with slight transformations and rhythmic alterations—

“almost like a tapestry” in the composer’s conception. He feels that, in response to the flow of the text, he developed multiple thematic material, which he then wove throughout the work. “Each thread would transform itself and return,” in a tapestry-like display of musical ideas.

The extended orchestral prelude seems to establish a mood of inner pain and loneliness, especially with its enquiring clarinet solo passage that sets the tone for a desolate gravesite. The solo rhythmic soprano lines rely heavily on rhythmic declamation and ascend to dramatic climax in the description of grass “gripping the shallow soil with all the shocking might of hunger and of thirst.” Similarly dramatic is the treatment of the words that describe Weil toward the end as lacking “the strength even to lift [her] hands,” where the frailty of that sentiment is nonetheless accompanied by a powerful orchestral crescendo that, rather than portraying weakness or succumbing to death, emphasizes the resolute drama in Weil’s refusal. And just before the conclusion, Schnackenberg’s central question is posed after an interlude: “But how in giving thanks can we calculate the worth of one who chose to starve?”

There is no real answer—either in the conclusion of the poem or in the remaining music, with its haunting clarinet passage followed by a slowly fading and thinning instrumental texture.

—Neil W. Levin

Texts

SONG OF ANGUISH Sung in English

Lukas Foss

Isaiah

- 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.
That put darkness for light and light for darkness.
- 5:21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes,
That are prudent in their own sight.
Woe. They have erred.
- 9:15 [16] For the leaders of this people caused them to err
And they that are led of them are destroyed.
- 24: 4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away,
The world languishes and fadeth away.
- 24:19 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean
dissolved,
The earth is broken down, the earth is moved
exceedingly.
- 24:20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard.
- 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun
ashamed.
- 5:25 Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against
His people,
And He has stretched forth his hands against them,
And He has smitten them,
And the hills did tremble,
And the carcasses were torn in the midst
of the streets.
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand is stretched out still.
- 13:15 Everyone that is found shall be thrust through,
And everyone that is joined unto them shall fall by
the sword.
- 28:15 For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood have we hid ourselves.
- 13:16 Their children shall be dashed to pieces before their
eyes,
Their houses shall be spoiled and their wives
ravished.
- 9:16 [17] For everyone is an hypocrite.
For everyone is an evildoer,
Every mouth speaketh folly.

6:11 Then, said I, Lord, how long? And He answered:
Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant,
And the houses without man,
And the land be utterly desolate.

LAMMDENI (Teach Me)

Sung in Hebrew

Translation by Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

I. BARUKH HAGGEVER

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord; his trust being only in the Lord." (Jeremiah 17:7)

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5)

"Be aware of Him in all your dealings, and He will straighten all your paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

"Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who attains understanding." (Proverbs 3:13)

"See how happy the man that God censures becomes. Do not, then, turn away from the Lord's discipline." (Job 5:17)

II. VA'EDA MA

...And so that I will know what to speak in the gates, what to say, what to put forth,
Teach me!

III. MI AL HAR HOREV

Who stood on Mount Horeb with me and listened—as Moses did? In the desert he led my flock, he fed them manna, got water from the well; who, like Moses, could calm me, could remind me of my own qualities of graciousness and mercy, who whispered softly to me on Mount Horeb, "Have mercy!"?

Who had visions of law for entire nations, and saw them clearly without puzzles and riddles like Moses?

Who taught Torah well honed and with sharpness like Moses?

Who was privileged to enter into the holy cloud like Moses?

Who went up to heaven for forty days and lived without food or drink like Moses?

[As it is written] "And Moses ascended to God." (Exodus 19:3)

Arise, my people, for your light approaches; the glory of the Lord shines upon you.

ADON OLAM

Sung in Hebrew

Translation by Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

Lord of the world, who reigned even before form was created,
It was when His will brought everything into existence—

That His name was proclaimed King.

At the time when His will brought everything into existence,
Then His name was proclaimed King.

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

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

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

He is without beginning and without end;
All power and dominion are His.

He is my God and my ever living Redeemer,
And the Rock upon whom I rely in times of distress
and sorrow.

He is my banner and my refuge,
The portion in my cup—my cup of life
Whenever I call to Him.

I entrust my spirit unto His hand,
As I go to sleep and as I awake;
For my body remains with my spirit.

The Lord is with me; I do not fear.

THE HEAVENLY FEAST

Sung in English

Text: Gjertrud Schnackenberg, 1985

Only the stones at first
Seem to have a part in this,
And the little height of the grass
As it gains a fraction inch

By gripping the shallow soil
With all the shocking might
Of hunger and of thirst,
As if the soil itself

Lukas Foss

Robert Beaser

Were all that's left on earth.
I think the grass alone
Can hold within its grasp
What matters to it most,

And still it looks bereft,
And famished as the stones.
I watch a stream of moths
Proceeding on their ways,

They carve out tortuous paths
As if they were intent
On entering unseen
And ever-smaller doors.

So four years into the war,
And cut off from the ones
Whose circumstances you felt
And suffering as yours,

You carved yourself a path
Through ever-narrowing doors
Of hunger and of thirst,
And entered them day by day,

Refusing all at first
But that ration of food
Your people could obtain
Behind the lines in France,

And then refusing that,
From summer into fall
You cut your ration back
To send your part to them,

Your part diminishing
To rations cut in half
And cut in half again,
And then nothing at all

But water at the last
Sipped for the nurse's sake,
You finally lacked the strength
Even to lift your hands:

*Father, I cannot stand
To think of them and eat.
Send it to them, it is theirs.
Send this food for them,*

*For my people still in France.
And turned your face away,
As famished as the grass.
Only the stones at first*

*Seem to have a part in this,
And the little height of the grass
As it gains a fraction inch.
But hidden in the grass*

*As if the grass itself
Were giving out a cry,
I overhear a finch
Begin her native rhyme*

*And toil to paraphrase
Her version of your words.
It seems she tries and tries
Until the words come clear,*

*It is theirs, she seems to say,
Or this is what I hear,
And again: It is theirs, it is theirs.
And the plover joins in praise*

*With her fluttering, murmured prayers:
Send it to them, it is theirs.
And the blackbirds breaking wide
Take it up in their dialects*

*To sing you in their way,
I swear I can hear the words,
Send it to them, they say,
Send it to them, it is theirs,*

*Then all the birds of the air
Give thanks above your grave,
As if they were your cause
And those you meant to save,*

As if the birds were there
In attendance at the end,
And, seeing the sacrifice,
Had borne your body up,

So wasted as it was,
To your chair in Paradise,
And saw, before they fled,
Your first breathtaking act

Before the heavenly feast,
The bread set at your place:
To refuse to eat till none
On earth has less than you,

Though God in pity take
Your hands and lift them toward
His table for your sake.
Father, they have no food,

Send it to them, it is theirs.
And the birds returning here
Give tongue to what they've heard,
They tell the grass and stones

And the stream of moths who carve
Their tortuous paths in the air.
But how in giving thanks
Can we calculate the worth

Of one who chose to starve?
You held within your grasp
Our hunger and our thirst.
And the little height of the grass

As it gains a fraction inch
Seems to have a part in this.
It grips with a shocking might
What matters to the last,

As if the soil itself
Were all that's left on earth,
And all the earth were held
Within its famished grasp.

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About the Performers



Born in 1954 in Lynn, Massachusetts, baritone **JAMES MADDALENA** is a graduate of the New England Conservatory in Boston. He made his debut with the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1974 and in 1981 began an association with director Peter Sellars, appearing in his productions of operas by Mozart, Haydn, and Handel. Maddalena first gained international recognition in 1987 for his portrayal of Richard Nixon in the Houston Grand Opera premiere

of John Adams's *Nixon in China*. Maddalena has also created a number of other notable operatic roles, including the Captain in Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* at the Monnaie in Brussels, 1991; and Hobson in David Carlson's *The Midnight Angel* in St. Louis, 1993. An active concert artist, Maddalena sings a concert repertoire ranging from Bach to Hindemith. In 1995 he appeared in the premiere and recording of Elliot Goldenthal's Vietnam oratorio *Fire Water Paper*, followed by performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Seiji Ozawa, at Carnegie Hall, and in Washington at the Kennedy Center.

For nearly twenty years, conductor and pianist **KEVIN MCCUTCHEON** has been the music director for the Berliner Ärzte-Orchester. He was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and received his musical training in Philadelphia. He gave his first piano recital at the age of five and conducted his first symphony orchestra at the age of thirteen (his composition *Chaos in C-Flat Major*). In 2000 he was named a conductor for Berlin's esteemed Deutsche Oper, and in 2004 he recorded Henze's opera *Pollicino* for Schott Musik International. He is the pianist of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin.

Soprano **CONSTANCE HAUMAN**, a native of Toledo, Ohio, studied music and political science at Northwestern University and is an alumna of the Interlochen Center for the Arts. In 1986 she sang Ariel in the Des Moines world premiere of Lee Hoiby's opera *The Tempest*, and ten years later she repeated the role in her Dallas Opera debut. In 1989 she came to international prominence as Cunegonde in Bernstein's *Candide* in a complete concert performance with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer at the Barbican Centre. In 1990 she made her New York debut singing "Glitter and Be Gay" at a Bernstein memorial tribute.

GERARD SCHWARZ, one of the leading present-day American conductors, was born in Weehawken, New Jersey, in 1947. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at The Juilliard School, during which time he also played with the American Brass Quintet and then joined the New York Philharmonic, succeeding his former teacher, William Vacchiano, as co-principal trumpet. He resigned from the Philharmonic in 1977 to pursue a full-time podium career. In 1977 he cofounded the New York Chamber Symphony (originally the "Y" Chamber Symphony), serving as its music director for twenty-five seasons. From 1978 to 1985 he was music director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and in 1981 he established the Music Today contemporary music series in New York, serving as its music director until 1989. In 1982, he became director of Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, and in 2002 he became its emeritus conductor. His many honors include the Ditson Conductors Award from Columbia University, and honorary doctorates from The Juilliard School, Fairleigh Dickinson University, the University of Puget Sound, and Seattle University. In 2000 he was made an honorary fellow of John Moores University in Liverpool, and in 2002 he received the ASCAP award for his outstanding contribution to American contemporary music. Schwarz was a founding member of Music of Remembrance, an organization dedicated to remembering Holocaust victim musicians. In 1983 Schwarz was appointed music advisor of the **SEATTLE SYMPHONY**, and he was named principal conductor the following year, and music director in 1985. This orchestra, recognized for its innovative pro-

gramming, has more than eighty discs and ten Grammy nominations to its credit.



Gerard Schwarz conducting the Seattle Symphony recording of *The Heavenly Feast*, with Constance Hauman, soloist

Born in Boston, **CHRISTOPHER WILKINS** earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard (1978). In 1979–80 he attended the Hochschule der Künste in West Berlin as a recipient of the John Knowles Paine Traveling Fellowship, awarded by the Harvard Music Department, and he received his master of music degree from Yale University in 1981. From 1989 to 1996 he was music director of the Colorado Springs Symphony, serving in later seasons as music advisor. In 1991 he began an eleven-year tenure as music director of the San Antonio Symphony, where he is now music director emeritus. As a guest conductor, Wilkins has appeared with leading orchestras throughout the world. Plácido Domingo has named him a resident conductor of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas.

The **RUNDFUNK-SINFONIEORCHESTER BERLIN** (Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra) was founded in 1923 as the first radio orchestra in Germany. Its repertoire spans more than three centuries, but since its founding, the ensemble has been especially dedicated to contemporary works. Many of the greatest composers of the 20th century have performed their own music with this orchestra, either as conductors or soloists, among them Hindemith, Honegger, Milhaud, Prokofiev, Strauss, Schoenberg, Stravinsky,

Weill, and Zemlinsky—and more recently Krzysztof Penderecki, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Berthold Goldschmidt, and Udo Zimmermann. Since 1956 the orchestra has performed in twenty countries, including China and Japan. It also records extensively for DeutschlandRadio, founded in 1994, and many of its recordings have been awarded the German Record Critics' Prize. In 2002 Marek Janowski succeeded Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos as principal music director.

Scottish-born tenor **MARK WILDE** has appeared with the Birmingham and Savoy opera companies and the Glyndebourne Touring Opera. He has recorded for Naxos and for Hyperion Records.

Founded near the end of the 1990s, the chamber choir **LAUDIBUS** has been acclaimed for its blend and flexibility, for the breadth of its programming, and for its willingness to tackle difficult new works. It has given several world premieres, including works by Gavin Bryars, Giles Swayne, and Richard Allain. The twenty-two members of this dynamic young ensemble are selected by audition from the 130-voice National Youth Choir of Great Britain.



MICHAEL BREWER, musical director of Laudibus as well as of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, has directed the World Youth Choir and the National Youth Chamber Choir. He has twice won the worldwide competition Let the Peoples Sing. Brewer is music director at Chethams, Britain's largest music school for gifted children, and author of *Kick Start Your Choir*, a handbook for choral directors and singers.

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Credits

LUKAS FOSS (b. 1922)

Song of Anguish (1953)

Publisher: Carl Fischer

Recording: Jesus Christus Kirche, Berlin, Germany, May 1999

Recording Producer: Wolfram Nehls

Recording Engineer: Thomas Monnerjahn

Recording Assistant Engineer: Susanne Beyer

Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Elegy for Anne Frank (1989)

Publisher: Pembrece

Recording: Jesus Christus Kirche, Berlin, Germany, May 1999

Recording Producer: Wolfram Nehls

Recording Engineer: Thomas Monnerjahn

Recording Assistant Engineer: Susanne Beyer

Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Lammdeni (1974)

Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes

Recording: The Warehouse, London, UK, July 2000

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

Adon Olam (1947)

Publisher: Associated Music Publishers

Recording: St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, London, UK, October 2000

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes, Morgan Roberts

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

ROBERT BEASER (b. 1954)

The Heavenly Feast (1994)

Publisher: European American Music

Recording: Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA, May 1999

Recording Producer: Adam Stern

Recording Engineer: Al Swanson

Recording Project Managers: Richard Lee, Paul Schwendener, Neil Levin

The Milken Family Foundation was established by brothers Lowell and Michael Milken in 1982 with the mission to discover and advance inventive, effective ways of helping people help themselves and those around them lead productive and satisfying lives. The Foundation advances this mission primarily through its work in education and medical research. For more information, visit www.milkenarchive.org.

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