

Cover Art

JEWISH TONE POEMS

A MESSAGE FROM THE MILKEN ARCHIVE FOUNDER



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

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

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

Lowell Milken

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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

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

Neil W. Levin

Neil W. Levin is an internationally recognized scholar and authority on Jewish music history, a professor of Jewish music at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, music director of Schola Hebraica, and

About the Composers



AARON AVSHALOMOV (1894–1964) was born in Nikolayevsk, eastern Siberia, where his grandfather had established a profitable business after being exiled from the Caucasus in the 1870s. Aaron was sent for medical studies to Zürich, where his musical interests blossomed. He attended the Zürich Conservatory briefly—which constituted his only formal musical education. After the October Revolution, in 1917, which made further

studies in Europe impossible, his family sent him to the United States—via Manchuria and northern China. Less than a year later, having married a fellow Russian émigré in San Francisco, he chose to return to China. Apart from a short period in the mid-1920s, when he spent three years in Portland, Oregon, Avshalomov remained in China until 1947. For a number of years he lived in Peking, where he worked for China Booksellers and then for Librairie Française. Despite his lack of musical training—apart from the one term in Zürich—he began composing. He developed an approach that grafted elements of traditional Chinese music—which he had first encountered as a child among the Chinese community of his Siberian hometown—onto a colorful Russian style in the manner of Rimsky-Korsakov. He used the Western-oriented symphony orchestra to imitate and evoke sounds of traditional Chinese instruments, and he also transcribed characteristic ornamentations and used such instruments as temple blocks and finger

cymbals. Among his first works of this type was an opera, *Kuan Yin*, which was premiered in Peking in 1925.

Avshalomov achieved some performances of his works in America during his stay there in the 1920s, but he was unable to establish either a position or a significant reputation in the United States, and he returned to China in 1929. He settled in Shanghai, where there was an established Jewish community, and he became the head librarian of the municipal library and, in 1943, conductor of the Shanghai City Symphony. His works during this second period in China include concertos for violin and piano and two additional operas: *The Twilight Hour of Yan Kuei Fei* (1933) and *The Great Wall* (1933–41), which was premiered there in 1945.

During the period of the Japanese invasion and occupation of China, and then the Second World War, Avshalomov lived there under house arrest. His son, the composer Jacob Avshalomov, had been born in 1919 in China but had emigrated to the United States in 1937, and after the war his father joined him—this time remaining permanently.

In his initial postwar years in America, Aaron Avshalomov saw the premiere of his *Dream of Wei Lin*; and his Second Symphony (1949) was commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky. But once again he was unable to parlay those achievements into further success or to gain the recognition warranted by his obvious gifts. He remains a composer whose legacy awaits deserved rediscovery.

—Neil W. Levin

FOUR BIBLICAL TABLEAUX

B'nai Brith Ritual Suite

Program note by the composer's son

During my father's sojourn in Portland, Oregon, from 1926 to 1929, he was sustained by its Jewish community, to which he was introduced by his dear friend Jacques Gershkovitch, the founding conductor of the Portland Junior Symphony. My father's associations with that community led to the formation of the B'nai Brith Orchestra under his musical direction. Shortly afterward, Rabbi Henry J. Berkovitz asked him to compose an orchestral work for the dedication of Temple Beth Israel in Portland.

Although my father had scant Jewish education or religious upbringing in eastern Siberia, he had absorbed enough of his Jewish heritage to both inspire and facilitate the composition of this work, which portrays three biblical scenes—*Queen Esther's Prayer*, *Rebecca by the Well*, and *Ruth and Naomi*, followed by a *Processional*. Two factors are evident in this music as influences on my father in general: his interest in Chinese music and his admiration for the music of Ernest Bloch. Bloch's influence appears in these tableaux in the occasional use of augmented seconds as melodic intervals, cadences on open fifths, and organically conceived grace notes. These features are also discernible in traditional Chinese music.

Soon after the dedication of the synagogue, my parents and I left Portland to return to China. A farewell concert was organized, at which the *Four Biblical Tableaux* were performed in the Little Theater of the Studio Building. The work then lay dormant for decades, until 1971, when I was invited to present a dedicatory concert with my youth orchestra for the New Greater Portland Jewish Community Center. I included this work, together with Bloch's *Schelomo*.

—Jacob Avshalomov



SHEILA SILVER (b. 1946) was born in Seattle, where she began piano studies at the age of five. She graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1968, having studied composition with Edward Dugger. The university's George Ladd Prix de Paris enabled her to study for two years in Europe, and she worked with Erhard Karkoschka in Stuttgart and Gyorgy

Ligeti in Berlin and Hamburg. She earned her doctorate in music from Brandeis University, studying with Arthur Berger, Harold Shapero, and Seymour Shifrin. She also spent a summer at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, on a Koussevitzky fellowship, where she worked with Jacob Druckman. In 1979 she became a professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and in 1997 she was appointed Charles and Andrea Bronfman Distinguished Visiting Professor of Judaic studies at the College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Silver's compositions span a wide range of media and subject matter. Among her Judaically related works in addition to *Shirat Sara* are a Psalm setting—*Bar'khi nafshi et adonai* (Worship the Lord, O My Soul)—for antiphonal choirs, which was commissioned for the Gregg Smith Singers; *To the Spirit Unconquered*, a piano trio inspired by Primo Levi's writings on the Holocaust; a piano concerto whose final movement was composed in the style of a Hassidic *niggun*; and

a cello sonata that contains a theme and variations on an original tune for *shalom aleikhem*, one of the Sabbath eve *z'mirot* (table songs or hymns). Her large catalogue of general works includes a full-length opera, *The Thief of Love*, based on a modern reworking of a Bengali tale; two string quartets; *Dance of Wild Angels*, commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and premiered by its New Music Group in 1990; *Moon Prayer* for string sextet; *Theme and Variations for Bowed Vibraphone*; chamber music in other assorted combinations; piano pieces; and song cycles. She has also written two film scores, many cabaret songs, and incidental theater music. Current works include *Midnight Prayer for Orchestra* (2003), commissioned by the Stockton Symphony; and *Chant* for contrabass and piano (2003).

Silver was the recipient of a Bunting Institute Fellowship; the Rome Prize; the American Institute of Arts and Letters' Composer Award; and awards and commissions from the Rockefeller Foundation (Bellagio Residency), the MacDowell Colony, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Barlow Foundation. She was also twice a winner of the ISCM National Composers Competition.

SHIRAT SARA

Shirat Sara (Song of Sarah) was written as a symphony for strings, with the concertmaster or concertmistress as the soloist. Silver conceived this tone poem while living for a brief time in Jerusalem's Old City during the summer of 1984, and she completed it after her return to the United States. It addresses the biblical heroine Sarah, the first matriarch, who was the wife of Abraham, the first patriarch—known as the father of the Jewish people. The work's program concerns the story, told in Genesis, of Sarah's sorrow at her inability

to conceive, her entreaties to God for a child, and the joy she experiences at finally being granted that wish with the conception and birth of her son, Isaac, in her old age. Each of the three movements depicts one of those stages of the story.

The first movement was composed in Israel, inspired by the sounds the composer heard one evening as she passed by an open window of a yeshiva (talmudic academy). A group of men were singing a farewell to the Sabbath, and the melody was long and cyclical, seemingly without phrase beginnings, endings, or tonal center. The mysterious, lingering tune evoked a mourning, or reluctance to see the Sabbath pass, which had a profound effect on the composer as she began writing the work.

Threads of a quasi-Hassidic tune appear throughout the piece, and the second movement is based on a contemporary neo-Hassidic tune that Silver learned in New York. But its harmonic treatment encompasses both tonal and nontonal aspects—sometimes in juxtaposition, sometimes in a tension between the two. That duality applies to many of Silver's other works as well.

In her approach to this work, Silver was intrigued by Sarah's role in Jewish as well as Western history and culture. "In the Judeo-Christian heritage of the Western world," she has reflected, "the figure of Sarah holds a special place. She was the first woman to maintain unfaltering faith in the one, eternal God." The work was premiered in 1968 by the Hartford Symphony under the direction of Tibor Pusztai.



JAN MEYEROWITZ (1913–98) was born Hans Hermann M. in Breslau, Germany (now Wroclaw, Poland). His family had converted to Christianity prior to his birth, and they concealed the fact of his Jewish ancestry throughout his youth. Among certain elements and social circles (albeit a very small minority) of German-speaking or German culturally

oriented Jewry during that period, an act of such total assimilation and radical disassociation from Jewish identity—whether for social or political reasons (motivations of true religious convictions would not have dictated such secrecy)—was not altogether unique. Meyerowitz did not even learn that he was in fact a Jew until he was about eighteen. Ironically, in one instance, as a result of his family's chosen path, he narrowly escaped death. At some point, according to a lifelong friend, he was on a train that was halted by German soldiers, who removed all circumcised men and shot them summarily.

Meyerowitz went to Berlin in 1927 and studied music with Walter Gmeindl and Alexander Zemlinsky. When the Nazi party assumed control of Germany in 1933 following the elections that resulted in Hitler's appointment as chancellor, Meyerowitz went to Rome, where he studied composition with Ottorino Respighi

and Alfredo Casella and conducting with Bernardino Molinari. After the first concert of his music in Rome, the Italian composer-critic Mario Labroca observed that his compositions are "in a chromatic style like Berg's, but they nonetheless present an evident melodic definition that clearly excludes atonality." Meyerowitz took up residence in Belgium in 1938, but when the Second World War commenced with the German invasion of Poland, in 1939, he went to southern France, where he acquired friends in the Resistance and survived underground much of the time. In Marseilles he was hidden from the Germans with the help of the French singer Marguerite Fricker, whom he married after the war. Upon the liberation of Paris in 1944, several important French musicians—such as Jean-Pierre Rampal, Yvonne Loriod, and Yvon Le Marc' Hadour—performed his works there in radio broadcasts and concerts.

In 1946, about a year after the American and British liberation of France from German occupation, Meyerowitz immigrated to the United States, where he became an assistant to Boris Goldovsky at the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood. He later joined the music faculty of Brooklyn College, after which he taught at City College of New York (C.C.N.Y.), soon establishing himself in America as a composer. His second opera, *The Barrier* (1949), with a libretto by Langston Hughes—based on Hughes's play about racial tensions in the South, *The Mulatto*—was premiered in 1950 at Columbia University. It was revived at several Italian opera houses during the 1970s and at the Darmstadt Staatsoper in 1996. In 1956 Meyerowitz was awarded the first of two Guggenheim fellowships, and that same year he completed his opera *Esther*, based on the biblical Book of Esther (completely unrelated to his earlier Symphony *Midrash Esther*, recorded here), also with a libretto by Hughes, which was commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation for the eighth Festival

of Contemporary Arts held at the University of Illinois (1957). Other collaborations with Hughes included a cantata, *The Five Foolish Virgins*; and *The Story of Ruth*, for coloratura soprano and piano. Among Meyerowitz's other operas are *Eastward in Eden*, with a libretto by Dorothy Gardner, about Emily Dickinson's love for a married minister; *Bad Boys in School*, a one-act "opera farce" after Nestroy; *Simoon*, with a libretto by P. J. Stephens after a Strindberg play; *Godfather Death*, also with a Stephens libretto; and *Winterballade*, apparently his last opera, after the play by Gerhart Hauptmann. His other nonoperatic vocal works include *Missa Rachel Plorans*, an a cappella Mass setting, which critic Howard Taubman of *The New York Times* described as "a mixture of archaic and modern ideas, which are fused expressively"; his *Emily Dickinson Cantata*; *Herodiade*, a setting of the dialogue by Stéphane Mallarmé; and cantatas, song cycles, and individual songs on poetry of e. e. cummings, Robert Herrick, Keats, Rimbaud, and many others. His instrumental catalogue in addition to *Midrash Esther* includes a flute concerto; shorter orchestral pieces; and chamber music, including a string quartet written sporadically between 1936 and 1955 that was described in *Musical America* as "a lyrically impassioned and subjective work colored with archaic Hebraic religious undertones."

Meyerowitz received one of the coveted annual commissions from Cantor David Puterman and New York's Park Avenue Synagogue for a complete Friday evening service (*kabbalat shabbat*—"welcoming the Sabbath"—and *arvit*). That work, titled *Shir hadash l'shabbat* (A New Song of the Sabbath), was premiered there on the synagogue's 80th anniversary, in 1962—at its 18th annual service of new liturgical music by contemporary composers.

The polarized critical reactions to his music were as eclectic and diverse as Meyerowitz's span of subjects

and literary sources—which embraced American, English, French, and biblical poetry and drama and expressed both Hebraic and Christian liturgies. Some thought it overly conservative and even antiquated. Alan Rich of *The New York Times* spoke of Meyerowitz's stylistic identification "with the past" (a "right" he nonetheless conceded to him), and of his imitation of 19th-century operatic conventions and effects without an encompassing musical shape—although he acknowledged that some of Meyerowitz's operatic writing was the sort that could generate enthusiastic ovations. Musicologist and famously outspoken observer Paul Henry Lang thought Meyerowitz's music lacked personality and bespoke a *fin de siècle* mysticism that evoked a Central European rather than any Hebraic melos, even in declared Judaic expressions such as *Midrash Esther*. Yet other, equally prestigious and respected reviewers reacted quite differently. In 1957 Felix Greissle discussed Meyerowitz's music in *The Musical Quarterly*, noting its special importance in an era when musical styles have appeared and changed so rapidly that they bypassed a more natural evolution of style that accompanied important musical developments of previous centuries. "He [Meyerowitz] has decided for himself," Greissle wrote, "to take up and expand where recent tradition has left us with a near vacuum.... His compositions reveal a full command of all the paraphernalia of the superior artisan, such as well-wrought themes, perfect interrelation between melody and harmony, consummately developed climaxes, and logically built and strongly contrasting forms." The eminent composer and critic Virgil Thomson thought Meyerowitz was "possessed of a strong dramatic talent" and, following the 1950 premiere of *The Barrier*, anticipated a bright future for him. The *Chicago Daily News* critic went further in his admiration: "It is clear that Meyerowitz is that rare phenomenon in contemporary music: a real opera composer." And following *Eastward in Eden's*

premiere, a writer for the *Musical Courier* exclaimed, "We do not hesitate to call Jan Meyerowitz one of the greatest musico-dramatic talents of our day." In general, his music was perceived in both late Romantic and expressionist terms, permeated by intense emotion—often in juxtaposition with more delicate lyricism. But by the late 1960s and 1970s his music fell into neglect in America, and he returned to France after his retirement from City College.

SYMPHONY MIDRASH ESTHER

Symphony Midrash Esther (commentary on [The Book of] Esther) is a tone poem that emotionally depicts aspects of the story—told in the biblical Book of Esther—of the imminent genocide of the Jews in the Persian Empire and their triumphant reprieve and victory over their tormentors. But it is also a musical reflection of traditional exegeses and expansions upon that story and its characters, as found in Midrashic (exegetical) literature. Although the work carries no literal program, the composer drew his inspiration from the Talmud; the Midrash (rabbinic commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, often by way of allegory and metaphor, dating to the 5th–6th centuries C.E.); and other rabbinic commentary on this subject.

In the biblical narrative, Haman, the closest advisor and highest court officer to Ahasuerus, King of Persia and ruler of the vast Persian Empire, is besotted with envy and hatred for the Jews as a people—a hatred that arose because Mordecai, a Jewish leader and a courtier in Ahasuerus' palace, refused to bow down to him. Mordecai's adopted orphaned cousin, Esther, is the king's prized and cherished wife—Queen of Persia. On Mordecai's advice, she has never revealed her Jewish identity. Waging a personal vendetta, Haman plots against the Jews by convincing Ahasuerus that they present a collective danger to royal authority

and to the state, and he persuades the naïve king (known in Jewish literature as *melekh hatipesh*—"the fool king") to authorize complete annihilation of the Jewish population throughout the empire. This is to occur on a particular day, which Haman has chosen by lots (*pur*). Beseeched by Mordecai, Esther intercedes by revealing her Jewish identity to Ahasuerus. She pleads on behalf of her entire people, pointing out that the genocide decree would apply to her as well. When it is discovered that Mordecai once saved the king's life by exposing a regicidal plot, Ahasuerus turns on Haman in disgust and orders him to be hanged on the gallows he has just constructed for hanging Mordecai. However, since the law prevents a royal decree from being revoked, Ahasuerus issues a new order, allowing the Jews to organize for self-defense, and then to engage their enemies on the same day that Haman chose for the Jewish mass murder (the 13th of the Hebrew month of *adar*)—resulting in their decisive victory.

The first of the symphony's four movements, a solemn introduction to the story, evokes the imminent danger to the Jews amid the lurking forces of evil. The second movement, *Haman*, contains passages that reflect a frenzy of raw hatred and rage, personified in the story by Haman and expressed here by motoric energy. The third movement, *Esther and Ahasuerus*, is at once a contemplative lament and a representation of Esther's heroic poise, perhaps suggesting the dialogue in which she beseeches the king and reveals—at considerable risk to herself—her own Judaic ancestry. The final movement is titled *Purim* (a Hebraic plural form of the word *pur*), referring to the annual joyous Jewish festival that is celebrated to commemorate the averting of the catastrophe and the triumph of the Jews over their mortal enemy—which, in universal terms, might also be interpreted as a triumph of justice over evil and of equity over tyranny.

Midrash Esther received its premiere in 1957 with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Subsequent performances included one by the Pittsburgh Symphony under the baton of William Steinberg, a vocal advocate of Meyerowitz's music. It is tempting to consider obvious parallels between the biblical narrative and Meyerowitz's own experience as a near victim of—and refugee from—the German genocide, but the issue of hidden Jewishness poses yet another question. Meyerowitz's family had concealed its—and his—Jewish identity for a type of social safety (concerns for physical safety would not have been at issue until the early 1930s). To save her people, Esther's tactic is precisely the opposite: to reveal her identity and thus personalize for the king the impending disaster. Was the irony of that comparison present in Meyerowitz's consciousness as he created this work? And was it part of his inspiration? One can only speculate, but he does seem to have been sufficiently fascinated with the story to create two independent musical and dramatic expressions of it, and to have probed much lesser known ancient and medieval Judaic commentaries in order to create his own "musical *midrash*." For one who had no Jewish education, and to whom that Midrashic literature must certainly have been foreign, that level of Judaic curiosity cannot fail to arouse our interest.

—Neil W. Levin



About the Performers



Gerard Schwarz conducts the Seattle Symphony in Benaroya Hall.

Founded in 1903, when violinist-conductor Harry West assembled twenty-four musicians to perform in Christiansen Hall (site of the current Seattle Art Museum), the **SEATTLE SYMPHONY** is the oldest and largest cultural institution in the Pacific Northwest. Recognized for its bold, innovative programming, with the inclusion of much new music, it is also one of the world's most recorded orchestras, with more than eighty discs—many of them featuring American repertoire—and numerous Grammy nominations to its credit. In addition to its regular concerts, the Seattle Symphony presents a broad spectrum of other series, including Basically Baroque, Light Classics, Seattle Pops, Discover Music!, Tiny Tots, Distinguished Artists, and Music of Our Time. Seattle Symphony musicians began their association with the Seattle Opera in 1973. In 1981, led by Rainer Miedél, the orchestra made its first European tour, which included thirteen cities throughout Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Its previous music directors have included Henry Hadley, Basil Cameron, Nikolai Sokoloff, Sir Thomas

Beecham, and Milton Katims. Gerard Schwarz, holding the position since 1985, has brought the orchestra to new international acclaim. It now makes its home in Benaroya Hall, which was inaugurated in 1998 and has been praised for its architectural and acoustical beauty.



GERARD SCHWARZ, one of the leading present-day American conductors, was born in Weehawken, New Jersey, in 1947. He began piano lessons at the age of five and trumpet at eight, and he attended the National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan, and New York's High School of Performing Arts. 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.

Within a few years Schwarz found himself increasingly attracted to conducting, and in 1977 he resigned from the Philharmonic 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. In 1982, he became director of Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival. In the course of two decades he brought the Mostly Mozart orchestra to the Tanglewood and Ravinia festivals and on annual tours to Japan as well as on PBS *Live from Lincoln Center* telecasts; in 2002 he became its emeritus conductor.

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. In 2001 he also became music director of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, one of the world's oldest orchestras.

In 1994 he was named Conductor of the Year by *Musical America*. His many other 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.

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.



YOEL LEVI was born in Romania in 1950 but grew up in Israel. He studied at the Tel Aviv Academy of Music, where he received a master of arts degree, and at the Jerusalem Academy of Music under Mendi Rodan. He also studied with Franco Ferrara in Siena and Rome, with Kirill Kondrashin in Holland,

and at the Guildhall School of Music in London. After winning first prize at the 1978 Conductors' International Competition in Besançon, Levi became assistant to Lorin Maazel at the Cleveland Orchestra for six years, serving as resident conductor from 1980 to 1984. From 1988 to 2000 he succeeded Robert Shaw as music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Milestones from this period include an extensive European tour in 1991; the nomination of the Atlanta Symphony as Best Orchestra of the Year for 1991–92 by the committee of the first annual International Classical Music Awards; a highly successful performance of Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony in New York's Avery Fisher Hall; and a featured role

at the opening ceremony of the Atlanta Olympics in July 1996; as well as a large number of acclaimed recordings. In 2001, Levi, now the Atlanta Orchestra's music director emeritus, became artistic advisor for the Flemish Radio Orchestra (Vlaams Radio Orkest) in Belgium and principal guest conductor of the Israel Philharmonic. His other conducting engagements have included appearances with orchestras in London, Paris, Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Rome, Frankfurt, Munich, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Japan. In North America he has also conducted the orchestras of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Washington, Minnesota, Toronto, and Montreal. In 1991 he was invited to conduct the Stockholm Philharmonic at the Nobel Prize ceremony. Levi made his opera conducting debut in 1997 at the Teatro Comunale in Florence with Puccini's *La fanciulla del west* and his North American opera debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2000 with Bizet's *Carmen*. In June 2001 he was named Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.

Credits

AARON AVSHALOMOV: Four Biblical Tableaux (1928)

Publisher: American Composers Alliance

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

Recording Producer: Wolfram Nehls

Recording Engineer: Thomas Monnerjahn

Assistant Recording Engineer: Susanne Beyer

Recording Product Manager: Paul Schwendener

Coproduction with DeutschlandRadio and the ROC Berlin-GmbH

SHEILA SILVER: Shirat Sara (1985)

Publisher: MMB Music, Inc

Recording: Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA, May 1999

Recording Producer: Adam Stern

Recording Engineer: Al Swanson

Recording Product Manager: Paul Schwendener

JAN MEYEROWITZ: Symphony Midrash Esther (1954)

Publisher: Broude Brothers Limited

Recording: Jesus Christus Kirche, Berlin, Germany, November 2000

Recording Producer: Wolfram Nehls

Recording Engineer: Henri Thaon

Assistant Recording Engineer: Annerose Unger

Recording Product Manager: Paul Schwendener

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Credits

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Special recognition is due composer Michael Isaacson who served as a catalyst to the Archive's creation, and collaborated with the Milken Family Foundation in its work during the Archive's early years.

Milken Archive of American Jewish Music

— WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

“The most comprehensive documentation, ever, of music reflecting Jewish life and culture in America...The Milkens will realize something that has been a dream of scholars and musicians practically since the dawn of recorded sound...one of the most ambitious and important projects ever undertaken by any record company.”

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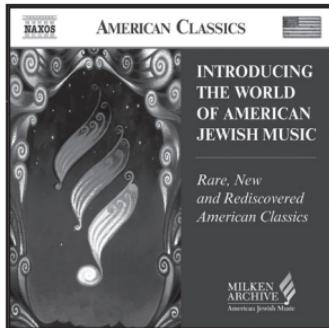
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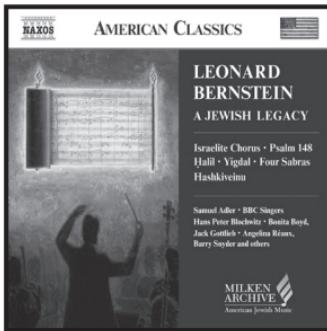
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Gerard Schwarz leads the Czech Philharmonic with energy and lends the lyric sections the tenderness they need.” “...a glorious — and complete

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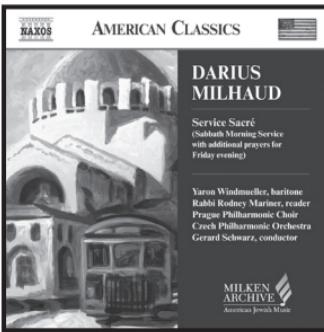
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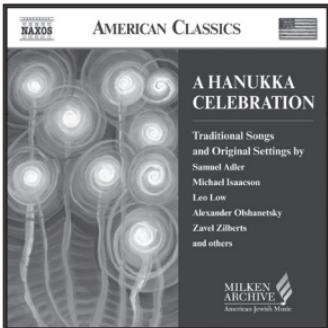
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