

Cover Art

Psalms of Joy and Sorrow

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.

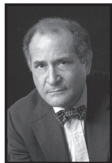
While much of this music had become a vital force in American and world culture, even more music of specifically Jewish content had been created, perhaps performed, and then lost to current and future generations. Believing that there was a unique opportunity to rediscover, preserve and transmit the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

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

Lowell Milken

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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

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

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

Neil W. Levin

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



Psalms of Joy and Sorrow



George Rochberg: from Three Psalms		0 Philip Glass: Psalm 126	3:53
1	Psalm 23	Theodore Bikel, speaker	
2	Psalm 150	Coral Carmina	
	Laudibus Choir	Barcelona Symphony/National Orchestra of Catalonia	
	Michael Brewer, conductor	Karl Anton Rickenbacher, conductor	
3	Jacob Druckman: Psalm 93	2:02	Donald Waxman: from Psalms and Supplications
	Rochester Singers		! II. The Twenty-third Psalm of David
	Aaron Miller, organ		@ IV. Jonah's Prayer from the Belly of the Whale
	Samuel Adler, conductor		2:47
4	Ursula Mamlok:		5:52
	Cantata based on the First Psalm		Joseph Evans, tenor
	Laudibus Choir		Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra
	Michael Brewer, conductor		Stephen Gunzenhauser, conductor
	Yehudi Wyner		Ralph Shapey: Psalm II
5	Ma Tovu	2:33	# Prologue: Prais'd be
			1:01
6	Shiru Ladonai (Psalm 96)	2:38	\$ I. Master of the Universe
	Meir Finkelstein, tenor		2:12
	BBC Singers		% II. Thy Covenant
	Spectrum		2:30
	Avner Itai, conductor		^ III. Day of Wrath
			2:29
			& Epilogue: Life and Joy
			:34
			Sarah Leonard, soprano
			BBC Singers
			Spectrum
			Avner Itai, conductor
	Miriam Gideon		* Robert Strassburg: Psalm 117
7	Ma Tovu	2:21	2:04
8	Adonai Malakh (Psalm 93)	1:51	Rutgers Kirkpatrick Choir
	Patrick Mason, baritone		Justin Bischof, organ
	Hugh Potton, organ		Patrick Gardner, conductor
	The London Chorus		
	Ronald Corp, conductor		(Heinrich Schalit: The 23rd Psalm
9	Martin Kalmanoff:		Aaron Miller, organ
	The Lord Is My Shepherd (Psalm 23)	4:06	New York Cantorial Choir
	Alberto Mizrahi		Samuel Adler, conductor
	Barcelona Symphony / National Orchestra of Catalonia) Zavel Zilberts: Psalm 137 (Al Naharot Bavel)
	Elli Jaffe, conductor		9:56
			Alberto Mizrahi
			Neimah Singers
			Schola Hebraeica
			Christopher Bowers-Broadbent, organ
			Instrumental Ensemble
			Neil Levin, conductor

THE BOOK OF PSALMS AND ITS MUSICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Common to the liturgies, histories, and spirit of Judaism and Christianity, the Book of Psalms is one of the most widely familiar and most frequently quoted books of the Hebrew Bible. As literature, the Psalms are also basic to Western culture. In terms of notated music alone, their continuum as an inspiration for musical interpretations and expressions stretches back in time for more than ten centuries; and their unnotated traditions of musical rendition predate Christianity, extending to Jewish antiquity and the Temple era.

Literary and Religious Content

The Psalms have been cited as manifestations of a form of popular theology, in the most positive sense of that perception. This is because they encompass a broad spectrum of human experience vis-à-vis God—rooted in the special relationship provided by the framework of the biblical covenants—while avoiding the level of abstract or philosophical theology that would be limited to scholarly hierarchies.

The Psalms have been viewed by theologians as expressions of man's thirst for moral, ethical, and spiritual grounding and his search for a guiding faith—all of which amounts essentially, in theological terms, to man's pursuit of God. "In the Torah and the [books of the] Prophets," wrote biblical scholar Nahum Sarna in his trenchant study of representative Psalms, aptly titled *Songs of the Heart*,

God reaches out to man. The initiative is His. The message is His. He communicates, we receive.... In the Psalms, human beings reach out to God. The initiative is human. The language is human. We make an effort to communicate. He receives.... The human soul extends itself beyond its confining, sheltering, impermanent house of clay. It gropes for an experience of the divine Presence.

Unique among liturgies in their singular blend of majestic grandeur, lofty sentiments, and poignant simplicity, the Psalms embrace virtually every basic human emotion and mood, always in the context of faith. Their subject matter

may be classified according to several basic poetic typologies, including hymns of praise and thanksgiving; elegies; pilgrim songs; meditations; paeans to God in history; celebrations of God's glory and greatness in nature; and poems of moral-ethical instruction.

The Psalms pulsate with reflections of life: its tribulations, its moments of elation, the search for consolation in times of distress, the natural urge to offer gratitude, the quest for justice (including the natural if base human inclination for retribution), the hunt for a path to contentment, the struggle to maintain faith in the face of diversity, the tendency toward doubt when practitioners of evil seem immune to defeat or justice, the spiritual struggles of transgressors to find their way, the hunger for virtuosity, and the pursuit of triumph over despair. Thus, despite their Judaic origin and solid Judeo-Christian association, the Psalms need not be restricted to any single people, religious group, or era. Their ageless attraction abides in their universal sentiment and their universally applicable teachings. In that sense, their resonance transcends both time and geographical space.

Etymology

Notwithstanding the secondary applicability of the term to certain apocryphal religious poems, to some non-Hebrew postbiblical poetic texts of the early Church, and possibly to some embedded hymns or songs in other Hebrew biblical books (e.g., *shirat hayam* [Song of the Sea], Ex. 15:1–18, or *shir moshe* [Song of Moses], Deut. 32)—and despite its legitimate, broader generic usage as a typological label for poetic expression unrelated to religious literature—it must be acknowledged that the word *psalm*, or *psalms*, now invariably calls to mind the biblical Book of Psalms, or the Psalter. This is the opening book (since earliest printed Bibles) of *k'tuvim* (Hagiographa, or sacred writings)—the third of the three sections of the *tanakh*, or the Hebrew Bible.

The English designation *psalm* derives from its cognate in the Latin Vulgate: *Liber Psalmorum*, or *Psalmi*. The Latin singular *psalmus* in turn came from the Greek *psalmos*, which

means a song or song text specifically sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument—and perhaps, by later extension, to instrumental accompaniment in general. The Jewish translators of the Septuagint in Alexandria selected the word *psalmos* to render the Hebrew *mizmor*. That word, *mizmor*, is reserved in the Bible exclusively for this self-contained book within *k'tuvim*, where it appears in the title or caption of fifty-seven Psalms—but never in the body of those texts. Later, *mizmor* came more broadly to represent liturgical singing accompanied by instrumental musicians.

Questions have been raised, however, concerning the precision of the use of *psalmus* to correspond to the Hebrew *mizmor*. It has been suggested that the Greek-Jewish translators in Alexandria might not have known the precise meaning of the Hebrew word, whose definition, along with other technical terms in the Bible, might long previously have been lost. Nonetheless, *psalmos*, and then *psalmus*, became universally accepted, as did the English equivalent, *psalm*.

The Hebrew name for the Psalter, and for the Psalms as a group, was accepted in rabbinic and subsequent literature as *sefer t'hillim*—lit., book of praises, or book of songs of praise—even though only one Psalm (145) contains the word *praise* (*t'hilla*) in its superscription. *Sefer t'hillim* is often contracted to *tillim*, a practice dating to talmudic times. And although a number of individual Psalms would not fall into that category and do not even express praise, the theme nonetheless permeates the Psalms in the aggregate—directly or indirectly, on multiple levels, and in various manifestations of unconditional, objective praise of God. Also, the expression *halleluya*, which is ubiquitously associated with the Psalms, appears nowhere else in the Bible.

Categories and Divisions

Although the total number of Psalms differs according to variant traditions, divergent or conflicting manuscripts, and alternative systems (in which, for example, what we now accept as two separate Psalms might originally have been a single text), the Psalter as it has come down to us in this present canonized form of the Masoretic text contains 150 Psalms—the number

now universally recognized. These are believed to be an amalgam of earlier distinct collections, for example:

- The Korahite Psalms (42, 44–49, 84–85, and 87–88), generally credited to the “sons of Korah,” the presumed descendants of the Levite who rebelled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.
- The Psalms of Asaph (50 and 73–83, which bear his name), a Levite whom David is said to have appointed as choirmaster in the Temple service (I Chronicles 6:24).
- The Hallel (praise) Psalms (113–118).
- The *shir hama'alot* Psalms, or “songs of ascent” (120–134), discussed further in the note here to the setting of Psalm 126.

There are also individual Psalms attributed by tradition to, or associated with, other specific biblical personalities. Two Psalms bear Solomon’s name, one is linked to Moses and one each to Heman and Etan, who are identified in Chronicles as appointed by David to leadership roles in the vocal and instrumental aspects of the Temple ritual. And there are forty-nine so-called orphan Psalms, which are accepted as anonymous. These are all in addition to the seventy-three Psalms more directly tethered by tradition to Davidic origin or involvement.

The Psalter is divided into five sections, or books. Those divisions are not necessarily designated by separate sectional headings or subtitles in the original Hebrew. Each of the first four books is concluded with a formulaic doxology (i.e., an incipit common to all four doxologies). The final verse of Psalm 89, for example, which concludes Book III, reads *barukh adonai 'olam amen v'amen* (Worshipped and praised is God unto eternity, amen, and amen). The last book has no such concluding doxology, but concludes with Psalm 150, with its catalogue of musical instruments to be used in praise of God, which is widely regarded as a doxology for the entire Book of Psalms.

It has been proposed that the fivefold division, to which the Midrash alludes in its statement that “Moses gave Israel five books of the Torah, and David gave Israel five books

of the Psalms" (Mid. T'hillim), corresponds by design to the Pentateuch—the Five Books of Moses. Another parallel between the distinct contributions of Moses and David may be drawn from their juxtaposed albeit differentiated origin as mentioned in II Chronicles (8:13–14 and 23:18), where Moses' (the Torah's) provision of the sacrificial scheme is correlated with David's institution of liturgical rites in the Temple to accompany it.

Age of the Psalms

The prevailing view adopted by much 19th-century scientific biblical scholarship assigned the Psalms to a period as late in the history of the religion of ancient Israel as the Maccabean-Hasmonaean era (2nd century B.C.E.), postdating the time of David and the Prophets by many centuries. That stance has been virtually rejected and reversed by 20th-century scholars. Based on refocused considerations of evidence in the Septuagint, on linguistic studies that reveal the absence of Hellenistic poetic-literary or theological influence, and on discoveries and comparative analyses of other ancient Near Eastern poetic literatures that predate ancient Israel altogether, scholars now almost universally allow that the canonization of the Psalms as an integral whole must have occurred well in advance of the 2nd century B.C.E., by which time their importance and popularity must have been long established. In this assessment, then, the composition of the Psalms predates substantially the Second Temple era.

The "Psalms of David": Davidic Authorship

Attribution of the Psalms as a corpus to David is a long-standing adoption in popular tradition. Hence, the frequently heard sobriquet for the entire contents of the Psalter—"Psalms of David"—and the ubiquitous image of "David the Psalmist," notwithstanding the aforementioned groups of Psalms that are accepted as the work of others, and despite the fact that actual authorship even of the so-called Davidic Psalms is expressly credited to David nowhere in the Bible. Seventy-three Psalms carry the designation l'david in their superscriptions, and there is the acknowledged possibility of David's hand in the composition of at

least some of them. But that designation l'david does not in itself provide any certainty about his authorship, since its precise meaning is not entirely clear. Nor does that designation necessarily have the same connotation in every Psalm where it appears. Various proposals put forth with respect to these particular Psalms include a tradition of Davidic authorship, a dedication to David, possible correlations between the contents of certain Psalms and events in David's life, a Psalm as sung or performed by or for David, and a Psalm text and/or musical rendition from the repertoire of one of the guilds of Temple singers that David is said, in post-Exilic biblical literature, to have instituted.

Nonetheless, a popular interpretation of the designation l'david as reflective of actual Davidic authorship of Books I and II (later extended to the remaining seventy-seven Psalms in Books II–V) became rooted early in the history of the Psalter's compilation and canonization. The colophon to Book II, which follows the doxology at the end of Psalm 72, announces that "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." It is worth emphasizing that even that statement does not confirm authorship. Moreover, in a departure from a talmudic interpretation, Rashi, the great medieval commentator, suggested that the colophon might apply only to Psalm 72, not to the first seventy-two Psalms as a unit. He proposed that the Psalms are not presented in the Psalter in any chronological order, and that Psalm 72 was composed by David as a prayer on behalf of Solomon when he appointed Solomon as his successor—becoming David's final Psalm.

A talmudic passage suggests David as a quasi-editor and compiler of the Psalter who culled from various sources, as well as the author of some of its contents: "David wrote the Book of Psalms, including in it the work of the elders, namely Adam, Malchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and three sons of Korah" (B.B. 14b). And another talmudic reference alludes to Davidic involvement in the expressions of praise for God: "All the praises which are stated in the Book of Psalms, David uttered each one of them" (Pes. 117a). Neither statement actually asserts original Davidic author-

ship. Moreover, an outdated assumption—that the Book of Psalms, regardless of authorship, was completed during David's reign—was disputed as early as the Middle Ages by such major commentators as Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Kimchi. For example, the origin of several Psalms was connected to the Babylonian Captivity, which occurred long after David's reign. In any case, it is impossible to ascertain the identity of whoever made the ultimate selection for the compilation, nor more precisely when it was accomplished. It is considered likely that much of the compiling, selection, and editing was done in the time of the scribes who succeeded Ezra and Nehemiah (viz., 4th century B.C.E.).

The traditional association of David with the Psalms and the manner of their musical rendition sits on solid biblical foundations. These include his youthful reputation as an accomplished player of the *kinor* (a stringed instrument, presumably plucked), his role in inventing or devising musical instruments and in composing or singing lamentations, his distinction as a “sweet singer of Israel,” and—perhaps most significant in broader historical terms—the part he played in establishing Jerusalem (and, with it, the Temple and its rituals) as the national and spiritual center of Israel and of the Jewish people—*ir david*, the City of David.

Poetic Structure

To all intents and purposes, the Psalms—as well as biblical Hebrew in general—may be viewed as predating the introduction of metrical Hebrew poetry to Judaic literature. Yet although they cannot be said to embrace meter in the classical or contemporary sense, the subject has been debated for centuries, beginning before the age of modern biblical scholarship. Nor has this issue been free of its share of charlatans. In the 17th century, one Marcus Meibomius claimed that the secrets of biblical Hebrew meter had been “revealed” to him, and he offered to share them if six thousand people presubscribed to copies of his work at a cost of five pounds sterling each. But he was unable to persuade a sufficient number of potential subscribers, and he died without sharing his revelations. John Jebb remarked in 1820 that “posterity may contentedly endure the deprivation.”

In the 19th century, various serious theories emerged—some of them in direct conflict with one another, and some along similar lines as others—which concerned systems of scansion based on enumerations of syllables. It was thought that these scansion might yield a primitive form of meter. These studies stood in contrast to earlier theories based on syllabic stresses and word units. But all such theories have been fraught with reliance on hopelessly hypothetical reconstructions. Efforts at identifying a precise system even of primitive meter in the Psalms are hampered by a lack of critical information. The determined vocalization or vowel deployment in the Masoretic text, upon which we rely, may not in fact always coincide with the actual vocalization and exact pronunciation of the biblical Hebrew poetry in its original state—i.e., at the time of its composition and as represented by the consonant texts.

Whether the Psalms contain any form of meter, and whether their structure can be viewed as a precursor to meter in much later Hebrew poetry, they are nonetheless poetry—in contrast to the clearly prose texts in most of the Bible. And they exhibit poetic structural features, the most significant of which is probably that of internal parallelism—a characteristic that might reflect their composition with the intention of being sung. This parallel structure appears in several forms throughout the Psalms:

- **Synonymic:** where two half-verses contain essentially the same thought or sentiment, expressed in different but complementary words—one half-verse in response to the other.
- **Antithetic:** where an idea or thought is reinforced by two half-verses that oppose each other with contrasting statements, one in response to the other.
- **Synthetic:** where the second of two half-verses responds to the first by completing its statement.
- **Climactic:** where a single idea or thought is augmented and expanded from line to line (or from verse to verse) with a cumulative, unfolding effect.

This system of pairs of balanced half-verses has been shown to resemble other ancient Near Eastern poetry among Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian literatures. Although Psalm verses usually comprise two equal or roughly equal parts, some have three or more divisions. The verses are normally grouped in strophes of equal or nearly equal length.

Temple Psalmody

In effect, the Psalter served as the Temple music manual, songbook, and prayerbook. In addition to the discussion in talmudic, Midrashic, and medieval exegetical literature, modern Judaic as well as objective musicological scholarship confirms that Levitical choral singing of the Psalms to instrumental accompaniment occurred along with the sacrificial ceremonies in the ancient Temple. The musical renditions were complementary to that cult, not part of it: the Psalms contain no information about, and no references to, sacrificial procedures, but they appear to have formed the centerpiece of the aesthetic-spiritual dimension. Their messages of personal experience and human emotions were not necessarily negated by their performance by *de facto* professional musicians—the Levites—nor by their association with the formalized, aristocratic priestly rituals. To the contrary, Temple psalmody may have counterbalanced the more mysterious, anagogical, and symbolic sacrificial system—almost as a tangible reflection of popular expression versus the ultimate patrician manifestation of Israel's religious life at those stages.

Late biblical books, together with some Psalm superscriptions as well as other ancient sources from the region (the 17th-century B.C.E. Annals of Sennacherib, for example), offer some insights into musical matters pertaining to the First Temple, in which choral psalmody can be demonstrated to have played a prominent part. Naturally, thanks to talmudic and other postbiblical descriptions and references, we are in a position to piece together much more about the musical format and practice in the Second Temple, which was inherited from musical models in the First Temple when the service was reconstituted after a forced hiatus of seventy years. Some of these sources offer suggestions about the size, makeup, and training of the Temple choirs, as well as about their performance, although there is dis-

agreement among the rabbis in the Talmud on various related matters (how Hallel was performed, for example). There is ample evidence of antiphonal (two choirs alternating) and responsorial engagement (soloist alternating with choir), which is easily reflective of the parallel structure of the Psalms.

The Superscriptions

Some superscriptions or headings may contain long-forgotten or now obscure instructions and other information pertaining to the musical performance or assigned occasions for their respective Psalms, although interpretation of these superscriptions remains a contested issue among both biblical and musical scholars. Even the simplest purportedly descriptive headings can generate dispute. There is disagreement, for example, concerning the superscriptive *lam'natze'ah*—whether it should be construed essentially as “to the choirmaster” or “to the conductor,” or whether instead it might have referred to a particular song type, to be arranged for those Psalms to which the term is attached.

Other superscriptions appear to refer to particular instruments, of which we can know at most their generic family types or the manner in which they should sound or be played (*n'ginot*, a string instrument, for example). And, apart from instrumental citations, there are other isolated terms in the body of some Psalms that are believed to be musical indications—*higgayon sela* (Psalms 9:17), for example, which some authorities suggest is a direction for a solemn, meditative instrumental interlude, while others believe it to be a call for a “murmuring sound” on the *kinor*. *Higgayon*, in Psalms 92:4, however, is often translated simply as a “solemn sound.” Although various logical and philologically as well as archaeologically grounded propositions have been offered with respect to these matters, few of the terms or references involved can be decoded with absolute precision or certainty. Some of the technical terms might have become obsolete by the time of the Second Temple.

Musical Adoptions and Contrafacts

Among the most puzzling superscriptions are those that appear either to encase some cryptic metaphor or—as some

scholars maintain—to identify some specific known tune or chant to which the attached Psalm should be sung or adapted. Examples include *ayelet hashahar* (lit., “the hind of the dawn,” but often left untranslated) in Psalm 22, and *al yonat elem r’ḥokim* at the head of Psalm 56, which translates as “according to the silent dove of those who are distant” (and which the Targum—the Aramaic translation and version of the Bible—interprets as a metaphorical allusion to the religious faithfulness of Israel even when its people are far away from their own cities). Such superscriptions might even have included text incipits of secular songs for use as contrafacts. That such preexisting musical formats and tune identities were thus indicated in some superscriptions is certainly within the realm of reasonable possibility. That position is reinforced by the knowledge that similar practices existed elsewhere in the ancient world. Still, although it is also known that medieval Hebrew poets often assigned or used recognized tunes for their poems, and although stipulating specific known tunes for song texts has been widely perpetuated in many cultures up through the modern era, there is nothing approaching universal scholarly consensus on this issue with respect to the Psalms.

Musical Reconstruction

Students and scholars of psalmody have, through painstaking comparative considerations and examinations, provided much information about the probable nature, formats, components, and features of the musical rendition of the Psalms in the Temple. This includes matters of range, melismatic versus syllabic articulation, predominance of particular tones (reciting tone, *finalis*, etc.), embellishment, and even aspects of overall ambience. But all of this amounts only to verbal description of the various parameters. It must be emphasized that, especially in the absence of precise musical notation (which, even in much later periods, does not necessarily provide sufficient data for reliable reconstructions anyway), these factors remain more academic and theoretical than artistic or aesthetic.

The same limitations apply to reasonable conjectures based on evidence contained in aspects of psalmody and other chant procedures of the early Church. Some of these

elements may have been borrowed and transferred from Judaic traditions and handed down to us as Church music practices evolved.

Notwithstanding the hoopla surrounding musical practice in the ancient Near East as gleaned from archaeological finds (Ugaritic discoveries, for example, concerning a supposed Hurrian cult song predating the Psalms, and its attempted restoration), any performable reconstruction of Temple psalmody with pretensions to aural authenticity would be a naïvely romantic exercise in futility. Even if we can approximate the rhythmic parameters by assuming that they correspond logogenically to the flow of the words, we cannot ascertain the precise modalities, tones, or ordering and sequencing of those tones in terms of melodic substance. Nor can we reflect the vocal or instrumental timbres. And if, indeed, some of the superscriptions do refer to known melodies or chants of the day, we have only their names. We certainly could not reproduce the melodies themselves.

The Psalms in Hebrew Liturgy

Psalms constitute a principal foundation stone of Hebrew liturgy as it developed during the centuries following the destruction of the Second Temple. Entire Psalms—as well as partial quotations, references, paraphrases, and influences—permeate the traditional prayerbook, in which, whatever liturgical rite is embraced, no other biblical book is so directly, richly, and consistently represented. Singer’s Prayer Book, for example, the Authorized Daily Prayer Book, of the United Synagogue of Great Britain (Orthodox), contains an index of seventy-three Psalms among the various services. And in any typical complete prayerbook there are no fewer than 250 Psalm verses reflected or incorporated in the prayers. Reform prayerbooks, too, are filled with Psalms.

Inclusion of Psalms in the liturgy has been interpreted in part as a resonance of popular identification and involvement—perhaps even demand. A talmudic reference to the recitation of the “daily Psalm” within services states that “the people have adopted the custom of including it” (Sof. 18:1). The eventual pervasiveness of the Psalms within

the statutory or legally required prayers as integral components occurred gradually and incrementally—a process that occupied many centuries. Over time, the surrounding non-obligatory liturgy accumulated individual Psalms as well. There is now no nonstatutory or “special” service that does not include at least one Psalm.

Psalm recitation is not confined to mandatory services. There are surviving customs of reciting the entire Psalter on various occasions, especially as acts of piety by fervently religious Jews. *Hevrot t'hillim*—societies of Psalm reciters—have been part of the religious life of many communities, and in contemporary Jerusalem, such a society comprises two distinct groups that divide between them the recitation of the entire Book of Psalms daily at the Western Wall.

Many echoes of psalmody and retentions of psalmodic stylistic features are found among various non-Ashkenazi traditions, especially those with roots in eastern Mediterranean, Near Eastern, and other communities of the so-called Jewish Orient. However, in many of these traditions, Psalm renditions long ago became artificially metrical, often according to specific syllabic patterns. In some cases this was a result of adaptation to metrical tunes.

The composite extant repertoire of Ashkenazi synagogue music, on the other hand, reflects very little in the way of psalmody, even in compositions for Psalm texts. For the most part, these have been informed by the same stylistic forces that have attended cantorial and choral writing for other texts. A handful of 20th-century Psalm settings, most for nonorthodox synagogues, have been based loosely on assumed psalmodic factors and ambience—for example Heinrich Schalit’s setting of Psalm 23. But these are exceptions. In more recent years, some synagogue composers have become intrigued by aesthetic portrayals of antiquity, and they have exhibited a renewed interest in illustrating the spirit as well as some of the assumed parameters of psalmody in their settings.

The Psalms in Christian Liturgy

The Psalms provided an obvious wellspring of liturgical material for the early Church, dating from the time when 8.559445

it was still perceived as a Jewish sect, although Psalm usage eventually differed between the Eastern and Western rites. In the Church’s initial stages of development, Psalms were adopted for formal worship, and they are believed to have predominated the format in the earliest services. Apart from a few fragmentary bits of earlier evidence, musical notation applicable to Western Church psalmody survives only beginning with the 9th century, as reflected in the earliest Frankish chant books.

In the Roman, or Western, Church, the survival of the tradition of unabridged Psalm singing is most conspicuous in the Office of Vespers (five Psalms); complete Psalms became part of other Offices as well, and of various ceremonies and processions. But in the course of the development of the Mass and other parts of Christian liturgy, Psalms became abbreviated or quoted (sometimes just a single verse). Language, too, was a contributing factor in the divergence of Hebrew and Christian psalmody, since the Church adapted inherited practices to the Latin translation.

In the various Protestant movements, Psalm settings followed the direction in art music development in which the vestiges of psalmody and other chant traditions were largely abandoned. Many composers for the Roman Catholic Church, however, continued for a long time to use aspects of psalmody as bases for their works.

The Protestant Reformation also led to an emphasis on Psalm singing in the vernacular (German, English, and other languages); and to foster congregational or communal singing, metrical versions were created, which often only loosely approximated the original Hebrew. These used strophic melodies that were more like hymn tunes with simple chordal harmonizations. A similar fashion also flourished in 19th- and early-20th-century Reform Jewish worship, both in Germany and in the United States.

Psalms in the Western Classical Music Tradition

With the advent and flowering of polyphony in Europe, artistic Psalm composition proliferated from the 15th century on and became an important feature of the Roman

Catholic Church—in the main following earlier artistic treatment of other parts of its liturgy. Major composers outside its fold, such as Bach, also addressed Psalms as sacred music from artistic perspectives, as in his motets. The history of Psalm composition in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries is intertwined in general with, and in some ways tethered to, the paths of motet and anthem genres during those periods. And English anthems of the time display an abundant reliance on Psalm texts and paraphrases.

Throughout the modern era and into the 21st century, in both functional sacred and secular concert contexts, composers of virtually every stripe and orientation have engaged the Psalms in expressions ranging from large-scale works for chorus, full symphony orchestra, and soloists to a cappella choral pieces, and from vocal and instrumental chamber music to solo songs and even—albeit less frequently—to purely instrumental interpretations, such as solo organ preludes and sonatas, or Krzysztof Penderecki's *Psalmus* (1961), an electronic work. There is probably no stylistic approach, no technical procedure, no composition treatment, no melodic, harmonic, or contrapuntal language—in short, no aspect of Western musical development—from which the Psalms have escaped.

The unrelenting appeal of the Psalms for composers in the mainstream as well as in the avant-garde of Western music in every generation lies in their particular religious spirit and in their transcendent humanistic content. Composers are continually challenged anew by the Psalms' inherent invitation to explore new and even untried expressive possibilities. Those composers with deeply held religious convictions, Judaic or Christian, and those outside religious life alike have confronted the Psalms from strictly Judaic, Christian, spiritually Judeo-Christian, or purely Western literary and cultural perspectives. Some Psalm compositions can be neatly and even exclusively deposited into one or another of those classifications. Other defy categorization and communicate on intersecting planes. Thus, the Psalms may be understood not only as an ecumenical bridge between the two religious traditions—which is no new observation—but, in addition to

their undiminished role in music for worship, as an artistic bridge between sacred and secular music in the evolving and expanding Western canon.

—Neil W. Levin

About the Composers and Their Works

GEORGE ROCHBERG (1918–2005), one of America's most important post-serialists who nonetheless once espoused dodecaphonic orthodoxy, is remembered now as one of the first firmly established American composers to change course midstream during the 1960s and reject both serial techniques and other presumed cerebral approaches to composition. Following his "return" to a modern version of the aesthetics of Romanticism and neo-Romanticism that had been discarded by most composers—especially within the academy—he was often quoted for his conviction that "there can be no justification for music, ultimately, if it does not convey eloquently and elegantly the passions of the human heart." By then he had come to believe that the failure of so much new music in the 20th century was owed, at least in large measure, to its shunning of dramatic and emotional expressiveness in favor of minute "abstract design for its own sake." But even as early as 1959 it would appear that he was seeking to distance himself from the scientific or mathematical connections to composition then fashionable in certain circles. "Music is not engineering," he wrote in a personal letter to a friend and colleague, "and I stick fast to my conviction that music retains a deep connection with existence as we feel rather than think it."

Born in Paterson, New Jersey, Rochberg studied piano as a child. During his teen years, his interests expanded to include jazz and composition, and after earning a degree at Montclair State Teachers College, he studied at the Mannes College of Music, in New York, where George Szell was among his teachers. In 1945, following a hiatus necessitated by his wartime service in the United States Army,

he resumed studies at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia as a pupil of Gian Carlo Menotti and Rosario Scalero—subsequently joining its faculty—and then received a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania, where he later served as a professor until 1983.

In the 1940s Rochberg's music was stylistically imprinted with the influence of Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Bartók. In Rome on a Fulbright scholarship in the early 1950s, through his association with the prominent Italian serial composer Luigi Dallapiccola, he became persuaded of the inevitability of twelve-tone techniques. For about a decade his music was written in that vein and largely bore the expected Schoenbergian stamp in terms of serial procedures and overall nontonal effect. His works from that period include choral settings, chamber music, and his second symphony (1956), whose premiere by Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra scored a major success and confirmed his status as a "serious" modern composer.

Following a period of self-reflection and artistic reassessment in the mid-1960s, in the wake of a calamitous personal loss, Rochberg came to the conclusion (nearly revolutionary for a composer of his milieu) that his future work, in order to have any meaning for him, would have to look back in some ways to the historical development of music and its pre-serialist aesthetics *vis-à-vis* expressivity. Some of his compositions from those years are in effect layered mosaics that draw upon and quote music of other composers, interlaced with his original material and refracted through his creative lens. His chamber work *Contra mortem et tempus* (1965), for example, famously contains quotations from 20th-century composers Pierre Boulez, Edgard Varèse, and Charles Ives. It takes the form of motivic fragments as well as diced and spliced melodic or rhythmic bits whose transformation and reassembling constitute—together with the glue of Rochberg's own musical ideas and developmental devices—an original composition.

By the 1970s Rochberg had effectively abandoned some of the most sacred ideals of the serial procedure adherents

and of their models among the Second Viennese School, declaring that those techniques and their results were "finished, hollow, meaningless" and that they made it "virtually impossible to express serenity, tranquility, grace, wit, energy ..." From the 1970s on, he began to blend modernity and modernism with Romantic elements, ranging—as he freely acknowledged—from purely diatonic sources to extremely complex chromaticism, but always geared toward his goal of achieving "the survival of music through a renewal of its humanly expressive qualities."

Between 1969 and 1987 Rochberg wrote four additional symphonies. The fifth was commissioned to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the city of Chicago, and it received its premiere there by Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Also, in the 1970s, having already written two string quartets during his serial period, he composed five more. Apart from his *Three Psalms*, set in the original Hebrew, Rochberg's Judaically related pieces include *Songs of Solomon* (1946); *David the Psalmist*, for tenor and orchestra (1954); *Sacred Song of Reconciliation* (*Mizmor l'piyus*), for bass baritone chamber orchestra (1970), commissioned for the 1970–71 concert series *Testimonium* in Jerusalem, during which time he was its composer-in-residence; and *Behold, My Servant* (1973), commissioned by the Jewish Theological Seminary.

THREE PSALMS

George Rochberg

Even though Rochberg later disavowed serial procedures *per se* and the overall pantonal, dodecaphonic ethos of the Schoenberg-Berg-Webern-driven orbit, he did produce many arresting works—perhaps even expressive "in spite of themselves" or despite their atonally oriented dissonance—during the period prior to his "conversion." This lends a note of credence to the view that the qualitative merits of a piece of music depend not so much upon which techniques (tonal, nontonal, serial, electronic, or any other) are employed as organizational means to artistic ends, but on how they are used—in what spirit, and with what degree of originality, imagination, and unquantifiable creative instinct.

Rochberg's Three Psalms for mixed chorus a cappella (two of which, Psalms 23 and 150, are included on this recording) was written in 1954, when his attraction and commitment to so-called atonal music was fresh. At that time he had a particular fascination with the creative possibilities offered by hexachords and their manipulations, and he is said to have developed a special affinity with Schoenberg's contributions as a composer and as a Jew. Indeed, in Rochberg's Psalm settings here, one senses the impact of Schoenberg's aesthetics with respect to rhythmic derivations from the stresses and cadences of the biblical Hebrew and to the declamatory choral style, which also characterizes Schoenberg's choral writing in his own setting of Psalm 130 (*De Profundis*, or *mimma'amakim*, in Hebrew). But if Schoenberg's setting served in some ways as the impetus for Rochberg's piece, as he later suggested, his inspiration was also rooted in the Book of Psalms itself. Some forty-five years later, he reflected that he had been "just full of the whole idea of the Psalms, and I wanted to try different ways of expressing them." The work was not commissioned or written for any particular occasion, but was "just something I needed to do." And he chose these three Psalms, including Psalm 43—specifically dedicated to his friend, the composer Hugo Weisgall—for what he intuited as their "emotional, spiritual content."

Amid the dissonant, though still partially tonally anchored, choral textures and linear chordal structures, there are carefully conceived contrapuntal lines that can be identified and traced by the attentive listener.

The setting of the 23rd Psalm, dedicated to Rochberg's parents, reflects its pastoral serenity and its message of comfort and reliance—and, especially at the conclusion of the piece, its stalwart confidence in divine protection, almost as a victory of the spirit over fear and defeat.

The world could spare many a large book better than this sunny little Psalm [Psalm 23]. It has dried many tears and supplied the mould into which many hearts have poured their peaceful faith.

Thus did a respected English Christian Hebraist, Alexander Maclaren, once describe the 23rd Psalm. The Targum (The 1st–2nd century Aramaic translation of the Bible) projects a national parameter onto this Psalm with its reading of the phrase *adonai ro'i lo eš'ar* as referring to "God who fed His people in the wilderness"—a reading that is accepted in some medieval exegeses. But, as other scholars have opined, it may be more appropriate to understand this Psalm (including that phrase, which is usually now translated along the lines of "The Lord is my shepherd; I lack nothing") as the testimony of a personal experience of faith, rather than as an affirmation of collective reliance.

This may be the most familiar of all the Psalms to Christians and Jews alike, and to Western culture as a whole. And it is probably one of the most often quoted texts from the Psalter. Although it is popularly associated with consolation in connection with bereavement and, even in some lay assumptions, with related eschatological assurance—because of its common recitation at funerals and memorial services—it was probably not so conceived. Most commentators interpret it as an avowal of faith in earthly life: steadfastness in the face of emotional, spiritual, or physical trial, and a metaphoric vehicle for courage and confidence in divine protection as a bulwark against succumbing to fear of danger or the gloom of depression.

The shepherd image here is the personification of divine watchfulness, providence, and protection—an image that appears in many other Psalms as well and which is rooted in the Torah (Jacob's reference to "God who has been my shepherd all my life long"; Genesis 48:15) and in Prophets (Isaiah 40:11 and Micah 7:14). It is also found in postbiblical liturgy, such as in the central *piyyut* (liturgical poem) concerning divine judgment on Rosh Hashana and *Yom Kippur*, *un'tane tokef*, wherein God, in this annual judgment of all humans, is likened to a shepherd who has his sheep pass one by one under his staff, a metaphor for considering the record of each person's deeds during the previous year and decreeing his destiny.

"Green pastures" (lit., pastures of tender grass) and "still waters" (lit., waters of restfulness—i.e., that are conducive to restfulness and inner peace, consistent with the overall theme, rather than the mere physical calm of the waters) connote reassurance and faith in the face of anguish, or inner peace in the face of turbulence.

The "valley of the shadow of death" should be understood not necessarily as physical death, but as the presence of real physical danger or the pain of internal struggle (in which case the operative word might be "shadow"). The divinely prepared "table" (i.e., festive enjoyment or celebration) in the midst or full view of such adversaries—internal or external—demonstrates almost defiantly that the speaker or psalmist remains divinely protected even under otherwise precarious circumstances. The oil of anointment has its historical basis in the trappings of privileged feasts in Near Eastern antiquity. And the shepherd's defensive rod, with which attackers may be driven away, and his staff, upon which he may lean for rest or ease while shepherding, are further metaphorical symbols of God's care.

The expected triumphal tone of Psalm 150, dedicated to his brother—with its resounding praise of God and its catalogue of biblical-era musical instruments once employed in ancient Jerusalem to accompany and amplify that praise—is also mirrored in Rochberg's uplifting exposition. Its rhythmic vigor, however, is interspersed and interrupted with a beautifully lyrical element, uncharacteristic of most settings of this Psalm in any era, which generally focus only on the more obvious bombastic sentiment of the text. There are even passages of great delicacy and moments of intimacy, in which the composer seems to be exploring different possible manifestations and moods of praise, while always returning to the Psalm's pervasive jubilation. The resolute open final chord hints at antiquity and appears to emphasize the historical-literary role of this Psalm in concluding the entire Book of Psalms.

Psalm 23—from Three Psalms—was given its premiere at the 20th anniversary of Lazare Saminsky's annual Three-Choir Festival at Temple Emanu-El in New York City on

April 20, 1956 (the year of the work's publication). There is a precedent for a performance of Psalms 23 and 150 as a pair, without Psalm 43, which occurred at the Exposition of Contemporary Music at the University of Cincinnati in 1966. The earliest performance of the entire work also dates to 1966, when it was heard at the Philadelphia Musical Academy—now the University of the Arts.



Throughout his musical life, JACOB DRUCKMAN (1928–1996) was considered one of the most promising and most erudite American composers of his generation. Born in Philadelphia, he studied piano and violin in his youth and also became an accomplished jazz trumpeter. He studied composition with Aaron Copland at the Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood), and with Peter Menin, Bernard Wagenaar, and Vincent Persichetti at The Juilliard School—whose faculty he joined in 1956. He also held teaching positions at Brooklyn College and at Yale, where he became chairman of the composition department in 1976.

Ranging from abstract to theatrical, Druckman's music, which embraced purely instrumental, vocal, and electronic genres and expressions, is known for its dramatic sonic impact. In the 1960s his theretofore neoclassical formal tendencies (his 1950 *Divertimento*, for example) gave way to experimental music for combinations of instruments together with prerecorded electronic parameters and sounds. By the 1970s he was leaning as well toward rich, sometimes extravagant orchestral colors and timbres in his pieces for larger ensembles. At the same time, he was always concerned with well-calculated structure and judicious focus on detail. Indeed, he once described these two sides of his musical personality as "Apollonian and Dionysian"—sides that can sometimes be juxtaposed in a single piece. He also turned to the device of quotation from other, earlier works, which could involve music of such stylistically and chronologically disparate composers as Cavalli (1602–76), Cherubini (1760–1842), M. A. Charpentier (1643–1704), and Leonard Bernstein.

Prism (1980) was probably Druckman's most frequently heard orchestral work. Among his other important pieces are his first large-scale orchestral work, *Windows* (1972), for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music; *Aureole* (1979), commissioned by Bernstein; *Valentine* (1969) for solo contrabass; *Antiphonies* (1963); and *Lamia* (1974).

In 1978 Druckman was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Commenting on his untimely passing, ASCAP president and chairman Marilyn Bergman observed, "American music has lost one of its leading citizens, a greatly talented man who was also an inspired teacher and a determined advocate."

PSALM 93

Jacob Druckman

Druckman's setting of Psalm 93 is excerpted here from the *kabbalat shabbat* (welcoming the Sabbath) section of his full Sabbath Eve Service, "Shir shel yakov," which was commissioned in 1967 by Cantor David Putterman for the twenty-third annual service of new liturgical music at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York. Although *kabbalat shabbat* is actually an independent and self-contained service that begins just prior to sundown, preceding the Sabbath eve service itself, most formal settings of the Friday evening liturgy as artistically unified conceptions treat the *kabbalat shabbat* texts (Psalms and Psalm verses, plus a much later kabbalistic poem, *l'kha dodi*) simply as the opening part of a single Sabbath service. Although Druckman's music of the late 1960s is generally marked by more advanced and experimental sonorities and more progressive compositional techniques, he reverted here—as many composers have done when addressing the liturgy for functional rendition—to a more conservative approach, to which a moderately sophisticated but nonetheless lay congregation could relate.

The employment of Psalm 93 in connection with the anticipation of the Sabbath, and as a prelude to it, may have roots in antiquity that predate the development and canonization of the established Sabbath liturgy. Rabbinical literature contains references that have been cited to sug-

gest that the Psalm was sung every Friday in the Temple in ancient Jerusalem by the Levitical choir. (The Septuagint gives further such evidence in the form of an added superscription that refers to "the day before the Sabbath.") And a talmudic reference (R.H. 31a) appears to place the Friday recitation of Psalm 93 within the context of divine cosmological parameters as set forth in Genesis, wherein God's Creation—the creation of the universe—becomes complete with the creation and emergence of mankind on the sixth day, followed by the divinely ordained Sabbath as, among other things, a sign of completion. Thus, in Judaic theological tradition, God's ultimate sovereignty over mankind—and therefore over the course of human history and events—is firmly and eternally established by the sixth day. That supreme mastery is now added to, and fused with, God's already demonstrated sovereignty over the cosmos—over both time and nature: "The world is firmly, immutably, and long-since [of old] established" (v.1); "You have existed [as sovereign] from eternity—from time immemorial" (v.2).

The opening words of this Psalm constitute a resounding affirmation of divine sovereignty, illustrated poetically in terms of earthly trappings of royalty. At first glance this might seem historically obvious, even tautological, since the concept of divine sovereignty is accepted as one of the foundation stones of Judaic theology. But the actual image of God as King, and its subsequently inspired analogies to humanly conceived regalia—as depicted here (and in the other so-called Enthronement Psalms) through literary evocations of royal robes, the impregnability of fortified girding, and the monarchical throne—may be of more recent vintage in Jewish antiquity than the basic monotheistic principle itself.

The fifth and final verse of Psalm 93, which assures that God's testimonies—His law and teachings—are both true and perfect (*viz.*, sacred) beyond all limitations of time, is interpreted as a deduced consequence of His supremacy as the eternal King. Since His omnipotence and infinite reign are acknowledged as unquestionable certainty, and since it may be assumed that this acknowledgment implies the

resulting benefit to the world, His being and aura may be characterized as the essence of holiness: "Holiness is appropriate to your abode . . ." Thus the opening and closing verses are linked by virtue of their revelation concerning the divine nature: God's ever-enduring and exclusive cosmic supremacy, and the sanctity and perfection of His rule that follows from that truth.

The transparent energy of Druckman's interpretation, which amplifies the Psalm's focus on God's strength as the supreme power, is established by a memorable rhythmic motive that persists throughout the piece. The setting also mirrors the responsorial parallel structure of the text.



URSULA MAMLOK (b. 1923) lived until the age of sixteen in her native Berlin, where she began composing as a child. She studied with Professor Gustav Ernest and Emily Weissgerber. In recent interviews she has recalled her family's mainstream synagogue affiliation and Jewish holy day observances, and she also remembers anti-Semitic slurs against her as a child even prior to the Nazi era. When, during the early years of the National Socialist regime, Jews were excluded from the Hausmusik programs in public schools, her father organized private musicales in their home, for which she wrote music. Following the infamous orchestrated nationwide pogrom in 1938 known as Kristallnacht, the family left Germany for Ecuador—for the American immigration quotas precluded their entry into the United States by that time (1939). But in Ecuador, feeling alienated, her parents became disaffected from Judaism and abandoned Jewish observances and celebrations altogether. "We were angry," she has recalled. "Suddenly all of our family members were in concentration camps or were being murdered, and somehow we didn't feel like celebrating anything."

Eventually, in 1940, the family was able to settle in New York, where she studied with George Szell at the Mannes School of Music for four years. In 1956 she studied composition with Vittorio Giannini at the Manhattan School of Music, where

she received her bachelor's and master's degrees. During that period her music tended to reflect the traditional, tonal approach of Giannini. But her subsequent studies with Roger Sessions—and additional work with such exponents of a more advanced modern musical language as Stefan Wolpe and Ralph Shapey—broadened her harmonic bases and techniques and freed her from complete reliance on conventional tonalities. "It [the music written after those exposures] is probably the same music I wrote before, only with a different technique." She also studied piano with Edward Steuermann, one of New York's leading piano pedagogues of that time, whose pupils included such major concert pianists as Lorin Hollander, Alfred Brendel, and Joseph Kalichstein.

Steuermann had a close association with Arnold Schoenberg, and this also played an influential role in Mamlok's own musical development. She agrees, however, with those who maintain that no music is technically "atonal," even if it may disregard common practice foundations. "My music is colorful, with the background of tonality—tonal centers. . . . I can't shake it completely."

In addition to her Cantata based on the First Psalm, her significant works are her string quartets; *Panta rhei* (Time in Flux), for piano trio (1981); *Der Andreas Garten* (1987), for flute, harp, and mezzo-soprano, to poetry by her husband, Gerard Mamlock; *Grasshoppers* (1956), for solo piano; *Two Thousand Notes* (2000), a millennium celebration; and *Constellations* (1993), commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony. She was honored with a festival and symposium at the Manhattan School of Music in April 2006.

CANTATA BASED ON THE FIRST PSALM

Ursula Mamlok

Psalm 1 has been viewed constructively as essentially man-centered rather than God-centered, in the sense that it provides the quintessentially Judaic path to human righteousness and thus to a good, fulfilling, and ultimately rewarding life. It contains neither the praise for God found in many other Psalms nor petitions for intervention. And there is neither the psalmist's rejoicing nor any lament over

events (Psalm 137, for example). Rather, this Psalm is at its core a divine admonition to man concerning his behavior and actions and the moral and ethical values that must guide his life. The central theme is the Judaic desiderata of the centrality of the Torah—God’s law and teachings—in the daily life of individual people.

It is understood in this Psalm that God is the supreme, omnipotent, and exclusive sovereign of the universe, but the emphasis is on the corollary of that truth—that His teachings are therefore true and perfect as the guide for human life, and that the worthy and truly content ones are those who adhere to them.

One might also view this Psalm as a precursor to a fundamental tenet of later rabbinic Judaism: that the very act of learning the Torah—contemplating it, discussing it, and dwelling on it continually throughout one’s life—not only provides the means to knowledge and wisdom and reveals the practical formula for a righteous and fulfilled life, but also constitutes for its own sake a sacred religious obligation and experience. Such Torah study itself becomes a principal means of communication with God.

Psalm 1 articulates three levels of moral and ethical human failing:

- “Sin”—viz., simple failure to adhere to the truth of God’s teachings and to put them into practice on a daily basis—whether from ignorance or from lack of character and moral strength to resist contrary impulses.
- “Wickedness,” also sometimes translated as “ungodliness,” which signifies the knowing, conscious, willful, and persistent violation of God’s laws and commanded ways.
- “Scornfulness” or “mockery”—considered the worst of all—which applies to those who insolently and deliberately choose evil ways specifically out of scorn for the divine teachings, and who, moreover, take delight in corrupting others and leading them, too, to violate the commandments.

Thus the opening verse proclaims that he who would attain happiness in life is one who avoids (“has not walked in the path of”) and disassociates from the potentially contaminating influences of the wicked, meaning those who have no fear of God and who believe that evil can be pursued with impunity in an earthly daily life from which they assume God to be distanced. And man is cautioned, too, not to expose himself to the ways of less villainous ordinary sinners (viz., the wayward—those who err by straying from God’s mandated path), whose seemingly more benign course may nonetheless have attraction for the average person.

This Psalm encapsulates the theological principle that man, through his choice of behavior, retains control over his destiny to the extent that he accepts God’s teachings. Some commentators have gone further to suggest a type of popular theology in the link here between faith and human progress on a collective level, based on the acknowledgment of this universal moral order. “The Psalm implicitly proclaims unquestioned faith in the power of the individual to transform society,” wrote Nahum Sarna in his scholarly consideration and explication of the text, “no matter how seemingly invulnerable be the forces of evil. This, too, derives from the Torah’s teachings.”

Thus the assurance that the wicked—or the “ungodly”—shall perish is not a celebration of vengeful retribution nor a punitive judgment in a hereafter, but another indication of this Psalm’s concern with earthly life, and a reemphasis on free will. It is by their own doing that the wicked will perish and their ways ultimately fail. Righteous conduct in accordance with divine teaching will prevail, the psalmist reminds us, while evil will be its own undoing.

Psalm 1 belongs to the category generally called “orphan psalms”—those without superscriptions that might serve as some clue to origin or authorship. Together with Psalm 2 it is considered an introduction to the Psalter. Much scholarship leans toward the view that the two originally formed a single text, as has been shown in some earlier versions

of the Psalter, further underscoring the prefatory nature of Psalms 1 and 2 as a summary statement of the Torah's supremacy as the godly way of life.

Cantata based on the First Psalm is probably Mamlok's only work conceived and intended as a Judaic expression. "I wrote it to express that spiritual side of me," she has observed, "which may not be apparent in my other music." Written in 1958 while she was still working with Giannini, it nonetheless represents the beginnings of her transition from more traditionally tonal music to extended tonality. "It is quite dissonant in its choral structures," she explains, "but it is essentially in major—even with a key signature, which few serious composers were employing anymore then. I got interested in twelve-tone music only afterwards." She set the Psalm to the English translation in the Authorized Version (King James), with some minor word substitutions to suit the flow of her vocal lines, only because she felt that her lack of knowledge of Hebrew would hinder her musical interpretation if she attempted to grapple with the original language. Despite its tonal underpinnings, the work displays her chromatic propensities as well as her contrapuntal skill. Although the organ part is an important parameter, much of the piece has an a cappella choral flavor, and the texture varies. The accompaniment is absent in certain parts, while at other times it takes over. And the choral passages give way to smaller groupings of soloists. Although composed more than forty years before the Milken Archive recording, this piece never received a public performance. The present recording constitutes its world premiere.



For nearly a half century, YEHUDI WYNER (b. 1929) has been recognized as one of America's most gifted composers. Although born in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, he grew up in New York City. By the age of four or five, he began improvising short pieces, and while a piano student of Loni Epstein at The Juilliard School, he became increasingly

attracted to composition, which he then studied at Yale with Richard Donovan and Paul Hindemith, and at Harvard with Randall Thompson and Walter Piston. After completing his undergraduate work, he spent a summer in residence at the Brandeis Arts Institute in Santa Susana, California, a division of the Brandeis Camp, where the music director was Max Helfman (1901–63), one of the seminal figures in Jewish music in America. There, Wyner came into contact with some of the most creative and accomplished Israeli composers of that period, and he was profoundly affected by the founder and director of the institute, Shlomo Bardin, whom he credits with instilling in him and his fellow students there a fresh appreciation for Jewish cultural identity.

In 1953 he won the Rome Prize in composition and spent three years at the American Academy in Rome. Since then he has garnered many other honors—including two Guggenheim Fellowships and commissions from the Koussevitsky and Ford Foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. In 1998 he received the Elise Stoeger Award from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for his lifetime contributions to chamber music, and he has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Wyner joined the faculty of Brandeis University in 1986 and held the Naumburg Chair in Composition there from 1990 until his retirement. Previously he taught for fourteen years at Yale University, where he was head of the composition faculty, and was dean of music at the Purchase campus of the State University of New York. He was on the chamber music faculty of the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood from 1975 to 1997, and he has been a visiting professor at Cornell and Harvard universities. He has been both a member (keyboard artist) and conductor of the Bach Aria Group since 1968, and he is the leading pianistic interpreter of his father's (Lazar Weiner) vast body of Yiddish lieder.

Wyner's catalogue includes a diverse array of orchestral chamber, choral, incidental theatrical, and solo vocal and instrumental works. Many of his important pieces have been

informed by Jewish experience and heritage. They include Dances of Atonement for violin and piano (1976); another synagogue work, a Torah Service (1966) for chorus, two trumpets, horn, trombone, and double bass; and his single foray into solo Yiddish song, *S'iz nito kayn nekhtn*, a folksong setting described by Wyner as "a transformation of a setting—a rather radical setting in the Bartók manner." In 2006 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his piano concerto.

MA TOVU and SHIRU LADONAI:

PSALM 96

Yehudi Wyner

Wyner's *Ma tovu* and *Shiru Ladonai*—Psalm 96 are two movements of his twenty-movement Sabbath Eve Service, which Cantor David Putterman commissioned for his 1963 annual service of new liturgical music at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York. That event also coincided with the congregation's celebration of Cantor Putterman's thirtieth anniversary of his ascension to its pulpit.

Ma tovu (lit., How lovely [are your dwellings]. . .) is the text incipit of a prayer traditionally recited by Ashkenazi Jews upon entering the synagogue. (Among Sephardi Jews the custom is to recite Psalm 5:8 for this purpose.) The text is a pastiche of Psalm verses (5:8, 26:8, 69:14, and 95:6), preceded by an introductory quotation from *bamidbar* (Numbers 24:5). Talmudic interpretation equates the reference to "tents" and "dwellings" in this verse from Numbers with synagogues and schools (*Sanh.105b*). The phrase *et ratzon* (time of grace) in Psalm 69:14 is held to signify the time of communal worship (*Ber. 8a*). The text of *ma tovu* generally appears as a prefatory passage in the traditional Ashkenazi daily prayerbook, prior to the preliminary prayers of the morning service. But it is also commonly associated among American (and Western) Jewry with formal Sabbath eve worship, as an introductory rendition leading into the *kabbalat shabbat* (welcoming the Sabbath) service. In some congregations it is also sung as a prelude to other evening services—Festivals and High Holy Days.

The evidence contained in 19th-century European notated cantorial and synagogue choral sources (manuscript as well as printed) suggests that formal vocal rendition of *ma tovu* as a prelude to *kabbalat shabbat* was a musical innovation by the first learned Emancipation-era cantor-composers in German-speaking Central and western Europe. This probably reflected new prayerbook formats there, not only for specifically Reform worship, but also for modernized but traditional-leaning synagogues (Liberale, or "moderate reform") of the mainstream. Choral settings of *ma tovu* for this liturgical function were most likely introduced in Vienna by the pioneer modern cantor Salomon Sulzer (1804–1890), and were followed shortly afterward in Berlin—with even greater impact on the subsequent aggregate repertoire in the West—by Louis Lewandowski (1821–94). (Even the most prolific cantor-composers in eastern Europe—apart from those in certain cosmopolitan settings who sought to emulate western models late in the 19th century—ignored the *ma tovu* text altogether when composing for the Sabbath liturgy.) Thereafter the practice was transferred to America, where the text was included as a preamble to Sabbath worship in many prayerbooks, and where it became a standard (though by no means mandatory or exclusive) musical overture to formal Sabbath eve worship—in many orthodox as well as most midstream traditional and Reform synagogues. Cantorial-choral settings of *ma tovu* have also been used frequently in America as preludes for nonliturgical occasions such as public and civic celebrations, and even for wedding ceremonies.

Psalm 96 (*shiru ladonai shir hadash*—Sing to the Lord a New Song), adopted in the canonization of the liturgy as the second component of the *kabbalat shabbat* service, is also categorized as one of the Enthronement Psalms. Like Psalm 93 (discussed above with reference to Jacob Druckman's composition), it addresses the concept of God as supreme and eternal cosmic King. In its instruction to "Declare His glory among the nations," it transcends the historical relationship of God to Israel by underscoring His sovereignty over all peoples; and it emphasizes the divine attributes of justice

and fairness. God is described here in universal terms as the “true judge” who, as the essence of righteousness and the instrument of salvation, will ultimately judge all. In addition to the images of divine strength and power in Psalm 93, this Psalm projects the notion of beauty onto God’s embodiment of perfection and holiness (b’hadrat kodesh).

Wyner exercised complete artistic freedom—motivically, harmonically, and modally—in composing his service. He deliberately chose neither to employ nor to follow the established Ashkenazi prayer modes (nusah hat’filla) that are historically applicable to parts of this liturgy; and he did not observe consciously any preexisting musical strictures. The work as a whole displays—and the musical ideas are advanced by—a rich blend of contemporary idioms along with the composer’s own brand of mid-20th-century musical language. Yet there is an almost uncanny feeling of spiritual connectedness in terms of an aggregate Ashkenazi tradition. Solo vocal lines are at times logogenic, yet remarkably expressive, and the service is awash in references to biblical cantillation motifs—the one traditional source upon which Wyner did draw consciously and liberally to provide historical linkage. But these motifs are used freely, even sometimes arbitrarily, as musical subject matter rather than as required formulaic patterns. Other devices that contribute to a Hebraic flavor are the astute juxtaposition of open fifths and other intervals—more suggestive of antiquity than of conventional triadic harmony—and syncopated rhythms of an eastern European folk character.

Despite its artistic freedom, Wyner has acknowledged that this service probably does bear the subconscious imprint of traditional character, which he feels he absorbed during his youth from cantors who came to his home to coach Yiddish songs with his father: “The traditionalism of this service stems more from absorbed experience than from applied method.”

In his preface to the published version, Wyner explained that he had tried to create “an expression of directness and intimacy, relevant to the modest, undramatic conduct of worship in the traditional synagogue.” To that end, he gave the

voices “absolute primacy,” relegating the accompaniment to the role of “punctuation and color.” And he deliberately kept the forms simple, with minimal elaboration. “Indeed, were it possible to further reduce the texture to a single line of adequate strength,” he wrote, “I would gladly do so; for I am more interested in the image than in its elaboration—the bare theme more than its variation and extension.”

For a long time Wyner resisted what he called “the temptation to detach this music from its synagogue function” by bringing it to the concert hall; and thus he declined at first to orchestrate it. Had he intended the work to be performed as a cantata or oratorio, he explained in a subsequent interview, he would have designed the structure, dramatic flow, and connection between movements quite differently. However, he eventually came to view the religious and potential concert contexts of the work as not necessarily mutually exclusive, recognizing the spiritual possibilities in performance outside the synagogue. He thus orchestrated the service for chamber orchestra in 1991, and that version received its premiere in 1992 at Brandeis University, conducted by his wife, Susan Davenny Wyner.

The flow of the ma tovu movement is guided by an ancient responsorial format. Shiru ladonai evokes ancient psalmody as well, which is recast here in contemporary and imaginative guise. But there is no loss of the text’s transparency in this setting, which mirrors the structural properties and cadences of the Psalm verses.



MIRIAM GIDEON (1906–1996) was born in Greeley, Colorado, where her father was a Reform rabbi. Her interest in composition—began in childhood as an ancillary, experimental, and almost private activity—soon became the primary focus of her creative energies. At Boston University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree with a major in French literature and a minor in mathematics, Gideon continued to study music, and she returned to New York after graduation with a view toward a career in public school teaching. But the urge to compose absorbed her more and more.

One of the most important imprints on Gideon's future was her private study, for several years during her late twenties, with the now fabled émigré Jewish composer from Russia, Lazare Saminsky. Saminsky was then the music director and organist at New York's Temple Emanu-El. After a few years of private lessons, he suggested that Gideon study with the esteemed American composer and composition teacher Roger Sessions, who had been a pupil of Ernest Bloch's. Gideon worked with Sessions for eight years, gradually developing her distinctive and deeply expressive combination of extratonal and pantonal idioms that would define her music thereafter. In 1946 she earned her master's degree in musicology from Columbia University, but even before matriculation she began teaching at Brooklyn College. The eminent composer and intellect Hugo Weisgall, the chairman of the faculty at the Jewish Theological Seminary's Cantors Institute and Seminary College of Jewish Music (now the H. L. Miller Cantorial School), invited her to teach there, and thus began a fruitful, rewarding, and mutually beneficial affiliation for some forty years. Weisgall became a fervent champion of her music, and in 1970 she earned her doctorate (Doctor of Sacred Music) from the Seminary under his guidance.

Like Weisgall, Gideon had a particular affinity for literature and its expression as vocal music, saying that she was "moved by great poetry and great prose almost as much as by music." She was especially prone to set literature in the context of vocal chamber music—voice with small instrumental ensembles—in which the vocal line often functions as one of the instruments. Even more remarkable was her fondness for dual-language and even multilingual settings.

Her first Jewish work was her English setting of Psalm 84—known liturgically in its original Hebrew as *Ma tov bu* but composed and published by her as *How Goodly Are Thy Tents*. Written for women's voices, it won the Ernest Bloch Choral Award in 1947. Then came her first Hebrew setting—*Adon olam*—in 1954, commissioned and premiered by Hugo Weisgall at the Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore. Three *Masques* for organ followed in 1958,

commissioned by composer and virtuoso organist Herman Berlinski. Gideon based that work on cantillation motifs for the annual Purim rendition of the Book of Esther.

Gideon's two Jewish magna opera, however, are unquestionably her two artistically sophisticated Sabbath services. The first, for Sabbath morning, *Sacred Service* (for the Sabbath), was commissioned in 1971 by The Temple in suburban Cleveland. This work was scored for baritone and tenor soloists, with mixed chorus and an ensemble of six wind and string instruments together with organ.

Her second service, comprising principal elements of the liturgies for *kabbalat shabbat* and Sabbath eve (*ma'ariv*), is titled *Shirat Miriam L'shabbat*. Commissioned and premiered by Cantor David Putterman for the annual Friday evening service of new music at New York's Park Avenue Synagogue in 1974, it is scored more conventionally for tenor cantor, mixed choir, and organ. In fashioning this service, Gideon accepted some of Cantor Putterman's well-meant advice to consider tradition a bit more than she had done in her first service so that the work would stand a better chance of a life afterward.

Taken together, these two services demonstrate her refined craft, her ability to express emotional depth and strength with subtlety, and the power of her exquisite economy. Gideon was fond of relating how, upon hearing her *Seasons of Time*, a critic once remarked to her that he had "never heard so many right notes."

Gideon felt that defined considerations of sonorities and technical devices wrongly mask the more important matters of emotional impulses—with which she believed there was insufficient concern in postwar 20th-century music. She cautioned that many composers were so eager to demonstrate facility that they didn't allow themselves to become personally involved in their own music. "As far as I am concerned," she said, "I must see whether what I am writing comes from a musical impulse, and whether I am responding to it. What I write has to mean something to me.... It has to seem new. I have to be surprised by it, and it must register as feeling."

"I didn't know I was a woman composer until 'the movement' in the 1960s," she reminisced in the mid-1980s. "I knew I was a young composer, and then, suddenly, an older composer. But never a woman composer."

MA TOVU and PSALM 93 (Adonai Malach)

Miriam Gideon

Like the selections here by Druckman and Wyner, Miriam Gideon's *Ma tovu* and *Psalm 93* are also excerpted from a full Sabbath eve service—in this case her *Shirat Miriam L'shabbat* (Miriam's Song of the Sabbath). The work was her first musical expression of the *kabbalat shabbat* (welcoming the Sabbath) and Sabbath evening liturgies as a unified artistic statement. Without compromise to originality or sophistication, she turned to a few sources of perceived as well as genuine Jewish musical tradition as a foundational frame of reference. These sources consisted of biblical cantillation motifs for certain sections; some melodic material and tunes that were familiar, especially then, to American congregations and were regarded as "traditional"—which she then treated judiciously with her own harmonic vocabulary; and aspects of Ashkenazi prayer modes and modal formulas (*nusah hat'fila*), which she used not as a confining limitation, but more as an underpinning in certain prayers for original melodic exploration. At the same time, she appropriately reserved some prayers for completely free invention, and she made astute and imaginative use of quartal harmony in several passages.

The *ma tovu* setting exhibits refreshing directness and transparency in the vocal lines and an almost deceiving brand of expressive simplicity. There is about the piece as a whole an aura of gentle lyricism that beautifully amplifies the opening sentiment of the text, and there is a controlled delicacy in the choral writing.

Gideon's interpretation of *Psalm 93* preserves the energy of its affirmation concerning divine sovereignty, which is established in the opening measures. The overall clarity seems designed to exploit the energy of the linguistic sonorities. Homophonic textures and careful manipulation of choral unisons exude power and strength.

"A work totally at ease with itself" is how musicologist and critic Albert Weisser described the entire service in a review following its premiere. That assessment applies equally to these two excerpts on their own merits.



A well-established figure in a variety of forms of American popular music, MARTIN KALMANOFF (b. 1920) probably remains nonetheless most famously associated with his hit song "Just Say I Love Her" (1950, in collaboration with Jimmy Dale, Sam Ward, and Jack Val). His complete catalogue of popular songs, which also comprises such other commercially successful titles as "A Night to Remember," "At a Sidewalk Penny Arcade," and "My Dream House," is represented in more than 200 recordings by a broad list of performers that includes such singers as Dean Martin, Steve Lawrence, and Elvis Presley. Born in Woodmere, New York, where his father was one of the founders of Temple Beth-El, Kalmanoff came to popular music armed with a solid classical music education at Harvard, where he studied with Walter Piston and received his bachelor's and master's degrees. His principal instrument was the piano, and he supported himself early on by accompanying, conducting, and playing the organ at Temple Beth-El.

Kalmanoff's more than fifty musical theater works embrace many operas and operatic-type pieces—a number of which are for children's performances—ranging from one-act to full-length productions. Yet his oeuvre is not limited to popular songs or musical theater, and his art songs include a cycle on poetry by Emily Dickinson. In the realm of Judaically related music, in addition to his theatrical presentations such as *The Victory at Masada* and his children's opera about King David (*King David and David King*), he has composed for the Hebrew liturgy. His full Sabbath service, *The Joy of Prayer* (1980), was written for Temple Emanu-El in New York, later performed at the Kennedy Center, and recorded with baritone Sherrill Milnes as the cantorial soloist.

Kalmanoff's *The Lord Is My Shepherd* was written in 1951. He approached this English version of the text of Psalm 23 in the vein of a romantic 19th- early 20th-century operatic aria rather than as a strictly liturgical expression per se—although nothing in its richly melodious exposition necessarily precludes liturgical use in certain synagogue settings. It captures the quiet drama and steadfast faith inherent in the Psalm.



PHILIP GLASS (b. 1937) is most commonly and eponymously perceived as the avatar of what has come to be known—aptly or not—as “minimalism” in music. If that cliché is partly the result of overly simplistic categorization, or of a less than accurate historical association, both Glass and composer Steve Reich—although their achievements may not necessarily be related—are often recognized in popular assumption as the two most visible exponents of that cognominal minimalist school. The term, however, which Glass rejects as a general rule, was coined by Michael Nyman as a way of writing about (i.e., after the fact), not composing, music. It is rarely used by the composers to whom it is frequently applied. Glass has acknowledged—probably for want of any preferable nomenclature—that the term can provide a convenient descriptive tag for a particular artistic approach and type of music with certain distinctive features. Still, he underscores that it applies, at most, to his earlier work from the 1960s and 1970s.

However one labels Glass's emblematic and easily recognizable style and overall sound—which has been much parroted, counterfeited, and even sonically satirized—his music found its principal resonance for a long time among pop and so-called crossover and fusion audiences, as well as among some new music aficionados. In recent years it has become increasingly familiar and attractive to elements among more conventional chamber music, symphony, and opera audiences. Yet to many listeners, when his works are considered in the aggregate, there are at the core some clearly discernible shared traits associated with the minimalist rubric. And

to some ears, these traits connect his earlier pieces with his far more complex and expansive later ones.

One of the keys to appreciating Glass's music, and that of those who have followed in his path, is the principle of continuous repetition—either of a simple motive or pattern, or of a single pitch (or dwelling on that pitch)—a practice anchored in many ancient cultures. “The short definition of minimalist music,” wrote Emily Pollard in her 2001 article “Philip Glass: Minimalist and So Much More,” is music that “combines repetition with such techniques as phasing, mass transposed layering, and mass accenting of isolated tunes.”

These and other emblematic features—such as a continuous beat or pulse and an aura of austerity—can have a pervasive hypnotic effect. This is reminiscent not only of Eastern musics and meditative aesthetics and states, but also—if less directly and more translucently—of early psalmody and chant in the course of Western sacred music.

Glass was born in Baltimore, where he began playing the flute as a child. While studying mathematics and philosophy at the University of Chicago (an early entrant at the age of fourteen), he started composing seriously. He earned his master's degree in composition from The Juilliard School and then studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. In Paris, he became fascinated with classical Indian music through his work with the famous Indian musician and sitar player Ravi Shankar, whose artistry was then becoming known internationally through concerts and recordings—especially in duo performances with one of the most celebrated American (and subsequently British) violinists of the century, Yehudi Menuhin. That experience—in tandem with travels on the Asian subcontinent and his even wider exposure to Indian, Tibetan, and other such non-Western traditional musics and religious philosophies—had a lasting effect on Glass's work and on the way he thought about music henceforth, and he became a Tibetan Buddhist.

At the core of his new musical sensibility and technique were his experiments with incrementally additive rhythmic and pitch schemes. This type of additive progression

was in itself perceived by some listeners as bespeaking a degree of Indian or Tibetan influence. Together with some of the repetitive and lean properties that are now generally understood as part of the minimalist sobriquet, it could produce an overall effect that spelled—as it could have been expected to do—sheer monotony to uninitiated audiences. But others found it not only refreshingly new, but also an intriguing reflective experience. “Almost anorexic music” was how one critic described it, allowing nonetheless that although it puzzled some, it also fascinated others. Another observer found “something haunting, even mystical sounding in Glass’s complex simplicity.” Eventually his music found a large following.

Deepened interest in Glass’s music among certain American audiences in the 1960s and 1970s may have been a function of their expanded awareness of Eastern and West Asian cultures. At least to some extent, those cultural and aesthetic discoveries owed their genesis to the explorations of the “counterculture” of that era—many of whose disaffected students and other young people turned to the East for spiritual inspiration, and some of whom were drawn to the pursuit of mind-altering or trancelike states and hypnotic experiences, including those induced by certain non-Western musics. Some degree of that ripple effect was inevitable, as that counterculture’s curiosity about Eastern aesthetics and sensibilities spilled over to broader segments of the public, including more mature generations. But it was Glass—and then Reich and their disciples—who, more than any other classically trained composers who preceded them, channeled those newly widened cultural vistas into music that, however strong its Eastern influences might have been, became an acknowledged part of 20th-century American (and thus Western) music. Yet Glass has been quoted as rejecting credit for having invented minimalism. “It was in the air,” he has observed, probably aptly, about that era. “It was bound to happen.”

Nor is the debt owed entirely to the East. Some influences are largely American, such as elements of post-1950s jazz

and jazz fusions that assimilate African components, as well as popular phenomena such as Bob Dylan, with his use of draw-out droning effects. Influences have also been discerned in native African percussion traditions and from Balinese gamelan music, in which repetition is mediated by timbral changes. And although they cannot be considered influences per se, there are analogous proclivities toward such repetition to be found in old non-Ashkenazi Judaic musical traditions—for example, Yemenite and other Near Eastern Jewish psalmody and biblical cantillation.

Despite his voluminous work in the late 1960s and early 1970s, much of it written for his own Philip Glass Ensemble, Glass’s quasi-operatic and innovative stage spectacle *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) is generally cited as his springboard to serious international attention. Widely regarded as a landmark in the emergence of a new, so-called postmodern musical theater, the work—which lasts more than five hours without intervals (the audience was invited to engage in ingress and egress at will during performances)—is built around a “text” consisting of numbers, *solfège* syllables, whispered effects, and some cryptic poems. Its success led to a commission for the choral opera *Satyagraha* (1980), to a libretto taken from the Indian philosophical and quasi-religious treatise the *Bhagavad-Gita* (represented as Gandhi’s guidebook), performed in its original Sanskrit.

A number of operas and other theater pieces followed, including *Akhnatan* (1984), *The Juniper Tree* (1985), and *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1988). The gargantuan *Symphony no. 5* (1999) in twelve movements (for solo voices, mixed and children’s choirs, and large orchestra) uses texts drawn from what Glass describes as various “wisdom traditions.”

Although repetition, continuously pulsating rhythms, and other parameters associated with the minimalist school have remained the hallmark of his style, Glass’s later music is also infused with larger and more expressive melodic constructs and effects, fuller harmonic language, and expanded instrumental colors.

Glass's setting of Psalm 126 was commissioned by the American Symphony Orchestra for a special concert at New York's Lincoln Center in 1998 marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel—a concert held for the benefit of the Jerusalem Foundation and conducted by Leon Botstein. The piece is scored for narrator, who recites the Psalm verses; chorus, which is confined to wordless syllables; and orchestra. The music employs repeating sequences of diatonic harmonies and steady rhythmic pulsation.

Psalm 126 belongs to the category generally identified as *shir hama'alot* Psalms, or "songs of ascent," from the supercription common to this group of fifteen Psalms, 120–134. Various historical explanations have been proposed for the supercription, none of which is universally accepted in the world of biblical scholarship. These have included a suggested link to the fifteen steps ascending from one court to another in the ancient Temple, upon which the Levites are said to have stood while singing with instruments during a ceremony of the Festival of Sukkot; an internal poetic device concerning ascending degrees of emphasis; common origin in the return from the Babylonian captivity, as the freed Israelites "ascended" toward Jerusalem while singing these Psalms; and the mass processions proceeding "up to" Jerusalem on each of the three pilgrimage Festivals (Sukkot, Pesah, and Shavuot), during which these Psalms might have been sung by the pilgrims as they ascended Mount Zion. This last supposition has become the most frequently adopted explanation, despite some unresolved problematic issues. This does not, however, necessarily rule out the 126th Psalm's possible connection to the return from Babylonia.

The national parameters of Psalm 126 are transparent, apart from any possible ritualistic or Festival-related history. It has also been viewed on its own merits as a hymn of national thanksgiving and rejoicing over the restoration of Israel's fortunes as a people. By custom, Psalm 126 is sung as a prelude to the *birkat hamazon* (benedictions, or "grace" after meals) on Sabbaths and other holy days in many traditions.



DONALD WAXMAN (b. 1925) was born in Steubenville, Ohio, but grew up in Baltimore, where his family relocated when he was a young child. He began his musical studies at the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied piano, cello, and composition with Elliott Carter. At The Juilliard School, where he earned his bachelor's degree, he was a composition student of Bernard Wagenaar's. In the early 1950s he and his wife, pianist Jho Waxman, founded a music school in Nyack, New York, and around the same time he became assistant conductor of the nearby Hudson Valley Orchestra. He was also a music editor at Galaxy Music in New York, a publishing firm that focused on American music. When Galaxy was sold, in 1990, he and his family moved to Boca Raton, Florida, which remains their home.

Waxman has composed music in a variety of forms. His catalogue includes many pieces for piano and piano ensembles, voice, chorus, and symphony and chamber orchestras. He has written several hundred piano pedagogical pieces.

He characterizes his harmonic language and melodic structures as basically tonal, "moving in a sort of Stravinsky-Milhaud orbit." Waxman has received a Guggenheim Fellowship (1964), a Klemm composition prize, and the Delius Society first prize, and in 1989 he was awarded a gold medal as the first American composer-in-residence at the Kang Nung Music Festival in Korea.

PSALMS AND SUPPLICATIONS

Donald Waxman

The genesis of Waxman's Psalms and Suplications was an invitation in 1953 by journalist Ben Hecht to write a work in celebration of the upcoming (1954) tercentenary of American Jewry. The occasion was a concert—over which Hecht would be presiding—commemorating the first lasting Jewish settlement in North America in 1654. But the inspiration for the particular texts Waxman chose, and for the ultimate form of the work, was ignited by his dis-

covery of the book *Language of Faith* (edited by Nahum Glatzer), a series of freely creative, imaginative, and liberal poetic translations of—and in some respects poetry based on—Hebrew liturgical texts, Psalms, and other biblical stories and passages by Jacob Sloan. Although familiar with these texts from their standard translation, Waxman was intrigued by Sloan's interpretations, which, for him, amplified their internal poetry. And he was suddenly reawakened to a sense of personal pride in the sophisticated literary accomplishments of Jewish antiquity. He selected four items from the book for his work: a text drawn from the evening liturgy for Yom Kippur ("Evening Prayer for the Day of Atonement"), Psalms 23 and 24, and "Jonah's Prayer from the Belly of the Whale," taken from the biblical Book of Jonah, two of which are recorded here. He scored the work for tenor and small orchestra, and in 1994 he expanded it to incorporate a small chorus as well as a fifth poetic setting from the same book, drawn from Sephardi liturgy. "To have contributed in music," he later wrote concerning this work, "even if in the humblest of ways, to that poetic tradition was and still is my affirmation of my faith."



"Every masterpiece is a work of religious music," insisted RALPH SHAPEY (1921–2001), one of the most original, fearlessly dynamic, outspoken, and provocative—as well as proudly difficult—composers in the elite pantheon of serious American composers of the second half of the 20th century. "My credo," he was fond of declaring whenever the subject of religious conviction was broached and whenever he was asked how his solid Jewish identity affected his music, "is simple:

- All great art is a miracle.
- The music must speak for itself.
- Great art is a mystery and creates—is—magic.
- That which the mind of mankind can conceive will be done, to paraphrase sentiments in the Talmud.
- A work of art must transcend in order to be art.

- Artist: He [God] filled him with the breath and spirit of God—of the Creative Force—with wisdom, knowledge, discerning insight, and physical knowing, to paraphrase sentiments found in the Torah, in b'reshit (Genesis)."

Expanding on that credo, he would often assert that "listening to the masterpieces of music from any period, it's as if they were written yesterday. How could any human being do these things? This is magic, this is mystery, this is beyond belief."

Although he never concerned himself with functional liturgical music, faith was central to Shapey's artistic commitment on many levels. "Do I write Jewish music? I haven't the slightest idea what kind of music I write. . . . It's a human experience. And Jewish is part of human experience for me because I am a Jew. It all relates to the question of individual faith . . . faith in humanity, faith in existence. I write music that I hope will give my audience a sense of eternity, excitement, and being part of the 'Creative Force' with which we are all involved, to greater or lesser extents. We creators, we artists, are fortunate in having discovered our personal link with the Creative Force."

Shapey was born in Philadelphia to immigrant parents from the Czarist Empire. He began violin lessons at the age of seven and then pursued conducting, becoming the conductor of the Philadelphia National Youth Symphony by the age of sixteen. In 1938 he embarked on composition studies with Stefan Wolpe, but his formal education ended with his graduation from high school. "I don't have a damned [expletive deleted] degree to my name," he often boasted with pride, especially after he had attained the rank of full professor at one of the most intellectually rigorous and prestigious universities in the world. A few chamber and solo pieces date from the late 1940s in New York, but he did not fully reach his stride as a composer until the mid-1950s, by which time he had become deeply impressed by the abstract expressionist movement in art—not least through his associations with art critics and important painters of the period, such as Willem de Kooning and Jack Tworok.

His works from the late 1950s and early 1960s already betray that artistic influence, which manifested itself in his own self-developed system of nontonal harmonic language and in his propensity toward vigorous gestures. Shapey taught nearly three decades at the University of Chicago, where he also founded the Contemporary Chamber Players—an extraordinary ensemble that presented and often premiered some of the most difficult and complex 20th-century music under his baton.

For audiences with clearly defined partialities to traditionally tonal, diatonic, and conventional melodic expression, Shapey's music can pose a fierce challenge; and it has been frequently but simplistically cast under the erroneously monolithic atonal/twelve-tone umbrella. "An assault on the senses" was one reaction to the premiere of one of his most complicated, boisterous, and unabashedly taxing orchestral pieces. But on another level, without compromise to his nontonal or pantonal aesthetic, much of his music has, at the same time, a lyrical quality as well as a romantic sweep, even if it may require a measure of preparation and perhaps repeated hearings to appreciate those aspects. In fact, he acknowledged that the label "radical traditionalist" applied to him by critics was indeed apt. "I am not a twelve-tone composer in the true sense of that term," he explained during a Milken Archive film interview in 1997 for its Oral History Project:

I use twelve tones—set up a row. But to me, that's a chromatic scale used in a certain way . . . in which the aggregate form of those twelve tones has common tones all over the place. . . I can go anywhere I want because of the common tones. I refuse to be bound by any traditional laws, tonal or nontonal. . . To me a system is simply a means of organization—then I do whatever I want with that system. Rules are made to be broken. . . . And, yes, I'm the judge. . . . later on, there are [other] judges. . . . I'm called an atonal composer. I don't know what that means. I'm a contrapuntalist.

Shapey always took delight in his image as the "bad boy" of what was, during much of the third quarter of the 20th

century, the avant-garde of intellectually driven music. He was convinced that artists must be people of their own time—that if Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven were alive in 1980, they would have been writing not as they had done, but as composers of their 20th century. "I am a man of my century—I can't go backward," he insisted. He dubbed the neoclassicists "wrong-note composers," and he called minimalism "the music of boredom." And regarding tonality: "The great masters did marvelous things in the tonal system. No one can do what they've done with it. So let it rest in peace."

Among his important Judaically inspired works in addition to Psalm II are *The Covenant* (1977), for soprano solo and sixteen players; *O Jerusalem* (1974–75), for soprano and flute; *Praise* (1962–71), an oratorio for bass baritone solo, double chorus, and chamber ensemble; and *Trilogy*, based on the biblical Song of Songs (three cycles, 1979–80).

Shapey received one of the highly coveted (and monetarily significant) MacArthur Foundation grants—the so-called genius awards—in 1982 (although when he received the notifying call, he assumed it was a prank and slammed down the receiver with one of his famous epithets). But he is more likely to be remembered for the prize he did not get—the 1992 Pulitzer Prize in music—and the international furor the incident generated in the world of the arts. That year, his *Concerto Fantastique* (1989–91), a work of more than an hour in length that was commissioned to celebrate the centenaries of both the University of Chicago and the Chicago Symphony, was unanimously adjudged the winner of the prize by the Pulitzer music jury, which then submitted it to the full lay Pulitzer board as its only selection. In what was probably an unprecedented move—immediately branded as philistine and dictatorial in voluminous critical commentary—the board overruled its own jury's award and in effect rescinded the prize, giving it instead to another, much less known composer. Irrascible and indignant as ever, Shapey's response was predictable and understandable: "They said they had to consider 'consumer interest.' Since when has the Pulitzer Prize been about consumer interest?"

If that's what it's about, they should put it in K-Mart." His addendum to his published brochure and catalogue of works reads, under the heading of awards and honors:

Pulitzer Prize (robbed) 1992.

Most of all, Shapey loathed mediocrity, and he never passed up an opportunity to rant about it and excoriate its exponents: "The problem with me is that I stand for the best," he said many times, "and I despise mediocrity with my very being. I try to achieve the best from myself and I expect it from others. That's where the fights sometimes occur. I don't start fights; they are thrust on me."

Indeed, his curmudgeonly, feisty (and often unprintable) pronouncements became legendary—inseparable from Shapey the artist, and adored and quoted with respect by his fans: "I've been asked a thousand times why I write such difficult music. I do it to challenge myself."

PSALM II

Ralph Shapey

The title of Shapey's Psalm II provides an illustration of the legitimate generic use of the term psalm outside the biblical context, as derived from the Latin psalmus, to mean, more broadly, a poetic text sung to instrumental accompaniment. Thus the piece (confusing as its title might be) is not a setting of the second Psalm of the biblical Book of Psalms, and the designation "II" appears because the work is an expansion of an earlier one—now known as Psalm I—with which it shares words and text sources. That earlier piece was written in 1984 for soprano, oboe, and piano. Later the same year, Shapey created the present work by adding choir and four strings (violin, viola, cello, and double bass).

The text comprises interwoven quotations from an unrelated variety of sources: writings of Walt Whitman, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Thomas of Celano (c. 1190–c. 1260), Henry Arthur Jones (1851–1929), and Henry Herman (1832–1894); and a well-known monologue of the 19th-century Hassidic master and leader, the Rebbe of Kotzk (1787–1859). Taken together, they express a manifestly Hassidic tripartite

sentiment: dual faith in God and in His creature, man (or Whitman's "the universe" as the divine creation); rebuke of God for failure to fulfill His promise of redemption, including the threat of rebellion and dissolution of the partnership implied by the covenants; and hope for ultimate resolution. The final plea in the epilogue ("O God, put back Thy universe, the universe for life and joy!") is not derived from any Hassidic sources, but rather from a 19th-century English melodrama, *The Silver King*, by Jones and Herman. Nonetheless, this plea reflects—especially in Shapey's juxtaposition of those words against the other quotations—a profound mystical Hassidic doctrine known as *tikkun olam*: repair of a spiritually broken world.



For many decades ROBERT STRASSBURG (1915–2003) figured prominently in the general musical life and Jewish cultural circles in the Los Angeles area. Born in New York, he studied and worked with Igor Stravinsky, Walter Piston, and Paul Hindemith—with whom he studied at Tanglewood on a Boston Symphony scholarship. After bachelor studies at the New England Conservatory, he received his master's degree from Harvard, where he was the recipient of a fellowship in composition. Later, he earned a doctor of fine arts degree at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles.

Throughout his life, in addition to writing prolifically, Strassburg was dedicated to teaching. He was chairman of the composition and theory department at the Philadelphia Music Settlement School (1943–47), he lectured at Brooklyn College (1947–50), and he was on the inaugural faculty of the Brandeis Institute, directing the music program at its camp in Hendersonville, North Carolina. He was also an artist-in-residence and taught at the Brandeis Arts Institute, a subsidiary program of the Brandeis Camp, for five summers (1951–55) in Santa Susana, California. There, Strassburg was able to share his artistic experience with such future composers of distinction as Yehudi Wyner, Jack Gottlieb, and Charles Davidson. At the same time, he benefited from contact and dialogue with such esteemed fellow composers

as Paul Ben-Haim, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Erich Zeisl, Julius Chajes, and many others.

In 1960 Strassburg moved to Los Angeles. He served as assistant dean of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Judaism until 1966, when he became a professor of music at California State University (Los Angeles). There, he also established and directed the Roy Harris Archives and published a catalogue of Harris's works. Strassburg composed in nearly all principal classical media, and his own substantial catalogue includes many Judaically related works, secular as well as sacred. During his tenures as music director at various synagogues—first in Florida and then in Los Angeles—he developed a particular interest in liturgical music, and he composed numerous prayer settings. Liturgical as well as Jewish historical themes also informed a number of his instrumental pieces, including the Festival of Lights Symphony for string orchestra, for Hanukka; a Torah Sonata for piano (with a version for string quartet, *Tropal Suite*); Tercentenary Suite, for viola and piano; Patriarchs, four biblical portraits for string orchestra; and A Gilgul fun a Nign (Migrations of a Melody), on a text by Yehuda Leib Peretz, for baritone, narrator, and chamber orchestra. He also wrote a number of Jewish art songs and folksong settings, all in addition to his general—viz., not Judaically related—chamber music.

Apart from Judaic subjects, Strassburg's lifelong passion for the poetry of Walt Whitman found its expression in many of his secular works. Notable among these are *Walt Whitman Cycle*, for tenor and orchestra; a ten-movement choral symphony, *Leaves of Grass*, premiered in Japan in 1992 during the Whitman centennial year; an opera, *Congo Square*, on the topic of Whitman's experience confronting slavery in New Orleans during his period as editor of *The New Orleans Crescent* in 1848; and various songs to Whitman poems. He was cochairman of the *Walt Whitman Centennial* events, held at California State University.

Strassburg composed more than forty documentary film scores and wrote incidental music for such theatrical productions as *King Lear*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Anne of a Thousand*

Days, and *The House I Live In*. He was also an active poet, and he published nearly twenty books of his own poetry during his lifetime.

PSALM 117 Robert Strassburg

Psalm 117, the briefest of all Psalms in the Psalter, was once described by the Christian Hebraist W. F. Cobb as "a Halleluya writ large in two verses." It is a hymn to universalist sensibilities in its imperative to all nations (*kol go'yim*) to praise God (i.e., to accept a monotheistically oriented oneness) for His two chief attributes: mercy and truth, which are held to apply to all peoples for all time. Strassburg composed this setting as an independent piece in 1965, not as part of any larger work.



HEINRICH SCHALIT (1886–1976) is one of the principal names associated with serious mid-20th-century American synagogue music for Reform worship—although some of his settings had currency at one time in liberal Conservative synagogues as well. He was one of the leading figures among the circle of European-born synagogue composers who emigrated to the United States during the 1930s—many of them as refugees from the Third Reich—which included Herbert Fromm, Isadore Freed, Hugo Chaim Adler, Frederick Piket, and Julius Chajes. Collectively as well as individually, those composers established a new layer of repertoire and a new composite aesthetic within the Reform orbit, which—together with the music of American-born colleagues such as Abraham Wolf Binder, earlier arrivals such as Lazare Saminsky, postwar émigrés such as Max Janowski, and second-generation émigrés such as Samuel Adler—pretty much dominated the Reform musical scene until at least the early 1970s. That repertoire has continued to reverberate despite the inroads of more populist styles.

Schalit was born in Vienna, where he studied composition with Robert Fuchs (1847–1927) and with Joseph Labor (1842–1924), who was also one of Arnold Schoenberg's

teachers. In 1927 Schalit was appointed to the position of organist at the principal Liberale synagogue in Munich, whose learned cantor and productive resident composer, Emanuel Kirschner (1857–1938)—a former singer in the choir of Louis Lewandowski in Berlin and a follower in his path, albeit in a more artistically sophisticated vein—appears to have exerted a lasting influence on him. His first synagogue composition was a setting of v'shamru for the Sabbath eve liturgy, which he then incorporated into his first full Sabbath eve service, *Eine Freitagabend Liturgie*. That service, published in Germany in 1933 and later revised for American publication in 1951, remains one of his seminal achievements, notwithstanding his substantial subsequent oeuvre. By that time he had grown dissatisfied with what he called an “unorganic mixture of traditional cantorial chants with congregational and choral music in the German style of the 19th century,” and he felt that the synagogue of the 20th century required its elimination. Liturgical composition became for him a sacred calling, with a sense of mission that he posed as a challenge to contemporary Jewish musicians to “prepare a change in style and outlook,” as he wrote in the preface to his first service. His goal was to “create a new, unified liturgical music growing out of the soil of the old-new, significant and valuable source material” that had become available through recent musicological studies. In his own music for worship he therefore consciously avoided the 19th-century harmonic idioms that had become so firmly accepted through Lewandowski's hegemony, forging instead his own less conventional harmonic language that often incorporates moderate, controlled dissonance within a basically if sometimes gently pungent diatonic framework.

In 1933, following the National Socialist victory in Germany and the appointment of Hitler as chancellor, Schalit accepted the position of music director at the Great Synagogue in Rome, where, despite the Mussolini regime, the racial and anti-Jewish parameters of Italian Fascism had yet to emerge. In 1940, after it had become necessary once again to relocate, he immigrated to the United States.

After serving a number of synagogues in the East and on the West Coast, he settled in Denver. After a brief period in Los Angeles, he returned to the Denver area and retired in Evergreen, Colorado.

Among Schalit's other important works are a Sabbath morning service; a second Friday evening service; a setting of the k'dusha; settings of texts by medieval Spanish Hebrew poets; individual prayer settings; and many Psalms.

PSALM 23

Heinrich Schalit

Schalit's setting of the 23rd Psalm in English translation, in its evocations of perceived antiquity, is atypical of his work. Yet it is one of his best-known and most frequently performed pieces. Its distinguishing features are its stark simplicity and calm, even-tempered flow, which provide the desired mood of resignation and comfort suitable for memorial services. Although cast in triple meter, the setting nonetheless suggests the aura of a nonmetrical chant that follows the natural rhythm of the words. The intended effect here is a partially stylized echo of ancient psalmody, with its logogenic emphasis, the predominance of a repetitive reciting tone for the majority of syllables, and modest variation at cadences that resolve typically on the designated final tone, or *finalis*. The vocal line is cast in a simple modal framework.



ZAVEL ZILBERTS (1881 [1880?] –1949) was equally acclaimed in his lifetime as a choral conductor and a composer, but his legacy resides in the latter area. He was the only major and substantially published American composer of liturgical music known to have been a music director previously in an eastern European khor shul (lit., choral synagogue). To appreciate fully Zilberts's art, one must understand the significance of the khor shul as a response to modernity. The term can be misleading, since the choral parameter is historically inseparable from eastern as well as western Ashkenazi cantorial art, and either appertained or was the desiderata in virtually all formal eastern European

synagogues of nearly every brand apart from Hassidic and other small "prayer houses" (shtiblekh). The khor shul in particular, however, reflected aspects of western sophistication within a traditional orthodox framework and was an important religious-cultural institution of 19th- and early-20th-century cosmopolitan eastern European and Russian Jewry. Many of the most famous eastern European cantors served at one time or another in these khor shuls, which were among the most coveted pulpits. These synagogues often were also schools for boy choristers.

Zilberts was born in Karlin, a suburb of Pinsk, Belarus. His father was a noted cantor, known as the Karliner hazzan, in whose choir the young Zilberts sang as a child, and he was sufficiently accomplished by the age of twelve to be invited to officiate as guest cantor at the Kupetchesky Synagogue in Kiev. He was only sixteen when his father died, but he was able to take over his father's position at the shtot shul (city synagogue). In 1899 he entered the Warsaw Conservatory, where he studied voice, composition, conducting, and music pedagogy, earning his diploma in 1903. And from 1904 until 1907 he directed the Hazomir Choral Society in Łódź, which became one of Europe's most prestigious secular Jewish choruses.

In 1907 he became music director of the Great Central Synagogue in Moscow, just reopened after having been closed for a number of years by a czarist government official. Its congregants were mostly people of developed and sophisticated musical tastes, since the 1891 expulsion from Moscow of Jewish working classes had left a Jewish population mostly comprising the intelligentsia and professional classes. During his seven years there, Zilberts developed the basis for his own learned style of composition, finding ways to preserve and exploit the attributes of traditional hazzanut within contained and refined boundaries, and in tandem with classical choral writing. In 1914 he had to leave Moscow, since he fell outside the categories of permitted occupations for Jews there. His destination was America, but he was detained en route in Łódź for the remainder of the First World War and again directed Hazomir there.

He arrived in the United States in 1920 and was soon engaged as the director of the New York Hazzanim Farband Chor—the chorus of cantors of the Jewish Ministers Cantors Association. Zilberts perfected a technique of composing for the special sonorities and timbral requirements of the men's chorus medium, and under his direction the chorus grew to more than 100 members, with its annual concerts eventually held in such major New York venues as Carnegie Hall.

In 1924 he organized the Zilberts Choral Society, soon expanding it into a recognized fixture of New York's cultural life. Eventually its concerts featured soloists of such stature as Jan Peerce, Richard Tucker, and Robert Merrill. Even after his death, the Zilberts Choral Society continued on, disbanding in 1960.

As a composer, Zilberts devoted himself to three principal genres: Hebrew liturgical music, folk-art and quasi-liturgical choral settings, and Yiddish lieder. Yet all of his music is on the level of art music. His choral pieces demonstrate a genuine polyphonic proclivity within a liturgical framework. He frequently uses abbreviated fugal techniques, or fugatos, at or near the conclusion of pieces, to great effect. In this he followed the practice of David Nowakowski (1848–1921), the master synagogue composer in Odessa. The erudite cantor Pinchos Minkowsky (1859–1924), the last cantor of the famous Broder Synagogue in Odessa, once referred to Zilberts as "the greatest star in the [Jewish] musical world."

Perhaps most unusual was Zilberts's versatility in being able to appeal with equal force and artistic success to orthodox/traditional and Reform tastes and sensibilities. It might even be said that to some extent, both circles claimed him as their own.

PSALM 137 Zavel Zilberts
Zilberts's concert setting of Psalm 137, *Al naharot bavel* (By the Rivers of Babylon), was composed originally in Łódź in 1905 as a mixed-chorus work and was performed there in 1906 by the Hazomir chorus. It was, however, never published in that form, and the manuscript has not been found. In 1923 in New York he reworked the piece for its present

männerchor (TTBB) version for a Carnegie Hall performance by the chorus of the Jewish Ministers Cantors Association, and he published it in this form shortly thereafter. It is representative of his many male-voice concert works written expressly for concerts by that large ensemble of New York-area cantors.

On the whole, this piece illustrates the degree to which Zilbert's artistic sophistication and his craft far exceeded that of most of the other synagogue, secular Hebrew, or Yiddish choral composers in America at that time. It shows his ability to construct a work along traditional lines—with dramatic cantorial gestures and rich choral effects—that nonetheless exhibits classical musical development, form, structural and tonal arch, and facility with counterpoint. It also typifies his affinity for grandeur and his refined choral writing technique—especially with respect to his skill in composing and arranging for men's voices.

Psalm 137 describes, in dramatically poignant as well as naturally indignant terms, the human torment and national catastrophe of the Babylonian Captivity and Exile (586 B.C.E.). It proclaims the victims' (Israel's) determination for eventual justice (including the candidly instinctive and graphic, if unrestrained and unchecked, call for retribution as a natural emotional response) and for restoration of their homeland and sovereignty. This is, of course, one of the Psalms that could not possibly be assigned to David, who died centuries before the incident it relates, and it generally falls into the category of Psalms concerned with Jewish national history and its formative mythologies.

The work is filled with emotionally driven tone painting and harmonic as well as contrapuntal depiction of the drama of the Psalm. The opening chords of the instrumental introduction and the mournful choral entrance establish the atmosphere of collective suffering and national tragedy. The anguished, almost dissonant flavor at the words *al ad'mat nekhar* (on alien soil) calls forth vividly the plight of an entire people forced from its home as captives in a strange land. "One can certainly feel the silent protest

of an entire people," wrote the learned cantor Pinchas Jassinowsky in his review of the premiere, "whose destiny has been sealed, and there remains only the pouring out of its bitter heart and weeping. . . ." The second section finds the Jews swearing that they will never forget or abandon hope for their sacred land, as the vow is taken up by each of the four voices—with particular resoluteness in the second basses. The third section, marked "Andante Pastorale," amounts to a fervent prayer that God never forget what has befallen His people. The fourth section, "Allegro," is developed polyphonically and suggests the beginning of a fugue that never actually proceeds as such. A brief solo tenor quasi-recitative passage leads directly to the coda as the work concludes with a steady crescendo. "The walls of Carnegie Hall," wrote Jassinowsky, "shook from the sounds of our exiled and embittered brothers in Babylon."

Zilbert's programmatic treatment of the text seems to reinforce musically its confirmation of the centrality of Zion and Jerusalem to Jewish national and spiritual identity and existence. A subsequent 1942 performance was also reviewed by Jassinowsky, who noted its added wartime significance:

It was a sad evening with our thoughts wandering to the other side of the ocean, where so much blood was being spilt, and especially where we Jews, the people of the [137th] Psalm. . . suffer bitterly from the old and new black forces at all times and all generations. . . . The soloist pleads, "Remember, God!" and the chorus answers aru, aru—Destroy, crush [our enemies].

—Neil W. Levin



Texts and Translations

NOTE: The self-contained Psalm texts, which are not given here, may be found in any standard Bible.

from FRIDAY EVENING SERVICE

Yehudi Wyner
Sung in Hebrew

5 Ma Tov

Translation by Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

How lovely are your dwellings, O House of Israel.
O Lord, through Your abundant kindness I enter Your house
And worship You with reverence in Your holy sanctuary.
I love Your presence in this place where Your glory resides.
Here, I bow and worship before the Lord, my maker.
And I pray to You, O Lord, that it shall be Your will
To answer me with Your kindness and grace,
And with the essence of Your truth that preserves us.

@ IV. Jonah's Prayer from the Belly of the Whale

Text: Glatzer 1947

In my straits I called to my Lord,
and He did reply!
From the belly of the chasm, I cried out;
Thou didst heed my voice.

When Thou cast me deep into the heart of seas,
when the torrent surrounded me,
when all Thy breakers and waves passed over me—

Then I said, "I am banished from before Thine eyes."
Yet shall I look again
toward Thy sacred habitation.

The seas engulfed me to the soul,
the deep surrounded me,
weeds wrapped round my head;
I sank to the ends of the hills,
the bars of the earth all enclosed me;
and yet Thou raised me alive out of the pit,
O Lord, my God.

When my soul fainted within me,
I recalled my God.
And my prayer came to Thee,
to Thy sacred habitation.
They who keep their vainness
forsake their mercy.

But I, with a thankful voice, will sacrifice to Thee.
What I pledged I shall fulfill.
Salvation is the Lord's!

PSALM II

Ralph Shapey
Sung in English
Source: the composer's documents

Prologue: Prais'd Be
Praised be the fathomless universe.

—Whitman

§ I. Master of the Universe
Master of the Universe, send us our Messiah
for we have no more strength to suffer.
Show me a sign, O God, otherwise—otherwise—
I rebel against Thee.

% II. Thy Covenant
If Thou dost not keep Thy covenant,
then neither will I keep that promise.

—Rebbe of Kotzk

Thou gave man speech and speech created thought,
which is the measure of the universe.

—Shelley

^ III. Day of Wrath
That day, the day of wrath, will turn the universe to ashes.
—Thomas of Celame

We are through being Thy chosen people,
Thy peculiar treasure.
—Rebbe of Kotzk

& Epilogue: Life and Joy
O God! Put back Thy universe,
Thy universe for life and joy!
—Henry Arthur Jones and Henry Herman

Psalms of Joy and Sorrow

George Rochberg: from Three Psalms (1954)

Publisher: Theodore Presser Co.

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

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineers: Campbell Hughes, Morgan Roberts

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

Jacob Druckman: Psalm 93 (1967)

Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Recording: Kilbourn Hall/Eastman School of Music,
University of Rochester, NY, December 1993

Recording Producer: Michael Isaacson

Recording Engineer: David Dusman

Recording Project Manager: Michael Isaacson

Ursula Mamlok: Cantata based on the First Psalm (1958)

Publisher: Ursula Mamlok

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

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineers: Campbell Hughes, Morgan Roberts

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

Yehudi Wyner: Ma Tov, Shiru Ladonai: Psalm 96 (1963)

Publisher: Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (Schirmer)

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

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineers: Campbell Hughes, Morgan Roberts

Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Miriam Gideon: Ma Tov, Adonai Malach: Psalm 93 (1974)

Publisher: C. F. Peters Corp

Recording: St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, London, March 2001

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineers: Campbell Hughes, Morgan Roberts

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

Martin Kalmanoff: The Lord Is My Shepherd

(Psalm 23) (1951)

Publisher: Carl Fisher

Recording: Sala Sinfonica del Auditori, Barcelona,
June 2001

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineer: Bertram Kornacher

Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Philip Glass: Psalm 126 (1998)

Publisher: Dunvagen Music Publishers, Inc.

Recording: Centre Cultural de Sant Cugat,
Barcelona, May 2000

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineer: Bertram Kornacher

Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Donald Waxman: from Psalms and Supplications (1953)

Publisher: G. Schirmer Inc.

Recording: Slovak Radio Hall, Bratislava, Slovak Republic,
June 1998

Recording Producer: Elliot McKinley

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

Ralph Shapey: Psalm II (1984)

Publisher: Theodore Presser Co.

Recording: St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, London,
November 1999

Recording Producer: BBC / Simon Weir

Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes

Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

Robert Strassburg: Psalm 117 (1965)

Publisher: Transcontinental

Recording: Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims,
Brooklyn, NY, May 2001

Recording Producer: David Frost

Recording Engineer: Rob Rapley

Recording Project Managers: Richard Lee / Neil Levin

Heinrich Schalit: The 23rd Psalm (1946)

Publisher: Transcontinental

Recording: Riverside Church, New York City, May 1998

Recording Producer: David Frost

Recording Engineer: Tom Lazarus

Recording Project Manager: Sam Adler

Zavel Zilberst: Psalm 137 (Al Naharot Bavel) (1923)

Publisher: Transcontinental

Recording: West London Synagogue, June 1999

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineer: Paul Libson

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

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

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Psalms of Joy
and Sorrow