

Cover Art

Zaimont

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.

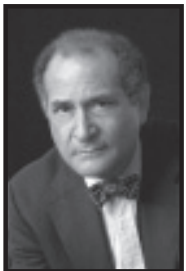
While much of this music had become a vital force in American and world culture, even more music of specifically Jewish content had been created, perhaps performed, and then lost to current and future generations. Believing that there was a unique opportunity to rediscover, preserve and transmit the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

◆ About the Composer



JUDITH LANG ZAIMONT (b. 1945) was born in Memphis, Tennessee, into a musical family. She grew up in New York City, began piano studies at the age of five, and at age eleven was accepted into the preparatory division of The Juilliard School. There, as she has since recalled, she first realized that she was “born to be a composer.” During her teen years she won several composition competitions, including that of the National Federation of Music Clubs; and at age eighteen she was awarded the BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.) Young Composer Award.

Zaimont studied piano at Juilliard with Leland Thompson (1958–64), and composition at Queens College with Hugo Weisgall and at Columbia University with Otto Luening and Jack Beeson. After receiving her master’s degree, she went to Paris to study orchestration with André Jolivet on a Debussy Fellowship from the Alliance Française.

While still in her teen years, before deciding to devote herself principally to composition, Zaimont formed a duo-piano team with her sister, Doris (now an accomplished opera director, Doris Kosloff). They toured the United States, recording and appearing on radio and television—including performances on Mitch Miller’s popular television show, *Sing Along with Mitch*.

Zaimont’s earlier works—written for the most part prior to 1980—are mainly vocal or for solo piano. In addition to the works recorded here, her Judaically related pieces from that period also include *Man’s Image and His Cry* (1968), for contralto and baritone soloists, chorus, and orchestra. General vocal works from that time frame include choral and solo settings of poems by Shakespeare, Shelley, Herrick, Gay, Auden, Cummings, Byron, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Blake, and others. Her piano works from those years include a concerto (1972) and numerous solo pieces, such as *A Calendar Set* (1972–78); *Two Rags* (1974); the nocturne *La Fin de siècle* (1978); and the four-hand *Snazzy Sonata* (1972).

More recent works in Zaimont’s oeuvre of nearly 100 compositions—many of which have been awarded important prizes and have received performances abroad as well as in the United States—include three symphonies; a chamber opera for children, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*; and oratorios and cantatas. She has also written a number of works on American Indian themes, such as *The Magic World (Ritual Music for Three)*, as well as music for wind ensembles, vocal chamber pieces for various combinations, instrumental chamber works, and solo music for string and wind instruments, piano, organ, and voice.

Zaimont’s many composition awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship (1983–84); a Maryland

State Arts Council creative fellowship (1986–87); and commission grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1982), the American Composers Forum (1993), and the international 1995 McCollin Competition for Composers—for her first symphony, which was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1996. She was “composer of the year” at Alabama University in 1994, the featured composer at the Society of Composers International American meeting in 1995, artist-in-residence for the 1996–97 academic year at Skidmore College, composer-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin (River Falls) in 1999, the honored composer in 2001 at the Eleventh Van Cliburn International Piano Competition—where the gold medalists performed her music—and the featured composer in 2002 at the annual conference of the National Federation of Music Clubs.

A distinguished teacher who has served on the faculty of Queens College, the Peabody Conservatory, and Adelphi University, Zaimont was a professor of composition from 1992 until 2005 at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. She is also the founder and codirector of the performing ensemble American Accent, based in New York, and the creator and editor in chief of the acclaimed series of books *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*. Her music has been the subject of twelve doctoral dissertations.

Zaimont’s works have been performed by the Baltimore, Jacksonville, Greenville (South Carolina), and Harrisburg symphony orchestras; the Czech Radio Orchestra; the Berlin Radio Orchestra; the Kharkov Philharmonic (Ukraine); and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestras in New York and Boston.



The composer with students at the University of Minnesota

Program Notes

SACRED SERVICE FOR THE SABBATH EVENING

Commissioned in 1976 by the Great Neck Choral Society (New York) in honor of the American Bicentennial, Zaimont’s *Sacred Service for the Sabbath Evening* is, despite its title, primarily a concert work rather than an actual synagogue worship service. It is a cohesive, astutely arched, and musically integrated series of sixteen artistic settings—mostly of English prose or quasi-poetic texts taken from the *Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship*. As the creation and publication of the rabbinical organ of the American Reform movement (the Central Conference of American Rabbis), this was—for much of the 20th century, until at least the 1980s—the preponderant prayerbook of Reform congregations in the United States.

Quite a few 20th-century composers—including some of the most recognizable names in the classical music

world (Ernest Bloch, Darius Milhaud, David Diamond, and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, to cite only a few)—have created sophisticated artistic settings of Sabbath services, with a view toward blurring the distinction between functional prayer experience and concert-oriented expression. Indeed, some of these works have succeeded admirably within both formats: as formal worship, particularly at unconventional services or celebrations in modern or progressive nonorthodox congregations that were receptive to the notion of expanding liturgical aesthetics in the context of Western musical perspectives; and, independently, on the concert stage. Zaimont's work, however, which is based largely on texts that fall outside the liturgy per se, appears to transcend the functional boundaries of synagogue ritual altogether. By turns dramatic and meditative in its reflection of the various moods suggested by the words, it relates to its texts as poetry and poetic prose that—in keeping with the spirit and worldview embraced by the authors of the *Union Prayerbook* itself—can resonate on universal planes.

Three choral numbers that were extracted from the work and issued separately in folio publications are suitable for rendition within worship services. These have in fact been performed widely—in synagogues as well as concert venues, and even in Christian churches. Yet apart from these individual pieces, this *Sacred Service* is, in its entirety, essentially a religiously oriented—but extra-liturgical—extended cantata for baritone solo, mixed chorus, and symphony orchestra.

The texts selected by the composer comprise liberal English translations and paraphrases of Hebrew prayers, as well as original meditative, supplicatory, or inspirational English readings that were intended by the *Union Prayerbook's* authors for spoken delivery from the pulpit by the rabbi or other ministerial officiant, or for responsorial articulation between

reader and congregation. Those para-liturgical readings were in turn based loosely on—or drawn from—traditional liturgical and biblical passages and sentiments, which were often recast to resonate with contemporary sensibilities, aesthetics, and concerns. Although the aggregate American Reform musical literature contains numerous practical settings of actual prayer texts and hymns in English versions, dating as far back as the 19th century, Zaimont was probably the first composer to intuit artistic possibilities in the eloquent language of those supplementary oratorical readings and to set them musically as oratorio-like arias, ariosos, accompanied recitatives, and contrapuntal choral pieces. The original Hebrew of the most familiar succinct liturgical or biblical pronouncements is maintained—followed by the English versions—in only a few instances in the score.

In their effort to streamline and abbreviate the liturgy for Sabbath services, as well as to provide week-to-week variety within the new format, the editors of the *Union Prayerbook* divided the Sabbath eve section (which also incorporates excerpted elements of the traditionally separate preliminary *kabbalat shabbat*—"welcoming the Sabbath"—liturgy) into five distinct alternative services. Each service was based on extracted elements of the traditional liturgy, albeit often abridged or reordered, surrounded by the newly fashioned English readings. Congregations were then able to select one of those services for any particular Sabbath. Zaimont based her work on the third such Sabbath eve service as it appeared in the 1947 edition.

The sixteen movements of Zaimont's *Sacred Service* appear in three large sections of five pieces each, with an epilogue following Part Three. Parts One and Two exhibit a dramatic approach, each concluding with an impressive choral movement. Part Three

(not represented in the recorded excerpts here) has a more sustained, meditative character. Throughout the work, the chorus, which is never relegated to an accompanying role, functions as an equal partner with the baritone solo. Textural variety is provided by occasional alternation between full chorus and a double quartet of choral soloists.

The Excerpts Recorded Here

1

Part One

I. The opening choral movement of the service, *The Lord Reigneth*, is the *Union Prayerbook's* English version of Psalm 97. Also commonly known by its Hebrew incipit, *adonai malakh*, it is the third Psalm at the beginning of the traditional *kabbalat shabbat* liturgy. But in the third alternate Sabbath eve service in the *Union Prayerbook*, it is the introductory Psalm. The principal musical motive of this setting serves as a kind of leitmotif, which recurs in the concluding passages of all three parts of the work.

2

II. *God and Father*, a baritone solo recitative, is a setting of the English reading that follows Psalm 97 in the *Union Prayerbook*. Although this text is not liturgy per se, its content is a pastiche of Sabbath-related thoughts and noble sentiments that touch upon ethical obligations and social conscience.

3

IV. *Why Do We Deal Treacherously?* This setting is drawn from the English responsive reading in the *Union Prayerbook* that, in its third Sabbath eve service, serves as a preamble to the proclamation of worship with which the principal liturgy of all prayer services commences: *bar'khu et adonai ham'vorakh* (Worship the Lord to whom all worship is due). The

alternation between baritone solo and choir reflects that between the reader and the congregation in the responsorial format of the text, which incorporates biblical verses. Jazzlike syncopations give the setting an agitated quality, reinforced by the choral repetition of the question posed by the opening line. Effective shouts and whispers in the choir are punctuated by the soloist's gentle but firm response.

4

Part Two

VI. The opening movement of the second section begins with this meditation, introduced by the words *O Lord, How Can We Know Thee?* This da capo aria is a setting of the English reading in the *Union Prayerbook* that serves as a prelude to the pronouncement of Judaism's central creed of monotheism, *sh'ma yisra'el adonai eloheinu adonai ehad* (Listen, Israel! *Adonai*—the Lord—is our God; the Lord is the only God—His unity is His essence).

This proclamation of God's eternal oneness and universality, together with its continuing paragraph that affirms the requirement of unequivocal devotion to God, constitutes the first of three biblical passages that are known collectively as *k'ri'at sh'ma* (the reading or pronouncement of *sh'ma* ...). As a unit, these three passages form the oldest and most essential part of the Hebrew liturgy (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21; and Numbers 15:37–41). It is the core of every morning and evening prayer service, and its recitation is obligatory for all adult Jews—more so than any other prayer text.

5

VII. This second movement of Part Two contains the actual sung pronouncement of the opening statement of *k'ri'at sh'ma* (*sh'ma yisra'el*)—first in its familiar Hebrew, and then according to the standard

translation found in most American prayerbooks. (The more probing and meaningful translation by Rabbi Morton M. Leifman, above, avoids the ambiguity and hollowness of the phrase “The Lord is One” and more accurately captures the significance and implication of the statement.) This is followed here by the nonbiblical response, *barukh shem k’vod malkhuto l’olam va’ed* (Worshipped be His Name whose glorious kingdom is forever and unto all time)—a liturgical formula that is nonetheless biblically based (Nehemiah 9:5).

Talmudic sources (Tosef.Ber. 7:22) assert that the response *barukh shem* . . . was employed daily in connection with the blessings pronounced by the priests in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem—in the manner of, or in place of, “amen.” And on Yom Kippur, the priests and others who stood in the Temple court are said to have uttered this phrase upon hearing the tetragram of God’s Name—the pronouncement of which was forbidden at all other times and by all but the High Priest, who articulated it annually in his public confessions on that holiest and most solemn of days. (Since the destruction of the Second Temple resulted in the suspension of the priestly ritual, the tetragram is therefore prohibited altogether by anyone, at any time, and under any circumstances.)

It is only in the Reform worship format that this response (*barukh shem* ...) is sung or said aloud at *all* services throughout the year. In traditional worship, except for Yom Kippur, it is uttered only in an undertone or whisper—which distinguishes it from the actual biblical verses. (Another suggested rationale for the establishment of this custom in the development of the liturgy is the deliberate differentiation from Temple practice in memory of its destruction, and there are also various midrashic explanations rooted in biblically related mythical lore and legend.) Only on Yom Kippur is *barukh shem* recited or sung aloud as

part of *k’ri’at sh’ma*, just as other parts of the Temple ritual are reenacted on the Day of Atonement. In traditional practice of the Ashkenazi rite, this formula is also pronounced aloud three times at the close of the concluding service of Yom Kippur (*n’ila*)—a custom that has been explained both as a final, resolute affirmation of faith following the day of intense self-examination and renewal, and as a declaration of optimism for the ultimate universal embrace of God’s eternal and exclusive sovereignty.

At the end of the 19th century, however, the authors of the *Union Prayerbook* felt neither historically nor theologically bound by the issues of ancient Temple ritual in this case. Nor were they constrained by liturgical custom (even though their revisions and reforms, no matter how liberal, were usually grounded in tradition). Their new format, some of which also drew on features of earlier American Reform-oriented prayerbooks, established the vocal rendition of the *barukh shem* response as standard practice for *all* services of the Reform movement in America. Virtually all musical settings of *sh’ma yisra’el* for Reform services—Sabbath, Festival, and Rosh Hashana as well as Yom Kippur—have therefore included it as an integral part of those compositions.

The composer has used the most ubiquitous American congregational tune for the opening proclamation, *sh’ma yisra’el*, with subtle rhythmic alterations. (The tune, whose origin is unknown, is often erroneously and annoyingly attributed to the great 19th-century cantor and composer Salomon Sulzer, for which there is no basis whatsoever apart from a similar three-tone melodic incipit and a cadential cliché (mediant-supertonic-tonic, with an implied V-I progression, which could apply to thousands of Western-type tunes). The tune—or, more accurately, the reference to the tune—is given mildly abrasive and rhythmically

emphatic context, and the tension is heightened by the modal alteration in the choral repetition of the Hebrew. Further original development and extension accompany the sung Hebrew translation in an interplay between the baritone soloist and the choir.

6

VIII. This movement is the continuation of the first of the three sections of *k'ri'at sh'ma* in English translation ("Thou Shalt Love the Lord Thy God ..."), as it appears in abbreviated form in the *Union Prayerbook*. At its conclusion, Zaimont's setting adds the opening line (also in English translation) of a separate prayer, the traditional post-*k'ri'at sh'ma* prayer and benediction: "Eternal truth it is that Thou alone art God and there is none else" (*emet ve'emuna . . .*), even though those words would normally be the beginning of an independent setting. While the *Union Prayerbook's* exclusively English version and paraphrase of this post-*k'ri'at sh'ma* prayer is given as a responsorial reading, creatively infused with extraneous biblical verses and ethical and moral sentiments, it does retain that original opening line.

This setting's gently flowing and simple melody stands in contrast to the dramatic forcefulness of the preceding movement and its hints of dissonance. It builds gradually in intensity, with choral and solo repetitions of the opening words; and it concludes with grandeur to the vehement reiteration of the words "There is none else" (i.e., there is no other God).



A WOMAN OF VALOR (ESHET HAYIL)

A Woman of Valor, described by its composer as a tone poem for mezzo-soprano and string quartet, is a setting of selected and reordered verses from the

concluding alphabetical acrostic poem in the Book of Proverbs (31:10–31). Commonly known by its incipit, *eshet hayil*, the poem is essentially an ode to the ideal (or idealized) wife in both conventional and timeless terms. As part of the domestic Sabbath eve ritual, it is customarily recited or sung at the Sabbath table on Friday evenings—upon return from the synagogue—along with other songs, prayers, and liturgical pronouncements that precede the festive Sabbath eve meal.

Although the term *eshet hayil* has most often been translated literally as "a woman of valor," that terminology has always been troublesome and less than satisfactory—not least because of its military and other inapplicable connotations. "A woman of virtue" and "a virtuous woman"—alternate translations that appear in a number of sources—also present semantic difficulties in terms of sexually-related associations, even though the poem does indeed enumerate a host of virtues that, quite apart from (assumed) sexual fidelity, constitute an aggregate desiderata from biblical-era perspectives. Other, more discerning translations include "a woman [wife] of true value"; "a woman of true [i.e., inner] strength"; "a woman of accomplishment"; "a woman of true worth"; or "an ideal wife." But however the words may be rendered in English for the sake of a succinct phrase, they are widely understood to describe a woman who is the pillar of strength of her family and household. Thus the most ubiquitous translation of *eshet hayil* might also work in the sense of a metaphor for valor in the daily struggle to balance with equilibrium all the aspects pertaining to her multiple roles within a traditional society—or, in 20th/21st-century lingo, to "be all things to all people in her family" while maintaining her own identity and sense of self-fulfillment.

The succeeding line in the Proverb, “for her price is far above rubies [or other jewels],” can also be problematic, for it risks an objectionable comparison of a woman’s worth with monetary considerations. (Some modern-era scholars have preferred the translation “corals”—stones that were found in the Sea of Reeds and in India.) Obviously, this reference to precious stones is simply a literary device used to indicate that a good wife is of inestimable worth to her family.

The phrase “Who can find [an *eshet hayil*]?” should not be construed as an actual question. It is better understood idiomatically to mean “[she] is precious”—i.e., rare, in the sense of “as if difficult to find,” and therefore to be respected, appreciated, honored, and revered.

The catalogue of household activities and obligations must of course be understood in the context of premodern sensibilities, and these references can also be reinterpreted in less literal terms as symbolic images. At its core the text describes a composite desiderata of a woman in whom her husband places unqualified trust—who is respected and admired by all in her household; who is kind to the less fortunate and gentle to all; who is self-assured and dignified; who is praised by her entire family; who upholds religious precepts and moral values; and who is God-fearing. “A man who is fortunate enough to have found a good wife,” observed a 14th-century rabbinic scholar with regard to this Proverb, “will lack for nothing. Even if he is poor, he must consider himself rich.... He must treat his wife with love and sympathy” (*M’norat hammaor*).

In its functional rendition at the Sabbath table, *eshet hayil* is either spoken or sung to any one of many folklike tunes that have accumulated in the aggregate

repertoire. This setting, however, is a sophisticated concert work in which the mezzo-soprano soloist calmly but resolutely probes the inner significance of the words and images, and in which the intricate and inventive gestures of the strings play an equally important role.



PARABLE: A TALE OF ABRAM AND ISAAC

The biblical account of Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:1–19) is one of the chief cornerstones of Judaic theology as well as a principal foundation pin of Jewish national birth. This story is known as the *akeda* (binding), or *akedat yitzhak* (the binding of Isaac [for sacrifice]). In it, the patriarch Abraham is told directly by God to prepare his precious son—his only son by his wife Sarah—for ritual sacrifice. Unbeknownst to Abraham, this is merely a trial of his faith and of his willingness to obey without questioning.

This Divine command contains no specific instruction actually to accomplish the act of slaughter and sacrifice. However, Abraham apparently assumes that it is implied by the directive to “offer him there.” Even so, the mere suggestion of desired human sacrifice from a Divine authority—which embodies the essence of truth and righteousness—must be understood within its historical context, as must Abraham’s blind acceptance of even the possibility that God would ever sanction, much less desire, such an act. The hideous practice of child sacrifice was prevalent among neighboring peoples and primitive religions throughout much of that part of the ancient world. Among some tribes, sacrifice of the firstborn was considered especially meritorious and pleasing to their gods. Child sacrifice is mentioned specifically

in the Torah ("for even their sons and daughters do they burn in fire to their heathen gods," Deuteronomy 12:31), and heathen enthusiasm for the practice is cited in other biblical passages (e.g., Micah 6:7 and II Kings 3:27). This Divine command to Abraham, therefore, might not necessarily have seemed inconsistent with the normative behavior of the age.

Abraham is instructed to take Isaac to Moriah and to *offer him there* in sacrifice (lit., to lift him up, i.e., on an altar of sacrifice):

And it happened . . . that God tested Abraham. And He said to him . . . "Take, pray, your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and go forth to the land of Moriah and offer him up as a burnt offering. . . ."

Abraham—who is considered the founder of Western monotheism (his father, Terah, had been an idol worshipper in the pre-monotheistic mold)—neither remonstrates nor hesitates, but proceeds immediately to comply. Without revealing to Isaac the real purpose of their journey, he cuts wood for the burnt offering and takes his son to a designated mount in Moriah (Jewish tradition identifies the locale as the later site of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, II Chronicles 3:1). He builds an altar there, restrains Isaac by binding him, and lays him upon that altar. Isaac does not resist, even when he realizes what is happening. At the last moment, just as Abraham takes the slaughtering knife in his hand and positions himself to complete what he believes to be God's instruction, God intervenes to prevent it. Through His messenger (angel) comes the following admonition "from the heavens":

"Abraham, Abraham . . . Do not reach out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him, for now I know that you fear God and you have not held back your son, your only one, from Me."

Abraham notices a ram caught by its horns in a nearby thicket, and he offers it instead as an appropriate sacrifice.

Assured beyond doubt of Abraham's faith and loyalty through this supreme test, God fixes and reconfirms—in the form of a promise—the proposal that He had set forth earlier (Genesis 17) regarding the perpetual covenant with the patriarch and his descendants:

And the Lord's messenger called out to Abraham once again from the heavens and said, "By My own self I swear, declares the Lord, that because you have done this thing and have not held back your son, your only one, I will greatly bless you and will greatly multiply your seed, as the stars in the heavens and as the sand on the shore of the sea. . . . And all the nations of the earth will be blessed through your seed because you have listened to My voice." (Genesis 22:15–18)

The *akedat yitzhak*, which is referenced numerous times throughout Hebrew liturgy, is thus considered one of the central narratives of Judaism—for two reasons. It confirms Abraham's unswerving belief in God's singular authority and supreme righteousness—even if Divine motives are not comprehensible to man or open to human understanding—and it thereby confirms Abraham's worthiness to be the founder of the people that will establish monotheism for the world. The *akedat yitzhak* is cited in rabbinic literature and commentary as the tenth and greatest of the trials Abraham faced to earn this merit. (By extension, the story is also said to illustrate Isaac's faith and devotion as the second patriarch.) At the same time, through God's staying of Abraham's hand, the entire incident teaches and underscores for all time the Judaic abhorrence and unequivocal prohibition of human

sacrifice, a significant departure from surrounding norms. Indeed, the innovation lay in God's intervention to prevent it.

Numerous Christian as well as Jewish commentators and theologians have observed that this story represents a major step forward in the history of human progress. Not only does it contain an implicit proclamation that the prohibition against human sacrifice should apply to all mankind, but it also clarifies that God requires only man's *spiritual* surrender to His will.

Throughout the centuries, interpretations and explications of the *akedat yitzhak*, including those in the Talmud and the Midrash, have stressed that the Divine request was confined to "preparing Isaac for sacrifice." Hence, the word by which the incident is known—*binding*—rather than any reference to sacrifice or death. Rav Saadia Gaon (882–942), one of the greatest scholars and authors, and leader of Babylonian Jewry in the Geonic period, explained that God's intervention does not constitute His abrogation of His own earlier instruction, since no intention of actual sacrifice was ever part of it. And Rav Saadia further amplified on the intervention to give it the meaning "Enough! More than this I did not desire of you" (*Emunot v'De'ot*, 3:9).

* * * * *

The poem "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young," by the English-Welsh poet Wilfred Owen (1893–1918), which forms the basis for Zaimont's cantata, however, offers an imaginative new twist to the *akedat yitzhak*, which becomes a metaphor for the senselessness and barbarism of the First World War. Owen imagines a scenario in which Divine intervention is unsuccessful; in which the angel's exhortation to sacrifice instead the ram—which represents, as the "ram of pride," the false and deadly pride of the Great Powers in the

war—is ignored; and in which Abraham does indeed sacrifice his son, defiant of God's admonition.

The poet refers to the patriarch by his original name, Abram [Avram], rather than the more familiar name by which he is remembered—Abraham [Avraham]. In the Bible he bears the shorter name only until God bestows on him the similar but new one—with the additional letter and the resulting additional syllable. This is in connection with the covenant whereby Abraham is designated as the father of a "multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:4–7), which occurs before the *akedat yitzhak* incident. Popular etymology and tradition, supported by standard rabbinic commentary, has assigned to the new name the specific meaning of "father of a multitude," which would have been given to Abraham to mark this watershed event in his life with respect to his new role. Some scholars have proposed that the new name might contain within it an obsolete Hebrew cognate of the Arabic *ruham* (numerous); other proponents of modern biblical criticism have viewed the name Avraham merely as a dialectic variant of Avram. Still, there is no consensus among scholars, since there appears to be no definitive Hebrew derivation for the name or word *Avraham*.

In any case, Owen's rationale for retaining the unaltered form, Abram, is not readily apparent. Yet it cannot have been inadvertent, since his biblical source was undoubtedly the Authorized (King James) Version, in which the three-syllable name Abraham is also established in connection with the Covenant. One possible explanation may lie in the poet's wish to emphasize that the Abram of his inventive parable shows himself unworthy—by virtue of his refusal to heed the angel's admonition—to be the father of the multitude of nations that will, through their embrace of monotheism, exemplify and promote God's moral and ethical teachings.

On one level, Owen appears to be posing a question with which historians frequently toy for academic sport with reference to critical incidents, episodes, and events—ranging from wars to elections to natural occurrences: What if the outcome of a seminal confrontation had been entirely different, even opposite? What would be the implications for history and for all that followed? With regard to the *akedat yitzhak*, what if human sacrifice had not been forbidden or ended, even among the so-called civilized world? Would anything in history have been different? Would it have been materially different if the *akeda* had not occurred—had Judaism not established the Divine abhorrence of human sacrifice? And would the history of peoples and their interactions have been different had they heeded this lesson?

Owen's poem is not so much a deliberation on the *akedat yitzhak* as an allegory of the carnage that was known once as the Great War. The poet revisited the *akedat yitzhak* in the context of that blood-drenched conflagration, which took the lives of ten million soldiers and sailors, the limbs and spirits of millions more, and perhaps as many as another ten million civilians, and which turned out to be, for the belligerents on all sides, an unimaginably colossal sacrifice of an entire generation of youth—in many respects for nothing. And yet, like Abram in Owen's version of the *akeda*, the Allied and Central Powers alike had been willing enthusiastically to sacrifice the "flower of their youth" on the altar of imperial power, colonial ambition, political arrogance, ultimatums, and national pride. At stake was preserving or restoring perceived balances of power, not (as in only a handful of confrontations throughout history) upholding any ultimate high ideals or deterring any inherent evil. All sides had anticipated a swift victory for imagined noble causes, in which the sacrifices would be minimal compared with the supposed benefits. "The boys will

be home by Christmas" was the prediction in England as the British army and navy went off to war in August 1914. But euphoric optimism and a perceived mission of righteousness pervaded the Central Powers as well: "A great flood of enthusiasm arose," described Eugen Fuchs (1856–1923), cofounder of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith, "a tremendous wave that swept up everyone in its path. Our hearts thumped and our eyes shone with anticipation.... Everyone was filled with the irrepressible hope that we would win—we had to win."

The Kaiser, whose cousins included the English King George V as well as Czar Nicholas II—his adversaries on the Allied side—had warned that a united Germany had never been defeated. "United we were indeed," proclaimed Fuchs and his fellow leaders. But by the time Owen wrote this poem from the trenches in



Wilfred Owen

France in the spring of 1918 (probably no later than early June), the estimated war dead on battlefields alone was already more than seven million, with no end in sight. Owen was killed in action during the crossing of the Sambre-Oise Canal, only a week before the end of the war. His mother received the telegram on the day the armistice was signed—on November 11, 1918.

In Owen's poem, the land of Moriah becomes a metaphor for the Western Front in Europe, and "parapets and trenches"—the accompaniments to warfare then—are added to the binding materials in the biblical story. Abram becomes an advocate for war, and for no real purpose—even when he is shown a way out:

But the old man would not do so [offer the ram instead], but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

In the Bible, Abraham's willingness to obey God's initial command—to prepare and offer Isaac for sacrifice—is justified because it involves his obedience to Divine authority and his deference to God's wisdom and incomprehensible righteousness. But once God clarifies His command, forbids the sacrifice, and provides a substitute in the form of the ram, nothing but sheer savagery and evil could have motivated Abraham to go through with the sacrifice in defiance of God's admonition concerning humane behavior. Similarly, whatever justification for war in terms of legitimate grievances the Great Powers might have had with regard to one another would, in Owen's perception, have evaporated in the face of alternative paths to resolution and negotiated settlements.

God is nearly peripheral to the poet's consideration. Owen's condemnation is directed at mankind and its leadership, whom he charges with the crime of human sacrifice. If, through the vehicle of the *akedat yitzhak* story, God has long ago forbidden human sacrifice and deliberate bloodshed to no purpose—and offered reason instead—then Owen's implication is clear in this allegory: Even civilized mankind has indeed learned nothing from that lesson, even by the dawn of the 20th century.

Zaimont has interwoven Owen's poem with another, much older text about the *akeda*: an anonymous 15th-century English mystery play, *Abraham and Isaac*, called *Brome* for the hall in Suffolk where the manuscript appears to have been kept until recent years. At the conclusion of the cantata, even though Abraham has already sacrificed Isaac by then, there is an echo of the opening scene—to the words from that mystery play—

recalling the initial command to offer Isaac while he is yet alive. The audience is free to interpret the significance of this recapitulation. Perhaps it suggests that the story is beginning again, or that it can begin again and therefore end differently—that there may yet be a second chance for mankind to revert to the biblical conclusion of the story in terms of its own morality.

The composer has also added the original Aramaic and Hebrew text of the *kaddish yatom*, the special variant of the Judaic doxology that is recited to honor the memory of parents and siblings—and, optionally, of other close relatives. That memorial *kaddish* recitation may be for Isaac or for Abraham, for the slaughtered in Europe, or for all mankind in future if it does not heed the lesson of the *akedat yitzhak*.

The composer has offered the following comments on the musical parameters of *Parable*:

Musically, the work is dramatic, with considerable text-painting, and it is tightly knit motivically. Musical materials are derived throughout from two sources: a rising and then falling half-step (part of the angel's command, "Abram, wilt thou rest?"), and a lyrical progression associated with Isaac. Contrasting with the highly forceful, narrative choral sections are lyric solos for Abram and Isaac in accompanied recitative style. Abram is given music that underlines the enormity of his quandary. His mood is mercurial, shifting between the desire to reassure his son and the knowledge that he must be the agent of his son's death.

There are two versions of *Parable*: one for voices and organ; and the one recorded here, for voices, five strings, and harpsichord. It was commissioned

by Florilegium, an amateur chorus in New York City, through a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts in 1986. Its world premiere occurred at Merkin Hall in June of that year, and it has been performed numerous times throughout the United States, including a performance by the New York Virtuoso Singers in 2004.



MEDITATIONS AT THE TIME OF THE NEW YEAR

The texts of the two movements of *Meditations at the Time of the New Year* are drawn from parts of various creative silent meditations that typically supplement the Rosh Hashana liturgy in many Reform synagogue services. The first movement, *Dawn*, is basically contemplative in its overall mood. Renewal—one of the principal spiritual themes in the liturgy of Rosh Hashana—is expressed with transparent but judiciously layered textures. The second movement, *Hope*, is more forceful, progressing from dense clusters to uplifting chords, especially at the words “Glory to those who hope.” This spirit of optimism, too, is one of the Jewish New Year’s dominant liturgical sentiments. The piece concludes with a calm coda that recalls the ambience of reverential prayer, its words taken from a well-known English translation in classical Reform liturgy: “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to Thee, O Lord.”

A subtle and sparsely scored percussion accompaniment features bell sounds on glockenspiel and chimes. *Meditations* was commissioned by the Concert Choir of Skidmore College and was composed in 1997.

—Neil W. Levin

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Texts and Translations

SACRED SERVICE FOR THE SABBATH EVENING (excerpts)

Sung in English

1

I. “THE LORD REIGNETH”

The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of isles be glad. Clouds and darkness are around Him; righteousness and justice are the foundations of His throne. The heavens declare His righteousness, let the earth rejoice, and all the peoples behold His glory. Zion heareth and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice; because of Thy judgments, O Lord. O ye that love the Lord, hate evil. He preserveth the souls of His saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Be glad in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks to His holy Name.

2

II. “GOD AND FATHER”

God and Father, we have entered Thy sanctuary on this Sabbath to hallow Thy Name and to offer unto Thee prayers of thanksgiving. The week of toil is ended, the day of rest is come. Thou, Creator of all, has given us the blessing of labor, so that by our work we may fashion things of use and beauty. May the fruit of our labor be acceptable unto Thee. May each new Sabbath find us going from strength to strength, so that by Thy grace we may be helped to an even worthier work. Make us conscious of our obligation to Thee and of opportunities for service which Thou hast put within our reach. Help us to use our powers for the betterment of our fellowmen so that Thy children may be gladdened by the work of our hands, God and Father.

14

3

IV. "WHY DO WE DEAL TREACHEROUSLY?"

Why do we deal treacherously brother against brother?
Why do we deal treacherously—why do we, why?
Seek good, not evil, that ye may live.

4

VI. "O LORD, HOW CAN WE KNOW THEE?"

O Lord, how can we know Thee? Where can we find
Thee, O Lord? Thou art as close to us as breathing and
yet art farther than the farthestmost star. Thou art
mysterious as the vast solitudes of the night and yet
familiar as the sun. Lord, O Lord, how can we know
Thee? Where can we find Thee, O Lord? Thou livest
within our hearts, as Thou dost pervade the world,
and we through righteousness behold Thy presence.
We behold Thy presence.

5

VII. SH'MA YISRA'EL

Sung in Hebrew and English

Sh'ma yisra'el adonai eloheinu adonai ehad
Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.
Barukh shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed
Praised be His Name whose glorious kingdom is forever
and evermore.

6

VIII. "THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD"

Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart,
with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these
words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon
thy heart. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy
children, and shalt speak of them when thou sittest
in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when

thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Thou shalt
bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be
between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them upon the
doorposts of thy house and upon thy gates. That ye
may remember and do all my commandments, and be
holy unto your God.

Eternal truth it is that Thou alone art God and there
is none else.



7

A WOMAN OF VALOR (ESHET HAYIL)

Based on the English translation from *The Holy Scriptures*,
The Jewish Publication Society, 1955

Eshet hayil mi yimtza?

A woman of valor who can find? —for her price is far
above rubies.

She looks well to the ways of her household, and eats
not the bread of idleness.

The heart of her husband trusts safely in her.
She does him good, she does him no evil.

She girds her loins with strength,
She strengthens her arms, stretches out her hands,
Yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.
Strength and honor clothe her, and she shall rejoice
in time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue
is the law of kindness.

She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she
reaches forth to the needy.
Her children call her blessed.

Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain,
But the woman who fears the Lord shall be praised.

Many daughters have done valiantly,
But you excel them all.



8

PARABLE: A Tale of Abram and Isaac

Texts adapted from the medieval mystery play *Abraham and Isaac*; "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young" by Wilfred Owen; and the Aramaic and Hebrew prayer Mourners' *Kaddish*.

ANGEL

Abram, Abram wilt thou rest?
The Lord commandeth thee,
Thy Lord commandeth thee for to take
Isaac, thy young son, that thou lovest best,
And with his blood make sacrifice.

Go! Go thou into the Land of Vision
And offer thy child unto the Lord;
I shall lead thee and show also.
Unto God's hest, Abram, accord!

CHORUS

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the firstborn spake and said:

ISAAC

Father, my Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt offering?
Where the quicke beast that ye should kill?

ABRAM

Dread thee not, my child,
Our Lord will send me and show here in this place
Some manere of beast for to take,
Through His sweet sand [messenger].

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ISAAC

Yea, father, but my heart shiv'reth
To see thy drawn sword so.
Tell me, father,
Bear ye your sword drawn for me?

ABRAM

Ah, Isaac, sweet son, peace! Peace!
Peace, dear child,
In all thy life thou grieved me never.
Sweet son, my sweetest child in earth,
In all thy life thou grieved me never once;
I love thee best of all.
Isaac, thou hast been to me child full good.
But child, though I mourn ne'er so fast,
Yet must I here
In this place shed all thy blood.

ISAAC

Mercy!

ABRAM

Ah, Isaac, sweet son, peace! Peace!

ISAAC

Mercy, father!

ABRAM

Peace, dear child, leave off thy moans!
Isaac, thou break'st my heart in three.

ISAAC

Mercy! Ah, mercy father, mourn no more!
Your weeping maketh my heart sore
As mine own death.

CHORUS

Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
(The Lord commandeth thee.)

ISAAC

Father, have mercy, turn down my face.
Would I the stroke were done!

CHORUS

When lo! An angel called him out of heaven,
Saying:

ANGEL

Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.

ISAAC

Father! Why smite ye nought?
O, would I the stroke were done!

ANGEL

Lo! Abram!
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.

CHORUS

But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

ANGEL

Abram, Abram wilt thou rest?
The Lord commandeth thee to take
Thy son for sacrifice.

ISAAC

Mercy, father.

MOURNERS' KADDISH

Sung in Hebrew

Translation from the Hebrew by Rabbi Morton M. Leifman

*yitgaddal v'yitkaddash sh'me rabba
b'alma div'ra khirute
v'yamlikh malkhute
b'hayyeikhon uv'yomeikhon
uv'hayyei d'khol beit yisra'el
ba'agala uvizman kariv
v'imru: amen.*

y'he sh'me rabba m'varakh l'alam ul'almei almaya

*yitbarakh v'yishtabbah v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam
v'yitnasse v'yithaddar v'yitalle v'yithallal
sh'm d'kud'sha
b'rikh hu.
l'ella ul'ella min kol birkhata v'shirata
tushb'hata v'nehemata da'amiran b'alma
v'imru: amen.*

*y'he sh'lama rabba min sh'mayya
v'hayyim aleinu v'al kol yisra'el
v'imru: amen.*

*ose shalom bimromav
hu ya'ase shalom aleinu
v'al kol yisra'el
v'imru: amen.*

[May God's great Name be even more exalted
and sanctified in the world that He created
according to His own will;
and may He fully establish His kingdom
in your lifetime,
in your own days,
and in the life of all those
of the House of Israel—

soon, indeed without delay.
Those praying here signal assent
and say, "amen."

May His great Name be praised forever,
for all time,
for all eternity.

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

May there be abundant peace for us
and for all Israel;
and those praying here signal assent
and say, "amen."

May He who establishes peace in His high place
establish peace for us and for all Israel;
and those praying here signal assent
and say, "amen."]



MEDITATIONS AT THE TIME OF THE NEW YEAR

9

I. DAWN

Every dawn renews.
Vast radiance and secret wonder fill the world

The stars of heaven,
The elements, arrayed in perfection,
These are awesome in their majesty—marvels,
yet never greater than the mind who beholds
them.

Just as the hand, held before the eye, can hide the
tallest mountain,
This miracle, matter, begets a wonder:
the body thinks;
insight comes from flesh;
the soul is born of dust to build towers of hope,
to open within us doors of love.

Vast radiance and secret wonder fill the world.
Space, ... Time, without end—eternity.

There is a grace that every dawn renews,
A loveliness in every morning fresh ...
every morning, every ...

The world is not mere fate....
(Every dawn renews.)

II. HOPE

Glory to those who hope!
 For the future is theirs;
 ... Hear the sound of joy and gladness; let us exult!

Glory to those who hope!
 For the future is theirs;
 We love dawn as a promise....

We rejoice in the light, we rejoice in the day.
 We rejoice in the beauty of the earth
 In the love of family we rejoice.
 We rejoice, and shall rejoice for evermore.
 —Glory to those who hope!

Join hands, trust in creation—
 Forge, then, a vision of things to come.

A great hope shall be fulfilled.
 There will be peace in the land, we shall be unafraid.

There will be peace in the land.
 (Glory to those who hope!)

* * * * *

May the words of my mouth and the
 meditation of my heart be acceptable unto Thee,
 O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

[Texts from *Gates of Repentance: The New Union
 Prayerbook for the Days of Awe.*

Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1978.
 Concept and assemblage by the composer.]

About the Performers



Born in 1954 in Lynn, Massachusetts, baritone **JAMES MADDALENA** is a graduate of the New England Conservatory. He made his debut with the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1974 and in 1981 began an association with director Peter Sellars, appearing in his productions of operas by Mozart, Haydn, and Handel. Maddalena first gained international recognition in 1987 for his portrayal of Richard Nixon in the Houston Grand Opera premiere of John Adams's *Nixon in China*, directed by Peter Sellars, and he sang the part again in London in 2000 when that production was mounted by the English National Opera. Maddalena has created a number of other notable operatic roles, and as an active concert artist, he sings a repertoire ranging from Bach and Handel to Mozart, Brahms, Orff, and Hindemith.

The **ERNST SENFF CHOIR** has become an institution in Berlin's cultural life. At the beginning of the 1960s Professor Ernst Senff directed a choir at Berlin's music conservatory (Hochschule) in addition to his duties as chorusmaster of the Municipal Opera (now Deutsche Oper). The choir's accomplishments soon led to concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic, the Berlin Radio Symphony (now Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester), and other orchestras, and provided the opportunity to work with internationally prominent conductors. All choir members are trained musicians. The ensemble's repertoire ranges across the entire choral-symphonic literature of the 18th to 20th centuries, with a special emphasis on contemporary works. On Senff's retirement, in 1990, Sigurd Brauns was appointed by the choir as his successor.

The **RUNDFUNK-SINFONIEORCHESTER BERLIN** (Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra) was founded in 1923 as the first radio orchestra in Germany. Its chief conductors have included Bruno Seidler-Winkler, Eugen Jochum, Sergiu Celibidache, and Hermann Abendroth. Among its guests have been such illustrious names as Otto Klemperer, Bruno Walter, Erich Kleiber, Herbert von Karajan, and George Szell. Many of the greatest composers of the 20th century have performed their own music with this orchestra, either as conductors or soloists, among them Hindemith, Honegger, Milhaud, Prokofiev, Strauss, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Weill, and Zemlinsky—and more recently Krzysztof Penderecki, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Berthold Goldschmidt, and Udo Zimmermann. Since 1956 the orchestra has performed in twenty countries, including China and Japan. It also records extensively for DeutschlandRadio, founded in 1994, and many of its recordings have been awarded the German Record Critics' Prize. In 2002 Marek Janowski succeeded Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos as the orchestra's principal music director.



GERARD SCHWARZ, one of the leading American conductors, was born in Weehawken, New Jersey, in 1947. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at The Juilliard School, during which time he also played with the American Brass Quintet and then joined the New York Philharmonic, succeeding his former teacher, William Vacchiano, as co-principal trumpet.

Increasingly attracted to conducting, he resigned from the Philharmonic in 1977 to pursue a full-time podium career. In 1977 he cofounded the New York Chamber Symphony (originally the "Y" Chamber Symphony), serving as its music director for twenty-five seasons. In 1982, he became director of Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, and in 2002 he became its emeritus conductor. In 1985 Schwarz was named music director of the Seattle Symphony, and in 2001 he also became music director of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. In 2000 he was made an honorary fellow of John Moores University in Liverpool, and in 2002 he received the ASCAP award for his outstanding contribution to American contemporary music. Schwarz was a founding member of Music of Remembrance, an organization dedicated to remembering Holocaust victim musicians. In 2004 he was nominated by President Bush to serve on the National Council on the Arts, the advisory body of the National Endowment for the Arts.



Alaska-born soprano **MARGARET KOHLER**, who earned her college tuition by fishing commercially for crab and halibut, was the first-prize winner in the 2002 International Opera Singers Competition in New York. She earned her master of music degree at

the Eastman School of Music and her B.M. and B.A. at Oberlin Conservatory and College. In 2004 she made her New York recital debut, and she debuted in Germany as soprano soloist with Bachchor Mannheim, premiering Samuel Adler's *Jona*.

The **EVEREST STRING QUARTET** was composed of a group of students at the Eastman School of Music during the early 1990s. The musicians, who have all gone on to illustrious careers, were Stephen Rose, first violin; Jeanne Preucil Rose, second violin; Joan DerHovsepian, viola; and Brant Taylor, cello. Stephen and Jeanne Rose now play in the Cleveland Orchestra, DerHovsepian plays in the Houston Symphony, and Taylor plays in the Chicago Symphony.

Conductor **SAMUEL ADLER** was born in 1928 in Mannheim, Germany. He studied composition with Aaron Copland, Paul Hindemith, Walter Piston, and Randall Thompson, and conducting with Serge Koussevitzky, and he holds degrees from Boston University and Harvard. In 1966 he became professor of composition (and later department chairman) at the Eastman School of Music. Adler has served on the faculty of The Juilliard School since 1997, while remaining professor emeritus at Eastman.



Soprano **FRANCES LUCEY** studied in her native Dublin. Engaged at first by the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, she is now leading soprano at Munich's Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz, where she has performed the roles of Sandrina in *La Finta giardiniera* and Maria in *West Side Story*. Her other stage appearances have taken her to opera houses throughout Europe and to

the United States, where she made an acclaimed North American recital debut at New York's Frick Collection, gave several concerts with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra, and sang in Handel's *Messiah* with the Philadelphia Orchestra. In Ireland, she has won critical praise in opera appearances at the Wexford Festival. Her many engagements with Dublin's RTE Orchestra include a televised *Carmina Burana* and an acclaimed recording of C. V. Stanford's *Requiem*. Her first solo CD, *Off to Philadelphia*, features Irish folksongs, songs by Gershwin and Cole Porter, as well as spirituals.



JOHN ALER was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1949. He studied at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., at the American Opera Center at The Juilliard School in New York (1972–76), and at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood. In 1977 he made his opera

debut as Ernesto in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* at the American Opera Center, and he won two first prizes at the Concours International de Chant in Paris. He has earned a reputation as one of the world's finest lyric tenors. His European stage appearances include Covent Garden; the Deutsche Oper of Berlin; the Vienna, Hamburg, and Bavarian state operas; the Salzburg Festival; and the Geneva, Madrid, Lyon, and Brussels operas.



Baritone **RANDALL SCARLATA** studied at the Eastman School of Music and in Vienna, and at The Juilliard School, where he earned his master's degree and was a member of the Juilliard Opera Center. He won first prize at the Young Concert Artists International Auditions (1999) as well as the Diallo Prize, the Lindemann Vocal Chair, and the Walker Fund Prize, which sponsored

his Washington, D.C., debut at the Kennedy Center in 2000. In the United States, he has sung at New York's Alice Tully and Merkin Concert halls, Boston's Gardner Museum, and at the Cleveland Art Song, Marlboro, and Ravinia festivals; and he has appeared as soloist with the Minnesota, Philadelphia, National Symphony, and California Symphony orchestras. In Europe, he has given recitals in Vienna, Salzburg, Hamburg, and Nice.

RABBI RODNEY MARINER was born in Australia in 1941 and graduated from Monash University Melbourne. He studied for the rabbinate at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, and in London at Leo Baeck College. Since 1982 he has been the senior rabbi at Belsize Square Synagogue, an independent London congregation established by German and Central European German-

speaking Jews in 1938. This synagogue maintains the unique blend of the timely and the timeless that characterized the Liberale Judaism of the middle and late 19th century in western Europe, especially in Germany, continuing up until its destruction by the end of the 1930s. In 2005 Rabbi Mariner was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Jewish Theological Seminary.

London-born **HAROLD LESTER** studied music at Trinity College of Music, specializing in all aspects of keyboard work. He has been principal pianist with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the New Philharmonia Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London Sinfonietta, frequently as a soloist. He toured the world as an accompanist with the late Cathy Berberian for some ten years, performing the world premiere of Berio's *Recital 1* and playing in major festivals. He has worked alongside contemporary composers including Berio, Stockhausen, Ligeti, and Messiaen. He is a specialist in Baroque music and has toured internationally as a solo harpsichordist. As a continuo player, he has played and recorded with leading chamber orchestras and many Baroque chamber groups. He is professor of harpsichord and Baroque music at Kingston University, and has worked extensively in the world of opera as a répétiteur.

Audiences often remark about the special interaction among the players of the **RUSKIN ENSEMBLE**, which was formed in London by a group of friends, all talented musicians. The Ensemble has given concerts throughout the British Isles and regularly performs at National Trust houses and gardens. Named after the Victorian writer and critic John Ruskin, the Ensemble has also created programs combining music with art or literature and performed in period costume, including *Jane Austen—A Regency Soirée*;

The Brontës Encountered; and *There Is No Wealth but Life*, about the life and times of John Ruskin. The group is particularly committed to taking music into the community, performing to audiences that normally do not have access to live classical music. The musical director, **JANE GOMM** (violin), studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music. She has toured Europe, Nigeria, Australia, and South America with different chamber orchestras, including the London Mozart Players and the London Festival Orchestra.



Laudibus, with conductor Michael Brewer

Founded near the end of the 1990s, the chamber choir **LAUDIBUS** is known for its blend and flexibility, for the breadth of its programming, and for its willingness to tackle difficult new works. It has given several world premieres, including works by Gavin Bryars, Giles Swayne, and Richard Allain. The twenty-two members of this dynamic ensemble are selected by audition from the 130-voice National Youth Choir of Great Britain. **MICHAEL BREWER**, musical director of Laudibus as well as of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, has directed the World Youth Choir and the National Youth Chamber Choir, and he makes frequent guest appearances with prominent choirs.

He has twice won the worldwide competition Let the Peoples Sing. Brewer has been the music director at Chethams, Britain's largest music school for gifted children. He is known for his choral workshops, which he offers annually throughout Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain.



Michael Brewer

Soprano **MARTHA COWAN** is active as a musician in concert, film, and recording throughout the Los Angeles area, and she has prepared, produced, and performed programs at home and abroad, from Beethoven in Bonn to Bach in Carmel, California. A specialist in early music, with an abiding interest in 17th-century repertoire, she also enjoys the challenge of singing contemporary works with their composers present, as she has with, among others, Boulez, Ligeti, Adams, and Zaimont.

Mezzo-soprano **KIMBALL WHEELER** made her 1982 New York Philharmonic debut under the direction of Zubin Mehta, marking the start of an international career that includes world-premiere performances at the Rome Opera and Teatro La Fenice, as well as performances with major orchestras and opera companies internationally. Her repertoire ranges from Monteverdi to Berio, Lees, and Zaimont, and she collaborates frequently with composers, appearing in film, television, and recordings. Winner of the Liederkrantz Award for Wagnerian singers and the Pro Musica Award, she has appeared at major halls throughout the United States and at many European festivals.

The **CHORAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**, formed in 1982, has earned praise both at home and abroad for its performances of American music and of neglected masterworks by composers of other nationalities. The ensemble has toured Europe, appearing with such orchestras as the Philharmonia of London, the Munich Philharmonic, and the Athens State Orchestra, and at festivals in Vienna, Prague, and Vilnius. At home, under the direction of Nick Strimple, it has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony.



Texas-born **NICK STRIMPLE**, music director of the Choral Society of Southern California and the Los Angeles Zimriyah Chorale, was educated at Baylor University and the University of Southern California. He has been a guest conductor with orchestras throughout the world and has prepared choruses for some of the

world's greatest conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Erich Leinsdorf. Strimple is author of the critically acclaimed book *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* and co-author of *Music in the Holocaust: Survival, Resistance and Response*. He is recognized internationally for his work with Shoah music and has served for ten years as a consultant to the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust. As a respected composer, Strimple has written concert and liturgical works as well as film and television scores, and has also served as arranger (mostly choral arranger) for such entertainers as Frank Sinatra, Rod Stewart, Lou Rawls, and Air Supply.

CREDITS

Judith Lang Zaimont (b. 1945)

Sacred Service for the Sabbath Evening (excerpts) (1976)

Publisher: Galaxy Music Corporation (E. C. Schirmer)

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

Recording Producer: Wolfram Nehls

Recording Engineer: Henri Thaon

Assistant Recording Engineer: Susanne Beyer

Recording Project Manager: Paul Schwendener

A Woman of Valor (*eshet hayil*) (1977)

Publisher: Judith Lang Zaimont

Recording: Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, August 1992

Recording Producer: Michael Isaacson

Recording Engineer: David Dusman

Recording Project Manager: Michael Isaacson

Parable: A Tale of Abram and Isaac (1986)

Publisher: Hildegard Publishing Co.

Recording: The Warehouse, London, UK, July 2000

Recording Producer: Simon Weir

Recording Engineer: Campbell Hughes

Recording Project Manager: Neil Levin

Meditations at the Time of the New Year (1997)

Publisher: Judith Lang Zaimont

Recording: Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church, Beverly Hills, CA, May 1999

Recording Producer: Judith Lang Zaimont

Recording Engineer: Tony Beecher

Credits

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