

January 20, 2015

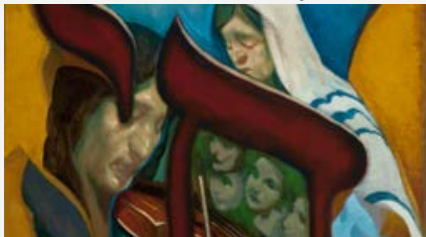
## Sacred Masterpieces from the Jewish Soul

In creating what is widely considered the paradigm of the intersection of Jewish liturgy and art, Ernest Bloch reflected: "I am battling against notes, sounds, rhythms, to extirpate out of my soul all the unexpressed music which has been latent—for centuries—which has been awaiting this marvelous text...." The battle was worth it, both for Bloch and for the world of American Jewish sacred music, which today has *Avodat Hakodesh* to serve as model and inspiration.

Avodat Hakodesh is now available from the Milken Archive in a recording featuring Leonard Bernstein and baritone Robert Merrill. The album is the

latest installment in [Volume 7: Masterworks of Prayer: Art in Worship](#). Bloch understood the broad appeal of his creation, commenting that "though intensely Jewish in its roots, this message seems to me above all a gift of Israel to the whole of mankind."

### Get Spiritual



Explore all of our liturgical work and its history in **Volume 7**.

### Get Studios



What is the Sound of **Four Saxophones** **Praying**? Find out in Leo Smit's Tzaddik.

### Get Nostalgic



Recently performed at Queens College, **Bernstein's MASS** is explored **with a video trailer** in this article..

Also featured on this album is Stefan Wolpe's *Yigdal Cantata*, a moving setting of the medieval hymn of faith known as yigdal [*elohim ḥaʾaf*] (We exalt the presence of the living God). It is based on Moses Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith—familiar to synagogue-oriented American Jewry from its role as an optional concluding hymn following Sabbath and holyday evening and/or *mussaf* services. One of many pieces commissioned by Cantor David Putterman (with New York's Park Avenue Synagogue from 1933 to 1976), it was premiered at that congregation's third annual service of new music on a Sabbath eve in 1945 and was later adapted as a cantata for concert performance.

Both works were composed over 70 years ago, and are based on centuries-old religious texts. But it is that very history, artfully channeled through the Jewish souls of their composers, that makes them timeless and ever-relevant.