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Bloch and Milhaud's Preludes to Acculturation

When cultures collide, such as they have when European Jews immigrated to the United States, change is often inescapable. Yet, the instigation for reflection and the forming of new perspectives can serve as a jumping-off point for artistic creativity. The resulting art can serve as both a guide and a bridge between worlds—one that highlights the uniqueness of each and, at the same time, their commonalities.

The notion of art as a bridge between two worlds has helped spawn some of the great musical hallmarks of the American Jewish experience. At the same

time, the idea of art for the sake of worship—a bridge to the divine—has inspired many of the great masters to compose simple, functional music such as that included on *Organ Music for the Synagogue* ([Album 13 of Volume 4: *Cycle of Life in Synagogue and Home*](#)), newly released from the Milken Archive.

Among the gems included here are a set of six preludes by Ernest Bloch and four from a set of nine by Darius Milhaud. Bloch's were composed in 1949, an otherwise unproductive year that witnessed the first recording of his *Avodat Hakodesh*. The four Milhaud preludes were adapted from previously composed incidental music for a play, and are based on Provençal and troubadour melodies from France's medieval period.



Legend



Yehudi Wyner elected as president of the **American Academy of Arts and Letters**.

Legacy



Milken Archive interviews **Mme. Milhaud** about a **long-forgotten Jewish work**.

Longevity



"Youngest of the old guys" **Pete Sokolow** brings **Klezmer to a new generation**.

Whether influenced by Milhaud's Provençal Jewry and flight from German aggression, or by Bloch's own investigation of a voice from beyond himself that he attributed to an ancient Jewish soul, the compositions show that music composed for the functional purposes of synagogue worship can also have value as art in its own right.

The album is rounded out with works by such accomplished composers as Ellis Kohs and Robert Strarer, along with two exciting pieces by Ofer Ben-Amots, all deftly performed by Barbara Harbach and Juergen Essle.