

March 4, 2014

Music for Weddings



A celebration is a choice to focus our attention on the positive, on hope. In the case of weddings, it's the community coming together to celebrate the hope of family and future generations. If you're in the midst of planning a wedding you've probably already started thinking about one of the occasion's most important components: music. And not just the klezmer band to kick off the party after the crushing of the glass, but music to accompany the processions and the lighting of candles, and to segue between different parts of the ceremony, etc.

Such music for Jewish weddings comprises one of two new releases available from the Milken Archive of Jewish Music in [Volume 4: Cycle of Life in Synagogue and Home](#). And with a composer roster that reads like a who's who of Jewish music, it is music that serves its "functional" purpose without sacrificing artistic expression.

Learn



Exclusive **video interview** of composer Jack Gottlieb discussing composing his setting of **Set Me as a Seal** from the Song of Songs..

Listen



The **Sephardic Music Festival** in LA is on now, "showcasing the **remarkable diversity** that exists within the Jewish community."

Celebrate



The **Pushkin Klezmer Band** plays on the **revolutionary stage** as part of the **celebration in Kiev** on the Euromaidan.

Need a wedding march? This album has three by Ernest Bloch, the Swiss-born émigré many consider to be history's greatest "Jewish" composer. Got *sheva b'rakhot*? The "seven blessings" that are recited after the exchange of vows and rings and the reading of the *ketuba* (marriage contract) are featured here in settings by Simon Spiro, Meir Finkelstein, and Morris Barash. Equally lovely, but divergent in mood and feeling, are several art-song liturgical settings featuring Portland's noted cantor Ida Rae Cahana and San Francisco's Rosalyn Barak.

When juxtaposed as they are here, the contrast of the larger, more formal services with the intimate art songs reminds us that marriage is not only about the bride and groom but also about their relationship to a broader community and, as the liturgy reflects, a higher power. Perhaps that is why weddings are so important. Because on some level they embody the hope implied in the words of the citizens of Anatevka, "it takes a wedding to make us say: let's live another day!"