

October 9, 2014

American Sacred Services for the Sabbath Eve

Our latest release, [Volume 4, Part 4: Sacred Services for the Sabbath Eve](#), is a new album featuring compositions by Max Helfman, Adolphe Katchko, Isadore Freed and Jack Gottlieb. This installment of the *Cycle of Life in Synagogue and Home* volume continues our exploration of the American contribution to Jewish tradition and worship, and vice versa.

The album opens with a small sampling of the music of Max Helfman, who was born in Poland and immigrated to America at age eight. He became and remains one of the most influential figures in the history of American Jewish

music. His *Shabbat M'nuha*, a series of four standard liturgical responses whose settings betray a folk- and dance-like sensibility, are but a glimpse of his vast contributions to the American synagogue.

Adolphe Katchko was already an established cantor in Europe when he immigrated to America in 1921 and quickly joined the ranks of the "Golden Age" cantors. Katchko was also among the few of that cadre known for composing for choral as well as cantorial voices. His Sabbath eve service, *Avodat Aharon*, of which four excerpts are included in this release, serves as a case in point.



Be Influenced



Jack Gottlieb talks to Neil Levin about his early years and the influence of his teacher, **Max Helfman**.

Be Joyous



Sukkot begins on Wednesday. Start the celebration with Moshe Ganchoff's setting of *Hosha na even sh'siya*.

Be Transported



Hearken back to the days of Yiddish Cinema with clips from a 1940s film, scored by **Alexander Olshanetsky**.

Isadore Freed, born in Belarus and brought to America at age three, went on to attend the Philadelphia Conservatory and University of Philadelphia—two schools the level of which would surely have been out of reach for him had his parents not left the Czarist Russian empire. Freed's contribution to this album, *Salomone Rossi: Sacred Service*, is based on a series of contrapuntal choral settings of Hebrew liturgy composed by the Italian Jewish composer Salamone Rossi and published under the title *Hashirim asher lishlomo* in Venice in 1623. That Rossi, an Italian Jew, was given the prominence and ease of restrictions at this time was proof positive of his talents. That Freed had the freedom to choose to devote his talents to bringing Rossi's work to modern audiences is reflective of America's contribution to Jewish history and art.

The album concludes with Jack Gottlieb's *Love Songs for the Sabbath*—a deft interweaving of poetry by Yehuda Halevi, Hannah Sennesh and others, with standard liturgical texts for tenor, narrator, chorus, and organ. Gottlieb is unique in this ensemble for being born in the U.S., but to see his connection to those that came before him one need only look at his dedication of this composition to his teacher, the aforementioned Max Helfman.

Whether based on texts that are thousands of years old or compositions that are hundreds of years old, these works help form a landscape of Jewish life in America. This is a life made more vital thanks to the freedoms granted by the rights to honor one's history, pursue one's passions and define one's identity.

Sample the songs and learn more a

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CYCLE OF LIFE IN SYNAGOGUE AND HOME

VOLUME 4

ALBUM 6

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