

May 7, 2013

## Harmonizing with History

### The Milken Archive releases Volume 18 – Psalms and Canticles: Jewish Choral Art in America

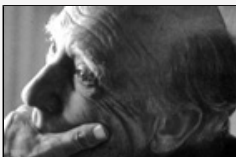
Few nations or religions have historically relied so heavily on their simultaneous conservation of tradition and ability to adapt to the era and dominant culture in which they lived as the Jews. The combination of ancient religious traditions with the secular Jewish culture of 20<sup>th</sup> century America that manifested itself in the works featured in [Psalms and Canticles: Jewish Choral Art in America](#), the latest multimedia volume release from the Milken Archive, was at once a departure from the past and a distinctly Jewish tribute to it.



Jewish choral music stretches back to the Levite choirs in the ancient temple. The psalms they sang inspired liturgical music by Jewish and Christian composers for millennia. Yet secular Jewish choral music only began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Jews in Europe began singing the classics in Hebrew translation and performing original non-liturgical compositions in various languages. They brought this concept to America as one of the vestiges of their old-world life that they could easily fit on crowded boats; and inspired a new generation of “American” Jewish composers, who began building a repertoire of secular Jewish choral music for professional singers, community choruses and moonlighting synagogue choirs. The resulting music of Volume 18 covers a lot of stylistic ground, but all of it illustrates the fundamental duality of the genre: its ancient, sacred roots and its paradoxically modern origins.

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### From the Milken Archive and Beyond: More Geist from our Zeit



#### OLD JERUSALEM BY JULIUS CHAJES

Jerusalem Day is May 8, Celebrate with Psalm 134



#### NEW: DANSE DE SALOMÉ

Documentary featuring Avner Itai and the BBC Singers.



#### TOVAH FELDSHUH IN DETROIT

May 12th in JCC Stephen Gottlieb Music Festival.

**News and multimedia content from around the Jewish Music world.**

If you have something fun and note-worthy to share with our readers, [send us an email](#).

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*Psalms and Canticles* explores the American extension of this relatively recent, European-born tradition with music reflecting a broad range of contexts, approaches, and orientations: [Leonard Bernstein](#) channels Westside Story ([watch the concert performance](#) of *Chichester Palms*); [Paul](#)

[Schoenfield](#) channels the Italian Renaissance; [Lukas Foss](#) channels Obadiah the Proselyte; and [Philip Glass](#) channels...himself. New in this volume is a world-premiere recording of [Joseph Achron's \*Dance de Salomé\*](#), based on an ancient Samaritan Passover ritual, featuring the BBC Singers and Avner Itai (watch a [short documentary on the work](#)). Other new recordings include pieces by [Irving Fine](#), [Judith Shatin](#), [Leon Stein](#) and others.

Whether you just want to sit back and listen to the melodic melding of history and harmony, or learn more by watching the [video interviews](#) and reading the [in-depth introduction](#) by Neil W. Levin, [Volume 18 – Psalms and Canticles: Jewish Choral Art in America](#) has something for every appreciator of Jewish music and its history in the new world.

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