

Cantors Assembly • June 1984 • Sivan 5744 • Vol XIV • No 1 •

JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC

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JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC, *Volume XIV, Number 1*

June 1984 / Shevat 5744

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JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC is a semi-annual publication. The subscription fee is \$12.50 per year. All articles, communications and subscriptions should be addressed to *Journal of Synagogue Music, Cantors Assembly, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 10011.*

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**A NEW JEWISH OPERA:
"MIRIAM AND THE ANGEL OF DEATH"**

BEN W. BELFER

A new opera, "Miriam and the Angel of Death" based on a short story, "Devotion Without End," by J. L. Peretz, had its premiere performance on June 17, 1984 in the new Feinberg Auditorium of the Jewish Theological Seminary. It was composed by Lee Goldstein, an Instructor of Music in the Cantors Institute of the Seminary, to a libretto by Rabbi Raymond Scheindlin, Associate Professor of (Medieval Hebrew literature in the Rabbinical School. The opera was commissioned by the Seminary in celebration of the Year of the Library-5744 (1983-1984), to mark the dedication of the new Library. It is scored for five voices and two pianos. Mr. Goldstein has previously written a prize winning opera, scored for full orchestra, based on Euripides' "The Trojan Women".

"Miriam and the Angel of Death" is a welcome addition to an ever increasing list of operas by Jewish composers on Jewish themes, i.e. "Gimpel the Fool" by David Schiff, "The Golem" by Lazar Weiner, "And David Wept" by Ezra Laderman and two operas by Bruce Adolphe, "Mikhaels The Wise" and "False Messiah" all of which were produced by the 92nd St. Y. In addition there are two operas by Hugo Weisgall on Jewish themes, "Athalia" and "Nine Rivers From Jordan."

What makes "Miriam and the Angel of Death" different from the above mentioned works is that the main thrust of this opera is religious in nature with motifs drawn from Talmudic legend, Kabala, prayer and the Torah itself. The story, which takes place in Safed in the 16th Century during the time of the mystics, concerns a brilliant young Talmud scholar, Hanania, who commits the sin of misusing his knowledge of the Torah by hurting others. For this, the Prophet Elijah punishes him with the loss of his knowledge. He can only regain it by becoming a penitent. He is advised by the prophet that he must study with the great scholar, Reb Hiya, at his yeshiva in Safed. Hanania's redemption will come through the sacrifice of a righteous woman whose devotion to the Torah is unquestioned. That woman is Miriam, the beautiful daughter of Reb Hiya,

Ben W. Belfer, has been the distinguished hazzan of Temple B'nai Shalom of Rockville Centre New York for a quarter century. He also is a member of the faculty of the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music.

who is ready to sacrifice her life for the sake of her love for Hanania and the Torah.

The composer and librettist have done a remarkable job in creating a very effective dramatization of this beautiful Peretz story for the operatic stage. The five characters in the opera are very ably portrayed by energetic young singers who not only have very fine voices but also look and move well on the stage. They are:

Esrog merchant-John Trout, bass
 Hiya, an elderly Rabbi-Stephen Kalm, baritone
 (Miriam, his daughter-Margaret Chalker, soprano
 Hananiah, a young penitent-Patrick Romano, tenor
 Sarah, the ghost of Hiya's wife-Mihal Shiff, mezzo-soprano

Although there are some solo selections in this work, it is truly an ensemble opera largely consisting of duets, trios, quartets and culminating in a full bodied quintet in the wedding scene. It would be difficult to single out any one singer. They are all deserving of the highest praise for their fine singing and excellent interaction, not only vocally but also dramatically. This is a tribute to the stage director, Mr. Charles Konddek, who had to overcome the difficulty of working on a stage which was not conceived for operatic productions.

Mr. John Iacovelli designed a very effective and imaginative set despite the limitations of the stage. Mr. Lee Goldstein, who conducted, very ably and carefully guided his musical forces through the intricacies of the score. The fine blending of pianists Victoria Von Ark and Stuart Raleigh provided excellent support for the singers. We must also mention the excellent work of the lighting designer, Mr. Alan Baron, and costume designer, Mr. Gabriel Berry, whose design of the costume for Sarah, the ghost of Hiya's wife, was especially imaginative.

The composer proudly acknowledges the influence on his compositional styles of Hugo Weisgall, who was his teacher, and of Richard Strauss and J. S. Bach. The opera is an excellent example of fine contrapuntal writing with resulting lush harmonies achieved through this horizontal form. Mr. Goldstein makes use of some traditional synagogue motifs, namely the popular Maoz Tzur theme (see Example 1) at the beginning of the wedding scene and also the B'ruchim Habaim, Mi adir and the Sheva Brakhot — the seven benedictions of the marriage ceremony.

The wordless melody chanted by Reb Hiya (see Example 2), with which the opera begins evokes a mystical quality reminiscent of

the slow wordless melodies of the hassidim. It is used again in the last scene when Hananiah regains his lost knowledge. This time he is joined by Reb Hiya in a duet suggesting a wordless scholarly discussion.

The sheva brakhot provide the central theme for a very exciting quintet in the wedding scene in which the characters express their individual feelings. Although it is a fine example of vocal contrapuntal writing, in the opinion of this reviewer, the overly busy and heavy piano scoring in this section, seem to be in conflict with the vocal writing. This was also evident in the duet between Miriam and the Ghost of her mother, Sarah. In both cases the otherwise fine diction of the singers was adversely affected. Perhaps Mr. Goldstein will take this under advisement when he decides to orchestrate this opera.

The Jewish Theological Seminary of America is to be congratulated for commissioning this outstanding cultural effort, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Leonard Goodman.

We look forward to continued efforts in the field of Jewish musical creativity in the years ahead.

EXAMPLE

Miriam:

three un-der the hup pa. Fa-ther, marry us!

Chiya:

Now, fa-ther, now! Here is the
let us speak of it to-morrow.

EXAMPLE 2

Musical score for Example 2, consisting of three systems of staves. The first system shows a vocal line with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second system includes a vocal line with the annotation *Chiya:* and *(chanting wordlessly)*, and a piano accompaniment with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The piano part includes the instruction *sub. p*. The third system features a vocal line with the annotation *(slowly, another figure takes shape out)* and a piano accompaniment with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The piano part includes the instruction *mp*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

HAZZAN LEIB GLANTZ: ON HIS 20TH YEHRZEIT

AKIVA ZIMMERMAN

(Translated from the Yiddish
by Samuel Rosenbaum)

("Twenty years have gone by since the passing of the talented hazzan, Leib Glantz. He died a day after Shabbat Shirah, 13 Shevat 5724. I saw him for the last time on the morning of Shabbat Shirah on his way to meet with his old friend, the poet Eliezer Shteinman. The latter, in his article, "The Last Sabbath" writing on his long friendship with Glantz, points out that it was symbolic that the great Hazzan Pini Minkowski died on the day before Shabbat Shirah, 5684, Glantz a day after Shabbat Shirah, both lived to be 65; in gematria, **Has!** ... Silence!)

Glantz was born in Kiev on 23 Sivan 5658, (1898). His grandfathers, R. Nahum and R. Naftali, as was also his father, were hazzanim. From earliest childhood he was bathed in Torah and hazzanut. He came to the amud for the first time at the age of eight. At 14, he was engaged as the choir director of the Morkrover shtibl in Kiev where his father served as hazzan. For the first time in a hasidic **klayz'l** (small synagogue) were the tornalities of Sulzer, Lewandowski, Baruch Schorr and the other 19th century masters heard.

Glantz was also, from his early youth, active in Zionist circles and served his first hazzanic tenure in the Zionist **shtibl** in Galaz, There he met and became associated with Zalman Rosenthal, editor of "Our Times". From the 14th Zionist Congress on he was an official delegate to every Zionist congress which followed. Much of his time, when he was not singing, he devoted to Zionist activity. His first compositions were a setting to Bialik's "**Aharey Moti**" ("When I Die . . .") and to Rosenthal's poem, "The Broken Roof". It is worthy of note that as his first opus dealt with death, so did his final, a new setting to the Kaddish.

He came to America in 1926 where he immediately became a figure to be reckoned with in hazzanut and an aggressive worker in the Zionist movement, particularly in work in behalf of the Jewish National Fund.

He visited Palestine for the first time in 1930 and was greatly moved by that experience. During the time he was active in Zionist work he did not accept a hazzanic post. It was not until 1941 that

he signed a five year contract in Temple Sinai, and after that at Shaarey Tefillah, both in Los Angeles.

He became a sought-after concert artist all over America, Canada, South Africa, and of course, in Palestine. He settled in Israel in 1954 and became the Chief Hazzan of the Tiferet Tz'vi Congregation in Tel Aviv, where he also established a cantorial academy for the study of hazzanut.

During his active career Glantz made literally hundreds of recordings, most of them of his own original works as well as of arrangements of hassidic nigunim. It was well known that Albert Einstein was an avid fan of his hassidic music. 90 of his 216 compositions were created in Israel, in spite of the fact that he lived there no more than 10 years. This gives some indication of how deeply Israel had rooted itself in his soul. Thousands upon thousands of Jews came to hear him daven in those golden years. He was highly thought of in Israeli musical circles, and was named a judge in the great Egel competition sponsored by the city of Tel Aviv.

On Shabbat Shirah he gave a talk to colleagues in Tel Aviv. He collapsed in the midst of his talk. He was taken immediately to a hospital to no avail. Thousands attended his funeral and accompanied him to his final resting place in **K'rit Shaul**. Among the chief mourners was his life long friend, the third president of Israel, Zalman Shazar.

Following his death, there were printed seven volumes of synagogue music, Yiddish and Hebrew songs as well as the volume "**Z'harim**" ("Reflections"), an anthology of articles and essays about his life and accomplishments. In Tel Aviv, a street was named in his memory.

Glantz's own words on hazzanut offer a fitting conclusion to this brief biography:

"Hazzanim must remember that they are not only musical craftsmen", certainly not just "singers". They must themselves create and plan, they must serve as their own architects of contemporary Jewish prayer. They must be the true shlikhey tzibbur, the authentic mediators between the congregation and the Almighty. They must be creditable spokesmen in behalf of the Jewish people in God's own spiritual tongue, the language of Israel's "Song of Songs".

MORDECAI SANDBERG: HIS COMPOSITIONS AND HIS IDEAS

CHARLES HELLER

“Like diamonds set in gold” was how Berele Chagy described Mordecai Sandberg’s settings of Hebrew.

Edward Clark, a former Head of BBC Music, said of Sandberg: “A composer in whose path new music is following.”

These two comments, recalled by the composer’s widow Mrs. Hannah Sandberg, represent the impact of Sandberg on two kinds of listeners: one concerned with expressing the Hebrew Bible and prayers and the other with developments in modern music in general.

In this article I wish to present Sandberg’s work and achievements both to a new generation of music lovers and to an older generation that has not heard his work since the last major concerts given in New York some years ago.

Mordecai Sandberg was born in Romania in 1897 and qualified as a physician. He settled in Jerusalem in 1922. He studied music and philosophy from an early age and gradually devoted more and more time to these subjects until by 1939 he felt he had to devote himself entirely to composing. His unique combination of expertise in music, medicine and in the universalistic philosophy of Judaism, derived from a profound study of the Bible, gave him a heightened awareness of the role music could play in life. His main aims became the setting of the Bible and the development of a musical scale (including microtones) that would be intelligible to listeners of varied backgrounds — ideally from all regions of the world. His search for the appropriate kind of music to express the words and deeper meaning of the Bible led to the conclusion that only through the use of microtonal intervals could the Hebrew words take on their full flavour. In other words, Sandberg felt the need for an oriental tonal system to express oriental words. He pursued the study of different tonal systems, Eastern and Western, in order to develop his own ‘Universal Microtonal System’ aimed at being intelligible to

Charles Heller is Choir Director at Beth Emeth Yehuda Synagogue, Toronto. His original research on diverse aspects of Jewish Music has been published in the *Canadian Folk Music Journal* and the *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute*. He also taught a course in Jewish Music at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. His most recent set of musical arrangements is *Encore!* (duets published by the Toronto Council of Hazzanim, 1983).

all races of mankind. The result was the confident use of microtones as an integral part of his flowing melodic lines, creating for the first time sophisticated 'occidental' music that could express the Hebrew Bible and prayers with a sound appropriate to the nuances of spoken Hebrew.

In 1939 Sandberg was on a lecture tour of the U.S., and was prevented by the outbreak of war from returning to Palestine. He remained in New York, where he was able to mount concerts (at Carnegie Hall and Town Hall). These were always carefully noted by the music critics, as were broadcasts such as those on CBS performed by the CBS Symphony Orchestra. In 1970 he moved to Toronto, where he became associated with York University, teaching a course on Music and the Bible. A concert of his work, including the Cantata *Jerusalem*, was given there in 1972. He died in 1973.

The chief aim of Sandberg's compositions is flowing melody, following closely the contours of the text. From this stems Sandberg's use of polyphony as the interweaving of independent melodic lines, and the use of microtones. Let us examine this more closely.

The exploitation of altered sounds has been one of the main features of twentieth-century music. Its most familiar manifestation is through the electronic synthesiser, which is now almost a standard instrument for modern composers. Earlier microtonal compositions by Sandberg and others have, however, been largely ignored today, in the wake of cheap and accessible recordings using modern electronic instruments. As a result, the work of the microtonal pioneers has been relegated to the textbook. Sandberg has not even been treated that well, as no standard modern text dealing with microtones, including a major article by the Jewish musicologist Artur Holde,¹ even mentions his name. The *only* discussion of Sandberg's work that I have seen is by Joel Walbe.²

Sandberg's understanding of microtones could only have come about as a result of his scientific training. With the aid of skilled technicians, he was able to construct such instruments as organs tuned in quarter-, twelfth- and sixteenth-tones, a four-keyboard clavichord and two special guitars. So proficient had Sandberg become in his studies of microtones that he spoke on this subject to a conference on new music in London in 1938. The striking fact

¹ Arthur Holde, "Is there a future for Quarter-tone Music?" *Mus.Q.*, 24 (1938) pp. 528-533.

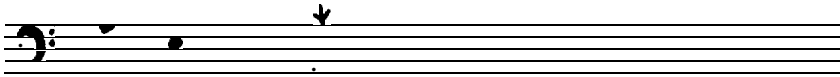
² Joel Walbe, *Der Gesang Israels und seine Quellen* (Hamburg: Christians Verlag, 1975).

is that the Czech composer, Alois Haba, was present at the same conference but he spoke on a different topic. Today, however, every college music student is taught the name of Haba in association with microtones, but none will have heard of Mordecai Sandberg.

This discussion of microtones should not confuse or deter the reader. Sandberg's aim, as we have said, was to create melody that would express the meaning of the Bible; the most effective way of doing this being through the use of microtones. But despite the precise notation of the microtonal intervals (for which the composer devised a practical system³), Sandberg was aware that performers and conventional instruments could not easily reproduce them. As a result, he sanctioned performances where, as a compromise, the microtonal shadings were ignored.

Microtonal shadings of pitch are especially important in oriental music, but they are present even in the kind of Jewish music we are used to. There are in my synagogue alone two practitioners of liturgy who use microtones in a consistent way, as in the following examples:

a) End of Torah portion







b) Wedding Service



Sandberg was fully aware of the use of microtones **in Jewish** music, and addressed Hazzanim on the subject. Many well-known Hazzanim and others involved in Jewish Music became supporters of Sandberg, and their names are to be found as dedicatees of his works. These include the late David Putterman; Hazzan Edgar Mills of Newark, N.J.; and Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson, Senior Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, New York, where Moshe Rudinow and Lazar Saminsky performed Sandberg's music. Roitman, Katchko and Glantz also admired and performed his work. The connection of the latter with Sandberg is of particular significance, since Glantz's pub-

³ The commonest symbols are:

 three quarter-tones sharp;
  three quarter-tones flat.

 quarter-tone sharp;
  quarter-tone flat;

lished work is itself notated using microtonal intervals.⁴ (It is also worth mentioning that Katchko would on occasion tell his organist not to play, as he felt the organ could not provide suitable sounds to accompany his singing.)

What can the listener expect from Sandberg's music? Primarily, as the composer himself stressed, the expression of feelings intended by the Hebrew text itself. Sandberg was particularly devoted to the Book of Psalms, which is familiar to many cultures, and composed two different settings of the whole Book. The music does not attempt word painting, but the achievement of the overall mood of the text. The score may be performed by any forces available — voices a *Capella*, instrumentally, or both.

The achievement of a particular mood was also behind the composition of *Ezkerah*, a Holocaust memorial based on passages in the Yom Kippur liturgy, which expresses hope in the ultimate victory of Jewish values. Those present at the first performance of *Ezkerah* in New York in 1952 were moved beyond applause to an awareness that they had not attended a mere concert but something approaching a ritual.

It is worth considering at this point why Mordecai Sandberg has been relatively neglected since the last major concert in New York in 1960. There are several possible reasons. One is the suspicion that may have been held by critics that a physician could not be a legitimate composer (Sandberg's patients were similarly doubtful that they were being treated by a musician). Unfortunately this pointless and damaging attitude is still to be found amongst music critics: it smacks of more than a little professional jealousy.

Secondly, there is the unfamiliar appearance of Sandberg's published scores. It is unfortunately the case that many singers, whether or not they are specialists in Jewish music, are not secure even with a score of diatonic music; they would hardly feel any more secure when confronted with the unfamiliar notation of microtones. In this respect we may compare Sandberg's approach to notation with that of Bartok and Grainger.⁵ These three composers devoted great ingenuity to the accurate notation of vocal music; but, equally, all three emphasised that the performer should not be daunted by the

⁴ See for example his *Sabbath Morning Service* (ed. David Loeb, Tel Aviv Institute of Liturgical Music/Israel Music Institute, 1971).

⁵ Bela Bartok and Albert G. Lord, *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs* (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1951); with reference to Grainger, compare the elaborate notation he used when describing such folk song discoveries as Lord Melbourne (*Journal of the Folk Song Society [London]*, Number 12), with the 'practical' notation in his set of *British Folk-Music Settings*, such as *Brigg Fair* (London: Schott, 1911).

printed page. Bartok and Grainger produced 'simplified' versions to encourage actual performance; Sandberg however preferred to leave his notation intact, so that the performer would be encouraged to perform the music exactly as intended.

Then there is the remarkable absence of Sandberg's name from any standard reference work. 'Nothing succeeds like success' they say; conversely the neglect of Sandberg's name by one source has led to his neglect by all the subsequent writers who used that source.

Finally, I suggest that critics in the 1950's, when large-scale concerts of Sandberg's music were arranged, did not have the background to accept his music immediately. Things are different today, however, as I hope to make clear in the following discussion.

Music-lovers are today probably better prepared to accept Sandberg's music than they **have** been in the past. This is partly because we have had our preconceptions removed — this is one of the achievements of modern music. We approach new works with 'clean ears' as it were (to use R. Murray Schafer's phrase). Another modern development has been the acceptance of a holistic world-view, as opposed to a dualistic view; it is dualism which is at the root of Western classical and romantic music, being derived from the tension of key structure. The following remarks by Professor Alan Lessem shed light on this concept: "Stravinsky said: 'In the Kingdom of Heaven, there is no drama, there is only dialogue which itself is only a disguised monologue'. Sandberg, as I interpret him, wrote a music that is essentially contemplative ... The partial and dualistic world-view of Western tradition is now on its way out. Witness to this may be seen in the way that many of our younger people in music, for example, are now turning to the East and to other non-Western musics in which the holistic world-view has still survived. It is this holistic world-view that permeates Sandberg's music."⁶

The value of this 'Eastern' approach to music was expressed by Ernest Newman in an article on Bloch's music, which may be quoted here as it sheds light on what we may expect from Sandberg's music. Newman wrote: "Melodies run their course ... (however), harmony, in passages of this kind, does not arrogate to itself the licence permitted to the melody: these flights into the melismatic are at present only possible if contact with a more or less standardized base is always maintained. But some day, no doubt, a further step

6 Address given at the Sandberg Memorial Concert at York University, January 1974. Transcribed from a tape recording.

will be taken in the direction of emancipation. Instead of a melisma being restricted, as now, to a solo instrument ... the whole orchestra will more or less partake in it. This, of course, will lead insensibly to the conquest of a whole new world of harmony and rhythm.” It seems to me that, in Sandberg’s music, this ‘further step’ has indeed been taken.

Most of Sandberg’s output comprises settings of Hebrew texts. His profound knowledge of Biblical texts enabled him to use them as the basis for expressing his universalistic views. But despite this devotion to the Hebrew language, he regarded himself as a composer who could be understood by anyone. This aspect of his work has indeed recently encouraged radio broadcasts of some of his compositions in the United States. Nonetheless, it is surely the Hebrew-speaking community which has a primary responsibility for the preservation and performance of his music.

Acknowledgement

All the biographical information in this article was obtained from interviews with the composer’s widow, Mrs. Hannah Sandberg, who has devoted herself to supporting study and performance of her late husband’s work. Sandberg’s works are available through Mrs. Hannah Sandberg, 11 Catford Rd., Apt. 723, Downsview Ontario M3J 1P9 Canada; and through the composer’s daughter, Mrs. Judy Naimon, 853 Loxford Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20901 (Tel. (301) 593-1499).

⁷ Ernest Newman, *Bloch’s Melodic Freedom*, *Times* (London), 28 Dec. 1941; quoted in Suzanne Bloch, ed., *Ernest Bloch: Creative Spirit* (New York: Jewish Music Council of National Jewish Welfare Board, 1976), pp. 18-19.

PUBLISHED MUSIC OF MORDECAI SANDBERG

Ezkerah (I Remember). Oratorio in three parts.

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Jerusalem for Viola or Voice and Piano or Orchestra.

Psalm 1.30 for English Horn or Voice and Piano or Orchestra.

The Song of Songs (Sonata No. 3 for Violin Solo).

Sextet for Clarinet, two Violins, Viola, Cello and Piano.

The Five Points; Epilogue for Strings and Piano.

* ***Reprinted below.***

Following are two samples of Sandberg's creativity: "Shlosh Esreh Midoth," and "Zman Simchatenu." They seem to have been among those pieces best received by concert audiences, the pieces which touched listeners most strongly. Our readers are reminded that the copyrights are reserved by Mrs. Sandberg. Inquiries regarding performance should be directed to her.

ZEMAN SIMCHATHENU

(The Season of Our Gladness)

A SUCCOTH SONG COMPOSED IN 1939. FIRST PERFORMED BY MOSHE RUDINOW.

In this composition a popular text has been combined with a quotation from the Pentateuch.

"Glad day have we, feast of joyance, Israel, let us rejoice
 Unto our Succah came a caller, Abraham our father.
 Blest he who comes, Blest he who comes, Abraham our father.
 Jointly the glad day adorn we, with palm-branch, myrtle and citron.
 Glad day have we, feast of joyance, Israel let us rejoice."
 "Be thou joyous on thy feast day, be thou only, only joyous."
 "Glad day have we, feast of joyance, little ones, let us rejoice."

Translation from the Hebrew Original by Abraham Regelson

In order to facilitate the adaptation of the traditional musical notation to a finer differentiating method of composition, Mordechai Sandberg has invented some new accidentals :

EXPLANATION OF UNUSUAL ACCIDENTALS:

The symbol	<	indicates	Sharpening	these signs do not
" "	◁	"	flattening	fix the amount of
" "	↙	"	one quartertone sharp	the alteration
" "	↘	"	" " flat	
" "	↗	"	three " s sharp	
" "	↘	"	" s flat	
" "	↖	"	one third tone sharp	
" "	↗	"	two third tones sharp	
" "	↘	"	one third tone flat	
" "	↖	"	two third tones flat	
" "	↙	"	one eighth tone sharp	
" "	↘	"	one eighth tone flat	... etc.

On the normal" piano

the usual # substitutes for ↙

the usual b substitutes for ↘

... etc.

unless expressly indicated otherwise.

(Principle of minimal error)

Dedicated to Cantor David Putterman
ZEMAN SIMCHATHENU
 (The Season of Our Gladness)

A Succoth Song-For Baritone and Piano

By Mordechai Sandberg

Introduction

Choral

YOM TOR LA - NU CHAG SA - ME - ACH

YIS - RA - EL NA - GI - LAH NA — — — :

NA L' - SUK - KA - THE - NU VA O -

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of music. The vocal line begins with a whole note 'NA' followed by a half rest. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. The lyrics 'L' - SUK - KA - THE - NU VA O -' are written above the vocal staff for the second measure.

RE - ACH AU - RA - HAM A - VI - - NU!

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The vocal line has a half note 'RE - ACH' followed by a half rest, then a half note 'AU - RA - HAM A - VI - -' and a final half note 'NU!'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line. The lyrics 'RE - ACH AU - RA - HAM A - VI - - NU!' are written above the vocal staff.

- NU! BA - RUCH HAB BA BA -

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The vocal line starts with a half note '- NU!' followed by a half rest, then a half note 'BA - RUCH HAB BA' and a final half note 'BA -'. The piano accompaniment features a more active bass line and chords. The lyrics '- NU! BA - RUCH HAB BA BA -' are written above the vocal staff.

- RUCH HAB - BA AU - RA HAM A - VI - NU.

Detailed description: This system contains the final two measures. The vocal line has a half note '- RUCH HAB - BA' followed by a half rest, then a half note 'AU - RA HAM A - VI -' and a final half note 'NU.'. The piano accompaniment concludes with sustained chords. The lyrics '- RUCH HAB - BA AU - RA HAM A - VI - NU.' are written above the vocal staff.

f YA - - CHAD ETH HE- CHAG NA CHO-GAN

a tempo
B' LU- LAV MAN-DAS U'-ETH- ROG - YOM TON

LA- NU CHAG SAM- ME- ACH YIS- RA-

Allegretto
EL NA- GI- LAH NA - you tou la-mu

chag sa me-ach ve-samach-ta be-chag-gei-eh-

v-ha-yi-tha ach sa-me-ach, You tov la-nu, chag sa-

me-ach ve-ha-yi-tha ach sa-me-ach You tov

la-nu chag sa-me-ach, Ye-la dim, na-gi-la na : NA

ritard.

allargando al fine con sordina

SHELOSH ESREH MIDOTH

The Thirteen Attributes

MORDECAI SANDBERG

Voice

p

A - do - nai, A - do - nai El
 A - do - nai. The LORD God

Organ or Piano

p

Ra - chum Ve - chan - nun
 Mer - ci - ful and Ora

pp

E rech Ap - pa - jim Ve - rav
 - ci - ous. Long - suf - fer - ing and A - bun - dant

sf

she - good - sed Ve - e - meth.
 in - ness and Truth.

No - tiser
 Keep

ing she sed La - a - la -
 mer cy for Thou -

- fin, No - se A - von Va -
 - sands. For - giv - ing in - i - qui -

-fe
-ly and Trans - gres - sion sha ire - cha - and

-ta - - ah
Sin

pp
Ve - nak - - keh.
And a - - quit - ting.

Ta - mach - ti je - the - do - thai bi - sche - losh es - reh mid - doth,
I rest on pit - lars, On the thir - teen ho - ly words,

u - ve - sha - a - rei de - ma - oth Ki lo
And on tears that flow With nev - er

nish - la - voth. Al - ken Sha - fach - ti si - ach pe -
ceas - ing might. There - fore I pour out pra -

- nei bo - chen lib - both. Ba - tu - ach a - ni ba -
- yer to Him who search - eth hearts. Here - in I

e - leh u - vi - ze - chuth she - lo - sheth a - voth.
trust And in the three Pat - ri - archs' right.

A - do - nai, A - do - nai, El Ra -
 A - do - nai, The LORD nai, God, Mer -

-chum ve - chan - nun E - rech - Ap - pa -
 -ci - ful and Gra - ci - ous, Long -

- jim Ve - rav che - sed Ve - e -
 - suf - fer - ing and A - bun - dant in good - ness and Truth.

-meth. No - tser
 Keep

che - sed La - a - la -
ing mer - cy for Thou -

fil - No - se - A - von Va - fe -
sands For - giv - ing in - i - qui - ty and Trans - gres -

- sha Ve - cha - ta - ah
- sion and Sin

Ve - nak - keh.
And a - quit - ting.

THE "JEWISH" WORKS OF ERNEST BLOCH

DAVID Z. KUSHNER

Although Ernest Bloch has been described in various encyclopedias and dictionaries as a "Jewish" composer, and, although his fame today rests largely upon a smattering of compositions with distinctly Judaic associations, an analysis of the musician's total oeuvre indicates that the so-called "Jewish" works represent a small facet of his art. Be that as it may, however, this body of musical literature established for its creator an international reputation and did much to set in motion the course he was to follow as a major creative artist.

Prior to the realization of the "Jewish" works, Bloch's music was derivative and reflective of the influences of his teachers and of the cultures which they represented; consequently, there are such France-Belgian examples as the early tone poem(s) *Hiver — Printemps* (1904-05) and still earlier German post-romantic *Symphony in C-sharp minor* (1901-02) which, in its original version contained descriptive titles for each of its four movements.

Following the performances in Paris of the music drama, *Macbeth* (1910), with resulting intrigues, personality clashes and cabals involving the composer and others, it became clear that it would be a monumentally difficult task to achieve a successful career as a composer.? Despite his disillusionment at the Parisian reversals (favorable commentary concerning *Macbeth* was given by Pierre Lalo, Romain Rolland and Nadia Boulanger),¹ Bloch, undaunted, discovered the means by which he would most appropriately be able to express himself musically. For some time there had been germinating in his innermost being a reawakening awareness of his own heritage. In a letter to Edmond Fleg (dating from 1906) ² whose

We are grateful to the Journal of Musicological Research for permission to reprint this article.

† The composer was trying to lecture at the Geneva Conservatory, compose, and simultaneously work in the family business (Swiss tourist merchandise) .

¹ See the writer's article, "The revivals of Bloch's *Macbeth*," *The Opera Journal* (Spring 1971), pp. 9-12.

² Suzanne Bloch, program notes for performance of the *Sacred Service* at Lincoln Center, December 4, 1969, p. 1,

own family name was originally Flegenheimer, Bloch disclosed that he had immersed himself in a study of the Bible and that, as a consequence thereof, there emerged a feeling of pride in his Jewish ancestry, a pride which he retained throughout his life. Fleg's interest in Jewish concerns seems to have been engendered by the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906). Several years later he sent Bloch a libretto based upon the Biblical story of Jezebel. But the tongue was unsuitable for him; "the language bothers me: Hebrew would be better for me, I am certain," he remarked.³

The remark is especially significant in light of the fact that the musician had only recently completed two song cycles to French texts, the *Historiettes au Crepuscule* (Camille Mauclair) in 1903 and the *Poemes d'Automne* (Beatrix Rodes) in 1906. The biblical subject matter was, no doubt, a paramount consideration in the determination of a suitable language; however, it is also apparent that Bloch was consciously identifying himself with the language of his forefathers.

It was now self-evident that Bloch had found himself both personally and musically. During the period 1912-16, he created a series of epical works based upon or inspired by the Holy Scriptures and referred to by him as the "Jewish Cycle." When Fleg, who had become a leading figure in Jewish cultural life, sent the artist a French translation of Psalm 137, the composer again made reference to the particular quality of the Hebrew language and, in a characteristically effusive outpouring of his deepest thoughts, suggested that "New forms should be created, free and well-defined, also clear and sumptuous."⁴ The prophetic nature of these words can be seen in the light of new forms which manifested themselves according to the requirements of the Jewish subjects which, no longer lying dormant, came to center stage in Bloch's creative thinking.

From the outset of the "Jewish" venture, it became obvious that the creation of a narrowly nationalistic art, with the expected quotation of folk melodies, was not what the composer envisioned. In the strictest sense, this approach would, in any event, have been an impossibility since a Jewish nation in a fixed geographical region did not exist at that time. What did transfix the musician was a concern for the more elusive Jewish soul, the collective soul, so to

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

speak, of an age-old people. Viewing himself as part of this unbroken continuum, it was Bloch's intent to release his personal interpretation and conception of Jewish music.

A sumptuously orchestrated setting of the 114th Psalm, with the text sung by a dramatic soprano, was the inaugural work in the "Cycle." Motifs of shofar-like intensity, which become, in the context of the "Jewish" works, a Blochian trademark, appear with stunning effect to enhance the pronouncement, "When Israel went out of Egypt . . .," which opens the Psalm, and to dramatize the closing words, "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord . . ." The vocal line, at times struggling to be heard above the barbaric splendor of the orchestration, calls to mind synagogal chant, no mere accident to be sure.

The symphony *Israel*, begun in 1912 but not completed until 1916, is perhaps the most explicitly Jewish of the works under examination. Its genesis has been given by the composer:

I intended first to call this work *Fetes juives*, but I hesitated, and it was Romain Roland who suggested *Israel*.

Of course, what I meant by *Fetes juives* was rather the symbolic meaning of these festivities. The first movement, *Yom Kippur*, the *Day of Atonement*, a *retour sur soi meme*, qualms of conscience . . . It seems to me that nowadays more than ever Man may atone for his follies . . .

As for the musical idiom, I was never much preoccupied by the prevalent styles of the moment, the accredited theories or fads, and I wrote my music just as I *felt it*.⁵

First performed on May 3, 1917 at a concert of Bloch's compositions given by the Society of the Friends of Music in New York, the symphony is dedicated to the Society's president Mrs. J.F.D. Lanier.

Israel is divisible into three clearly delineated sections: a slow introduction ("Prayer in the Desert"), an *Allegro agitato* ("Yom Kippur") and a *Moderato* ("Succoth"). What emerges is a stirring musical fresco expressing the composer's conception of the meaning of Judaism's most solemn festival, and the period of thanksgiving which follows five days later. The intervals of the fourth or fifth create in the listener's mind an aura of ancient rites some-

⁵ Ernest Bloch, from program notes for the Vanguard recording of *Israel*, 1952 (VRS 423).

how yet alive and meaningful. They conjure up the call of the shofar, the atmosphere of the cantillation and prayer modes of the synagogue, as well as the many motifs which are accented on the final beat of the measure, analogous to the Hebrew language itself in which so many words are stressed on the final syllable.

The *Succoth* section of Israel offers a fertile field for speculation as to possible Jewish sources for the primary thematic material. One theme, for example, bears a strong resemblance to the Passover seder song, *Echad Mi Yodea* (examples 1 and 2).



Example 1. Israel



E-Chad mi yo-de - - a.

Example 2. *Echad Mi Yodea*

It is quite conceivable that Bloch had heard his father sing or hum this tune, one which was known to the Jews of central Europe. Toward the close of *Succoth*, which *Deuteronomy* describes as a harvest festival, two sopranos, two contraltos and a bass join the orchestra; the score requests that they be “placed among the instruments, or at the rear of the platform.” Curiously, the text was written only after the music had been completed, and then for the purpose of employing vocables rather than syllables.

Adonai, my Elohim	
0 my Elohim!	
Allelouyah! 0 my Elohim!	sopranos and altos
Hear Thou my voice, my Elohim,	
Hear my prayer.	sopranos
0 I implore Thee, 0 my Elohim,	
Thou art my refuge.	alto solo
I implore Thee,	
In Thee I trust,	
I am steadfast, 0 my Elohim!	soprano
Hm [with lips closed]	
Allelouyah!	sopranos and altos

Adonai, my Elohim!
 O my Elohim, Thou art my refuge.
 Hear Thou my prayer, O hear my crying bass

In Thee I trust, O my Elohim!
 I am steadfast. alto and bass

The instrumental body calls for 4 flutes (2 interchangeable with piccolos), 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, contra-bassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, 3 or 4 tympani, bass drum, cymbals, side drum, 2 harps, celeste, triangle, low tam-tam and strings (with a minimum of 4 double basses sounding low O).

A section of the soprano solo (Example 3) seems to be based upon the cantillation mode of the *Song of Songs* (Example 4). The Symphony draws to a close in a prevailing mood of tranquility and serenity. Israel is not widely performed today, yet it remains one of the most significant utterances of the "Jewish Cycle."



Example 3



Example 4

When Bloch's father, Maurice, died in 1913, the *Trois Poemes Juifs*, dedicated to his memory, emerged with the white heat intensity that has come to characterize the music of this period. Israel was, for the time being, put on a back burner to be completed some three years later.

For his inspiration, the bereaved son adapted some of the sketches he had made for *Jezebel*, an intended opera that never reached fruition. The result was a set of three symphonic movements titled, respectively, "Danse," "Rite," and "Cortège funebre." The opening piece is a rhapsodic panoply of exotic "oriental" coloration creating a mood of languor and mysticism. "Rite" suggests a cultish ceremony belonging to a period lost in antiquity. While the

music is more emotional than it was in “Danse,” the customary shofar-calls induce a state of solemnity associative of a religious rite. The final funeral cortege was described by Bloch:

This is more human. My father died — these *Poems* are dedicated to his memory. There is something implacably severe in the rhythms that obstinately repeat themselves. At the end, sorrow bursts forth, and at the idea of eternal separation the soul breaks down. But a very simple and serene melody arises from the orchestral depths as a consolation, a balm, a gentle faith. The memory of our dear departed ones is not effaced; they live forever in our hearts.

The form is free, but it is really there, for I believe that our constitution demands order in a work of art.*

With the insistent repeated rhythmic patterns, the “eastern” exoticism (enhanced by the celesta), the “calls” and the non-specific program, the *Poems* produce the intended effect without literal quotation.

In an article by Olin Downes, Bloch illuminated further his own thoughts :

I believe that those pages of my own in which I am at my best are those in which I am most unmistakably racial, but the racial quality is not only in folk-themes; it is in myself! If not folk-themes you might ask, then what would be the signs of Jewish music? Well, I admit that scientific analysis of what constitutes the racial element in music is difficult. But it would be unscientific to deny the existence of such elements.⁷

For this composer, “racial” consciousness was a dominant factor in the creative process; indeed, so immersed was Bloch in his personal realization of Jewish music that he evidently did not choose to consider whether, in the twentieth century, one could legitimately refer to the Jewish people as a racial entity. Judaism is, after all, a religion practiced in different lands by individuals with different skin pigmentations, languages, habits, customs and traditions. Be that as it may, it suffices for the contemporary audience to understand that Bloch believed that what he poured forth on the page

⁶ Ernest Bloch, program notes of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, March 23, 1917, pp. 1132 and 1134.

⁷ Olin Downes, “Ernest Bloch, the Swiss composer, on the influence of race in composition,” *The Musical Observer*, XV (1917), p. 11.

was an amalgam of the expressions of his ancestors whose "racial" currents he felt coursed through his being.

With the advent of World War I, two additional psalms were set to music: *Psalm 22* for baritone and orchestra and *Psalm 137* for soprano and orchestra. *Psalm 22*, dedicated to Romain Rolland, is all desolation and negation, reflective of the lengthy text which commences, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" *Psalm 137*, beginning, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion," is an affirmation that the Jew, even in captivity in an alien land, will never forget his homeland. As in the earlier *Psalm 114*, the soprano appears to be in competition with the orchestra. A master of text setting, Bloch here adroitly silences the voice following the words, "O daughter of Babylon, thou art to be destroyed . . ."

The Psalms contain many deeply-felt passages, both textual and thematic. Their poignancy and expressivity bear the stamp of a highly original mind; even the meaning of poetry, as undeniably singular as David's, is in Bloch's setting enhanced and personalized.

With the Hebraic rhapsody for violoncello and orchestra, *Schelomo*, the composer had arrived as a prophetic voice. In actuality, this staple of the 'cellist's repertory, was initially conceived as a vocal work, a setting of texts drawn from Ecclesiastes. Maria Tibaldi-Chiesa, the Italian critic and long-time champion of Bloch's music, quoted the composer's notes for a performance of *Schelomo* at the Augusteo in Rome on January 22, 1933 in her biographical essay, published by G.B. Paravia in the same year. In them, the now widely esteemed musician stressed once more his concern for language, remarking that neither French, nor German, nor English was suitable, and that he was insufficiently knowledgeable in Hebrew for an undertaking of this magnitude. Fortuitously, Bloch made the acquaintance of the cellist Alexander Barjansky in Geneva toward the end of 1915, heard him perform, and quickly established rapport with the virtuoso and with his wife, a sculptress. His interest in the subject matter of *Ecclesiastes* was rekindled; instead of the delimiting human voice, he would substitute the voice of the deep-throated cello.

While Bloch was working on the composition, Mrs. Barjansky created a statuette of King Solomon destined for the composer. In his appreciation, Bloch dedicated his rhapsody to the Barjanskys. The premiere took place at a concert of the Society of the Friends

of Music with the artist on the podium and Hans Kindler as soloist. This was the very same concert, on May 13, 1917, at which Israel was given to the world.

From beginning to end, *Schelomo* achieves an illusion of free fantasy; however, the work is divisible into three sections with an introduction and a coda. The solo instrument, endowed with phrases of supreme lyricism, is at times declamatory and on other occasions intensely dramatic; indeed, its discourse is primarily vocal in nature owing, in all probability, to the original intent concerning medium. The orchestra is a vast palette of color ranging from the subtlest transparency of texture to voluminous waves of sound; yet again do the celesta and harps serve as color agents.

The frequent pauses, the repetitions of single notes and of entire passages, the huge leaps, the chromatic progressions and inflections, the innumerable changes of tempo and meter, the constant mood alterations — all of these seem to provide a musical mosaic of the Talmudic prose. The cello melodies, often morose in character, serve as a tonal representation of the monarch who, despite the trappings of power, found himself meditating upon the perennial human condition, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

The listener, carried along on the emotive eloquence of the music and by the kaleidoscopic coloration, is generally unaware of the architectonic logic of the score. Commencing with a cadenza-like lamentation in the solo instrument, and leading to an orchestral outpouring of magisterial splendor, the first section closes with another cello cadenza, this time an abbreviated melancholic transition to part two.

The middle section, rhythmically free and containing melismatic configurations reminiscent of many chants, is permeated with an ever-recurring gemora nigun (cf. the “Nigun” movement of the *Baal Shem Suite*).

Part three, which, as might be anticipated, recalls material presented earlier in the work, and which introduces a quartertone in the cello’s part, is essentially dolorous. Solomon, pondering the vagaries and vicissitudes of life sees passing before him his world of paradoxes, the magnificence and the barbarity, the hope and the despair. For a while, a vision of a better world arrests the King’s attention, but reality returns as the music moves inexorably to a pessimistic conclusion. A contrabassoon solo, present during the final five measures, adds to the bleakness of negation. All, it would appear, is truly vanity.

Schelomo, alone among Bloch's output, ends without a trace of hope, but then the subject requires nothing less than a faithful rendering in sound.

Olin Downes, who had occasion to observe the composer during this period, recalled the encounter in vivid detail:

. . . . The experience was unique and unforgettable: the scene on an afternoon in a stuffy little bedroom with an upright piano in it here in New York, where a maniac with blazing eyes, jet-black hair and a face lined with suffering and will and vision sat at a piano, beating it as a madman his drum, and, bawling, singing, shouting, released a torrent of music which poured out of him like lava from a volcano. There was the visitor's sudden realization that he was privileged to stand in the presence of genius — an overworked term. This, however, was genius, and no mistake. The piece was a *Schelomo* . . . 8

While *Schelomo* ends conveying futility and hopelessness, the *String Quartet No. I*, the first three movements of which were composed in Switzerland (the fourth was Bloch's first creative endeavor in America, August-September 1916), closes with an air of resignation, an acceptance of the inevitable. Although it is a work generally omitted from a discussion of Jewish music, owing to its abstract form, it has, according to the composer, distinctly Hebraic references. These, however, are tied less to specific thematic or accentual elements, but rather to such subjective personal traits as anguish, violence and bitterness. In so far as Bloch identified himself as a member of the Hebrew "race" (as distinguished from the Jewish religion), these characteristics may be construed, by transference, as Hebraic — within the context of this music.

Bloch continued to compose numerous other works in various genres and for various media, but, from time to time, he returned to Jewish subjects for his inspiration, as for example, in the *Baal Shem Suite* for violin and piano (1923; orchestrated in 1939); *Three Sketches from Jewish Life* for cello and piano (1924) ; *Meditation Hebraique* for cello and piano (1924; dedicated to Pablo Casals) ; *Abodah* for violin and piano (1928; dedicated to Yehudi Menuhin) ; the *Sacred Service* (1933) and the *Suite Hebraique* for viola (or violin) and orchestra (1951).

8 Olin Downes, "Ernest Bloch at 60," *The New York Times* (October 27, 1940). IX, p. 7.

Of these “Jewish” works, *Baal Shem*, or *Three Pictures of Chassidic Life*, has achieved in recent years the recognition which it is due. The title derives from the name given Israel of Miedziboz by his followers; i.e., “The Wonderworker through Invocations in the Name of God.” Baal Shem was a founder of the Chassidic movement which flourished in 18th-century Poland and exists yet today. In opposition to rationalism and secular education, Chassidic Jews retain a mystical approach to religion, their practices including singing and dancing to the point of frenzy. The three movements of the *Suite* are titled, respectively, *Vidui (Contrition)*, *Nigun (Improvisation)*, and *Simchas Torah (Rejoicing in the Holy Scriptures)*. The *Nigun*, with its rhapsodic flights of fancy, its open fifths and dotted rhythms, and its sensitivity to the tonal capacities of the violin, has become a staple of the repertory.

The *Sacred Service*, commissioned by San Francisco’s Temple Emanuel for \$10,000, was composed in Switzerland during the period 1930-33, following Bloch’s successful five-year appointment as Director of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In a lecture on the *Service*, or *Avodath Hakodesh*, delivered on September 16, 1933 at the Conservatory, the composer made a number of revelatory remarks.⁹ He acknowledged having had a Bar Mitzvah at the traditional age of 13, but admitted that he was “not educated religiously.” Having undertaken the task of composing a Sabbath Morning Service to texts drawn from the Union Prayer Book used by Reform Synagogues, he assumed the responsibility of learning the Hebrew language from Cantor Reuben Rinder of Temple Emanuel. As the Cantor was indisposed owing to an accident, Bloch, with his customary tenacity, instructed himself in Hebrew grammar, going so far as to delve into the roots of the words, which for so many are learned by rote without regard for their deepest (spiritual) meaning.

During the course of his lecture, the composer revealed the substance of his religious thinking:

My conception of God and religion has been put into this work. I am not a religious man, outside at least. I have been in all kinds of churches, moved and bored in them; but, perhaps the service which has filled me with deepest emotion

⁹ The entire lecture is included as an appendix in Robert Strassburg, *Voice in the Wilderness* (Los Angeles: Trident Shop, California State University, 1977), pp. 136-142.

has been the Catholic Church, with the exception of St. Peter's of Rome which I felt was for the rich of Wall Street.¹⁰

The *Sacred Service* was envisioned as the embodiment of a philosophy acceptable to all humankind — in short, a message universal and cosmic, not one limited only to the Hebrew people. The texts, in the main, are drawn from the Psalms, Deuteronomy, Exodus, Isaiah and Proverbs. Musically, there are five divisions to be performed without pause. Where responsive readings would normally occur, Bloch has inserted brief instrumental interludes during which the congregation (or audience in the case of a concert hall setting) may meditate or pray as they might wish.

The opening orchestral *Meditation* presents a mixolydian motif which recurs throughout the *Service* as a unifying motto. Part I contains the central profession of the Jewish faith, *Shmu Yisroel* ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One").

Part II, with its thrice-repeated *Kodosh* (Holy), from which derives the *Sanctus* of the Catholic Mass, expresses the unity of creation and the affirmation that God shall reign forever.

Part III is concerned with the law, and the purification of heart necessary to submit to it with joy ("May the words of my mouth . . ."). The Cantor and the chorus dominate this central portion of the work.

In the fourth part, the Torah having been returned to the Ark, the focus is now on earthly matters; the Cantor intones "Earth sees His Glory." *Etz Chuyim* ("Tree of Life"), a song closes the section.

The Epilogue, Part V, contains the prayer that men will come to worship the one true God and live in brotherhood in His world. On that day, sings the chorus, "the Lord shall be One, and His name, One."

The *Kaddish*, the prayer for the departed, is a reminder that those who have completed their existence on earth yet live in the hearts and memories of those they have left behind, and that they have entered the protection of the Divine Being. The final strophe

¹⁰ Bloch returned briefly to the United States to arrange for the performances of the *Sacred Service*. Oddly, Temple Emanuel did not hear the work until March 1938. The world premiere was given at Turin, Italy on January 12, 1934 with Bloch conducting.

of the closing hymn, *Adon Olam* (“Lord of the World”), appears to express a very personal view:

Into His hand, I commit my spirit
And, with my spirit, my body.
The Lord is with me —
I shall not fear.

Following the familiar three benedictions and amens, the Cantor bids the assemblage “Shalom,” Peace.

The grandeur of the “Jewish Cycle” is, in the *Avodath Hako-desh*, replaced by a compelling, but low-key, strength. Scored for baritone (the Cantor), chorus and orchestra (or organ), there are significant solos as well, assigned to soprano and alto voices. With this colossal epic, Bloch joined with such masters of sacred choral music as Bach and Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and Bruckner, in creating a transcendent musical monument.

During the final decade of his life, in which period Bloch composed largely abstract works, the *Suite Hebraique* for viola (or violin) and orchestra emerged, the outcome of a six-day “Bloch-fest” in Chicago held November 28-December 3, 1950. This celebration of the artist’s 70th year included a luncheon given in his honor by the Covenant Club of that exceptionally musical city. The *Suite* was written in appreciation to the Jewish organization; it received its first performance January 1, 1953 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Rafael Kubelik.

Although the themes, with characteristic augmented seconds, have Hebraic allusions, it would be well nigh impossible to define specific sources for them. The scoring for viola or violin is a practical consideration. The orchestration without piccolo, English horn, tuba, trombone, celesta or piano, is in keeping with the rather light style of the piece. The solo passages are not of the *tour de force* stripe associated with other concerted compositions (e.g., the *Concerto symphonique* for piano and orchestra, 1948).

The brief cadenza, which appears in the opening *Rhapsodie*, contains the basic folk-like material with which the movement is permeated. The second movement, *Processional*, is in three-part form; its opening quarter-note rhythm in the strings (including harp) is indicative of the title. The concluding *Affirmation*, also in tripartite form, is jaunty and positive in manner.

Unlike other “Jewish” works, the *Suite Hebraique* does not seek to ponder imponderables nor plumb any depths; passionate

and tumultuous climaxes are absent. The aim is to entertain rather than to provoke thought. It is among the few "light" items in the Bloch catalog (see also the *Four Episodes* for chamber orchestra, 1926), and, consequently, sheds a light on the composer not often encountered.

Bloch's quest for a musical identity found fulfillment in the "Jewish Cycle," in which he gave to the world a uniquely personal Jewish music. This point is paramount to an understanding and an appreciation of what the musician had, in fact, achieved. To say, as some reference sources do, that he was the leader of a Jewish nationalistic movement is as simplistic as it is misleading and inaccurate. The "Jewish" works are an expression of *the self*, the result of which is a subjective outpouring which touches the hearts of many, not because of a Jewish identification, but because of the music's communicative power enabling it to supercede national, racial and religious divisions.

While the creations of the "Jewish Cycle" and the later works with Judaic derivations established for Bloch an enviable reputation in North America, the "Jewish" label which attached itself to virtually all references to the composer came, ultimately, to assume certain negative qualities. It hindered, for example, a fuller appraisal of the vast majority of the pre-Jewish works and, more importantly, those which followed the "Cycle." The "Jewish composer" tag also caused a misconception in the public mind that Bloch's music was overly insular and, hence, incapable of universal appeal. A part of the problem was due to Bloch's own statements, given verbally or in the form of interviews and articles, which, when taken out of context, produced an all too handy categorizing of this humanistic and universal musical personality.

The stock musical vocabulary, that is the chords built on fourths and fifths, the "Bloch rhythm" (the writer's designation for the composer's sometimes obsessive preoccupation with the Scotch snap and its reverse), the augmented second with its Hebraicizing effects, the shofar "calls," the exotic, polychromatic scale constructions, the coloristic treatment of the orchestra, the constant state of flux with regard to meter, rhythm and tempo and the frequent ostinatos, when coupled with authentic or simulated Hebraic melodies or even fragments tend to produce in the listener's mind, if he is so inclined, an aura of ancient Hebraica. This is substantially enforced by the specifically descriptive titles and is an excellent example of the power of suggestion.

It is significant, however, that all of the Bloch arsenal, when applied, as it was so often, to music which has no Jewish imputation, is readily identifiable as characteristic of this particular composer. The “Jewish” works represent a vital portion of the artist’s corpus, but they reveal only one side of his multifaceted art. Bloch, never a follower of fads or fetishes nor an admirer of “isms,” may be referred to as an eclectic *par excellence*. Alongside *Israel* and *Schelomo* there are *concerti grossi*, string quartets and suites for solo violin and violoncello.

The “Jewish” compositions are Jewish in the sense that they were created by a Jew with pride in his heritage and possessed with a fierce desire to bring his understanding of that heritage to his fellow men through a language the world could understand, the *universal* language of music.

HARMONIZING CHANT MELODIES

MICHAEL ISAACSON

What I'm about to share with you has already been said and demonstrated many times before; in fact, the underlying principle of harmonization is as old as polyphony itself. Yet, faulty harmonizations in recent "lead sheet" publications of Jewish music have suggested that it is time once again to remind each other of harmonic principles that serve the nature of synagogue chant particularly well. All through this presentation I would like you to remember and redigest this one idea:

"The best harmonies are directly from the melody itself and are not superimposed upon it."

Let us first recognize that the prevailing harmonic system in our western culture is tertial (ex 1). Most harmonies in both popular and classical music can be analyzed as aggregates of sound build in intervals of thirds. This is so because the melodies they serve are also triadic or based on scales which are nothing more than moving tones between triadic structural points. To employ anything but tertial harmony with these melodies would be to go against the doctrine of harmony from within the melody itself.

But what do we do when we have a chant that is not triadic or based on a major-minor scale system? According to the above doctrine if tertial intervals aren't in the melody then tertial harmonies shouldn't be used. The answer is always to be found in the melody itself.

In example 2 we have a kiddush setting that is built on the intervals of the second, fourth and fifth — the quartal system. In fact it shifts tonal centers from F to Bb. On closer observation when ordered into a quartal scale (ex. 3) we arrive at a mixolydian likeness but without an E (third), A (a sixth), or B natural (leading tone).

The Eb and Ab from the kiddush fragment are part of a new quartal scale beginning on B^b (B^b, C, Eb, F, A^b, B^b).

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When we try to superimpose a foreign system of harmonization on this chant (ex. 4) the results are less than natural and satisfactory. It almost works except for the last two bars which are caught in that tonal shift. We all have seen efforts like this that try to reconcile one system upon another meet with only mediocre success.

A much more constructive tool would be the adoption of suspended chord symbols which more closely reflect the quartal system of harmony.

There are three varieties:

1. C^{sus} — A perfect 5th with the fourth suspended
2. C^2 — A perfect 5th with the second suspended
3. C^4 — The stacking up of two perfect 4ths (the outer interval obviously becomes a minor 7th)

When you invert these three types example 5 results.

If these suspended chords were used only in their pure form they would indeed be limited, but as the last measure of example 5 suggests, when an additional tone is brought into play for voice leading purposes the results can be quite satisfying.

Mental exercise: see if you can spell E^{sus} , E^2 , and E^4 and label all of its inversions.

when you are comfortable with this quartal system you will appreciate how much better it serves chant melodies. Let us look at the kiddush now (example 6) with our new chords. Doesn't it sound like it is one family?

Remember: historically and aesthetically the best harmonies are horizontal (in the melody) not vertical (superimposed). They are the result of careful analysis of the melody. If you see a lead-sheet which suggests a foreign system use this method to create an alternative harmony.

I hope this will be of some use to you in your pursuit of excellence. **A Hazzan constantly labors not only towards a better purity of spirit and voice but towards a higher level of music as well.**

HARMONIZING CHANT MELODIES

by Dr. Michael Isaacson

EX.1 CONVENTIONAL HARMONY IS BUILT ON THIRDS (TERTIAL SYSTEM)

C G/E C/G

Root 1st inv. 2nd inv.

MOST CHANT MELODIES ARE BUILT ON FOURTHS AND FIFTHS AND SECONDS (QUARTAL SYSTEM)

EX.2

KIDDUSH

KI - VA-NU VA-CHARTA V'D - TA-NU KI-DASH-TA mi -
-kol HA - A - mim

EX.3

QUARTAL SCALE

MISSING: A THIRD (To define Major or Minor or 6th)

P5
P4
MIN. 7th

A LEADING TONE TO ENFORCE MAJOR OR MINOR

EX.4

TO HARMONIZE EX. 4 WITH TERTIAL HARMONY WOULD BE A MISTAKE

Handwritten chord labels above the staff: F_7 , F_7 , B^b/F , B^bmi/bb , A^b/C , B^b/F

IT IS BETTER TO USE VOCABULARY OF QUARTAL HARMONIES (SUSPENDED CHORDS)

EX.5

IN PURE FORM

OR WITH NON-HARMONIC BASS

Handwritten labels above the staff: $C_{sus}(4m)$, F_2 , G_4 , C_2 , D_4 , G_{sus} , F_{sus} , B^b_2 , C_4 , B^b_2 , C_4/Ab , D_4/G

Handwritten labels below the staff: ROOT, 1st INV., 2nd INV.

EX.6

Handwritten chord labels above the staff: F_2 , B^b_2 , C_4/G , B^b_4/Ab , B^b_2

Handwritten dynamics: mp , mf , f

REMEMBER

THEY ARE ORGANICALLY DERIVED FROM THE MELODY; NOT IMPOSED UPON IT
 PLAY THE MELODY AND HOLD DOWN THE PIANO KEYS TO FORM CLUSTERS. NOW ANALYZE
 THE RESULTANT HARMONIES.

A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH PREPARATION

KENNETH B. COHEN

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, class of '82, and Cantors Jack Chomsky and Michael Krausman, for their assistance and support in this project.

At the 35th Annual Cantors Assembly Convention (May 2-6, 1982) held at Grossinger's New York, a questionnaire was distributed to those hazzanim who attended. The questionnaire sought to deal with a wide range of issues related to the manner in which B'nai Mitzvah programs are currently being run in North America today. This survey was conceived in the hope of documenting the attitudes and methods of dissemination of the Jewish oral tradition (B'nai Mitzvah) for present and future generations.

Our form consisted of 19 short answer questions, as well as a brief biographical section outlining each respondents background in hazzanut. The results of the survey have now been tabulated and will be placed into the archives of the Cantor's Assembly.

WHO ANSWERED THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Of the approximately 225 hazzanim registered at the convention, 72 or 33% responded to the survey. The respondents included: women, faculty members of the Cantor's Institute, and a broad cross-section of men whose native backgrounds range from such diverse geographical regions as: Germany, Hungary, Rumania, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, Israel and Canada. Their various Hazzanic, Judaic, and educational backgrounds are also noted on the survey.

1. How much contact, if any, do you have with B'nai Mitzvah program? (i.e. days during the week, hours).

<i>Hours Per Week</i>	<i>% Of Respondents</i>
0	15%
1-3	18%
5-7	13%
8-12	42%
15	8%
25	4%

Kenneth Cohen is a recent graduate of the Cantors Institute of Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He will assume the post of Hazzan at Temple Sholom in Greenwich, Connecticut in the fall.

By far, the vast majority of respondents (42%) teach 8-12 hours weekly, and on at least 4 days during the week (i.e. Monday thru Thursday and frequently Sunday). It is interesting to note that 15% of those surveyed have *absolutely no contact* whatsoever with the B'nai Mitzvah program. Of the remaining 85% that do have contact with the program, 10% are solely involved on a supervisory level. 8% instruct over 15 hours weekly and one out of every twenty Hazzanim spend over 25 hours a week training their young students.

Lesson times are typically 30 minutes in length and frequently vary according to the students needs. It is not uncommon for a Hazzan to schedule two meetings per week with a particular student.

2. How long in advance do you begin preparation for the B'nai Mitzvah?

<i>Months In Advance</i>	<i>% Of Respondents</i>
3	2%
4	8%
5	11%
6	28%
7	8%
8	11%
9	8%
10	5%
11	4%
12	15%

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of all respondents begin their preparation 5 to 9 months in advance. The mode, or largest figure within this set, start B'nai Mitzvah lessons 6 months ahead of time (28%). Of those surveyed, 15% initiate their training at least one full year prior to the date. One out of every 10 Hazzanim begins his program 3 to 4 months in advance. Indeed, one practically minded respondent stated that the correct amount of preparation depends upon the ability of each student.

3. What is required for a typical B'nai Mitzvah student at your synagogue? (Specify readings, number of verses) :

- (A) _____ Torah Reading (Fri., Sat., Sun.) _____
- (B) _____ Haftarah Reading _____
- (C) _____ Blessings before and after _____
- (D) _____ Lead parts of the service (Specify) _____
- (E) _____ Torah/Haftarah summaries _____
- (F) _____ English readings _____

- (G) _____ D'var Torah _____
 (H) _____ Thank you speech to those present _____
 (I) _____ Other _____

Each of the categories presented above will be examined separately. In order to understand the analysis which follows let the percentage given below reflect the number of respondents which require that particular skill. For example, the first category reads "63 % Torah Reading: " this means that 63% of the Hazzanim surveyed require their B'nai Mitzvah to read from the Torah. The comments which may follow the percentages give a more detailed account of each of the required skills.

- (1) 63% Torah Reading; On Saturday morning, most students generally learn the Maftir portion.
 (B) 100% Haftarah Reading; the number of verses mastered vary according to each individual.
 (C) 100% Blessings before and after.
 (D) 62% Lead parts of the service; Their participation may include any and all of the Saturday Morning Service, from Schochein Ad through Adon Olam.
 (E) 35% Torah/Haftarah Summaries.
 (F) 41% English readings; Usually three to four readings; Prayer for our Country.
 (G) 20% D'var Torah.
 (H) 41% Thank you speech to those present.
 (I) 13% Other; Other requirements include: Havdalah, Birkat Hamazon, Kiddush, Tallit-T'fillin practicum, and Closing Prayer; "There is a special program where children must fulfill certain projects such as visiting the old, associated Jewish charities, funeral homes, etc. ... and then they are permitted to read the Torah as a special privilege."

4. In your opinion, a Bat-Mitzvah should be responsible for: (Respond by using the letters listed in question number 3).

It should be noted that question number 4, as opposed to number 3, is an opinionated question. It asks the respondents what they believe the requirements of a Bat-#Mitzvah *should* be; not what the requirements actually are. The results of this question will take the same form as that of question number 3.

- (A) 51% Torah Reading; optional.
 (B) 82% Haftarah Reading.
 (C) 72% Blessings before and after,

- (D) 56% Lead parts of the service.
- (E) 39% Torah/Haftarah summaries.
- (F) 37% English Readings.
- (G) 23% D'var Torah.
- (H) 35% Thank you speech to those present.
- (I) 11% Other; parts of the service; a talk based on research; readings.

5. Who prepares and approves of your students (Haftarah and Torah) summaries?

- _____ Rabbi.
 _____ Cantor.
 _____ Other _____
- Rabbi: 40%
 Cantor: 52%
 Other: 6%

Based on the statistics above, we note that one out of every two cantors prepare and approve of their students summaries. In 40% of the synagogues surveyed, the rabbi oversees the students work. Ten percent of the time, the students summaries are reviewed by one of the following Hebrew educators: Assistant rabbi, associate cantor, Hebrew school teachers, and the educational director.

6. How many Torah readers do you have in your congregation?

<i>Torah Readers</i>	<i>% Of Respondents</i>
0	10%
1-5	50%
15-25	21%
50-75	5%
600	1%

Hazzan functioning as Torah reader: 13%

The range of responses to this question is staggering. The gamut extends from synagogues without any Torah readers (10%), to a congregation which can call upon more than 600 people to lane Torah. Half of those surveyed have between 1-5 individuals able to function as ba'alei k'riah; over 20%, between 15-20 people; and only a handful (5%) of congregations have 50-75 Torah readers. In addition, the survey also showed that one out of every eight cantors are called upon to read the Torah regularly as part of their duties.

7. What percentage of those Torah readers (See question number 6) have been trained by you since you assumed your pulpit?

<i>Torah Readers In Congregation</i>	<i>% Trained By You</i>
0	33%
20-30	10%
50	12%
66	5%
90	7%
100	33%

The figures indicate (See bracket above) that the two opposite poles are the most popular responses to this question. On the positive side, one-third of the respondents have trained all of their Torah readers. On the other hand, there are an equal number of Hazzanim (33 %) who have not trained a single Torah reader since they have assumed their current pulpit.

If we take into account the remaining statistics, we observe that there is an even split between those cantors who have trained 10%-50% of the current Torah readers and those who have trained 50%-90%. In other words, once again, there are just as many Hazzanim who train their Torah readers as there are those who do not.

8. Do you read the Torah in your congregation?

Shabbat	___	Yes	___	No
Weekday	___	Yes	___	No
High Holiday	___	Yes	___	No
		YES		NO
Shabbat		42%		58%
Weekday		28%		72%
High Holiday		15%		85%

The first category's statistics are somewhat misleading. Of the 4 out of every 10 Hazzanim who read the Torah on Shabbat, many only read occasionally Shabbat morning, while others merely read the portion for Mincha L'Shabbat.

During the week, the cantors' role with respect to Torah reading is even more diminished (28%). A few have indicated that they read only when the ba'al keriah is unavailable.

On the High-Holidays, approximately one out of every six Hazzanim read the scriptural portion as part of their participation in the services,

9. Is the reading _____ triennial _____ full _____ other.

Triennial : 38 %

Full: 50%

Other: 12%

The figures listed above are self-explanatory. Half of the congregations surveyed read the entire sedre. Thirty-eight percent adhere to the triennial reading. And the remaining 12% fall into the category of "having created their own minhag" according to the communities particular needs and abilities. Some of these "minhagim" include: (1) reading up to hamishi during Monday and Thursday and from hamishi to the end of Shabbat; (2) biennial; (3) selective verses which highlight the reading; (4) three p'sukim per aliyah; and (5) chanting approximately one full aliyah (or fifteen lines) each Shabbat.

10. Does your congregation hire Torah readers?

_____ For Shabbat.

_____ For Weekday.

_____ For High-Holiday.

_____ Salary range \$_____

_____ Ages _____.

_____ Sexes _____

% of Congregations Which Do Not Hire Torah Readers: 62%

% of Congregations Which Hire Torah Readers: 38%

Shabbat: 70 %

Weekday: 44%

High-Holiday: 57%

Salary Range:

Shabbat: \$35-\$50.00

Yearly: \$6,000-\$25,000.00

High-Holiday: up to \$2,000.00

Ages: Mode : 24 or 65 Years of Age.

Sexes: Male Only.

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents claimed that their congregation does not hire Torah readers. Rather, they depend upon the services of the trained layman (teens/adults), rabbinic interns, sextons, as well as the skills of the rabbi, cantor (See question number 6), and ritual director.

Based on the data received, the typical Ba'al Keriah is a male, either 24 or 65 years of age (an equal number of each). His re-

numeration for reading on Shabbat ranges from \$35-\$50 dollars. Whereas, full-time Torah readers (Shabbat, hol, hagim, and yamim nora'im) may receive anywhere from \$6,000-\$25,000 dollars annually.

11. Do you teach B'nai Mitzvah.

_____ Individually.

_____ In a group (How many?) _____

_____ Both.

_____ Other _____

Individually: 38 %

In A Group: 4%

Both: 58%

Nearly 40% of the respondents teach the B'nai Mitzvah solely on an individual basis, while 4% elect to instruct in a group environment. On the other hand, the majority of cantors (58%) teach in both settings; individually and in a group, in the following manner: Initially, the students are expected to learn the Haftarah/Torah b'rachot and trop in a group (ranging in size from 10-20 people). Once these basics are mastered, the B'nai Mitzvah are then assigned to individual appointments during the course of the week.

12. Do you teach cantillation in any of the following?

_____ Adult Education.

_____ Hebrew School.

_____ Home.

_____ Office.

_____ Other _____

Additional Cantillation Programming:

Adult Education: 37%

Hebrew School: 47%

Hebrew High School: 1%

Those Who Do Not Teach: 14%

Place of Instruction :

Home: 19%

Office: 78%

Chapel: 3%

In addition to teaching cantillation to the B'nai Mitzvah, almost half of those polled have developed and maintain a trop curriculum with their Hebrew School. Over one-third of the respondents hold adult education courses and a few cantors have Torah reading core

at the High School level (It should be noted that one out of every seven Hazzanim *do not* teach cantillation outside of their B'nai Mitzvah program).

By far, most cantors (78%) hold their classes in their synagogue office. Yet, nearly one out of five teach in their homes. A few use the small chapel or main sanctuary as their place of instruction. This enables the student to gain familiarity with the physical environment of the service and eliminates some of their anxiety in the process.

13. Should the B'nai Mitzvah program be the responsibility of the Hazzan? ___ Yes — No Why or why not?

Yes: 82%

No: 10%

Unsure: 8%

The overwhelming majority of respondents (82%) believed that the B'nai Mitzvah program should be the responsibility of the Hazzan. They maintain that the Hazzan is the musical expert in the synagogue, best qualified and most knowledgeable to instruct in the ta'amim and liturgy than anyone else. Many understood the program to be a natural adjunct to the duties of their profession: "It is an excellent opportunity to impart basic synagogue skills and important Jewish values and attitudes with respect to prayer, in general, and to the role of the Hazzan, in particular." Moreover, others realized that the quality of the B'nai Mitzvah experience could extend or diminish the family's future relationship with the synagogue.

A number of respondents believed that the cantor need not be the sole individual responsible for the student's Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. Rather, it is the obligation of the *entire* executive staff of the synagogue (i.e. rabbi, educational director, youth director, executive director and Hebrew School instructors) to ensure a well-rounded religio-educational experience for their B'nai Mitzvah.

Other hazzanim were more reluctant to assume responsibility for the program. They believed that the nature of the cantor's involvement be determined, in part, by the size of his congregation and the extent of his other duties. One Shaliach Tzibbur expressed this notion extremely sardonically by exclaiming, "The cantor should take responsibility (of the B'nai Mitzvah) providing there is no one else sufficiently qualified to instruct. In my case, I happen to be lucky."

A small group of klei-kodesh (10%) were prepared not to be involved with the B'nai Mitzvah training. They felt that "the B'nai Mitzvah program usually involves force feeding music to often, tone-deaf, highly resistant, young recalcitrants." Another hazzan prudently cautioned all colleagues of the profession by claiming, "Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons places too much of a strain on our voices . . . and that daily tutorials, for hours at a time, can be detrimental to ones vocal health." Perhaps, an underlying tone for many of the respondents could best be summed up by one man's extreme frustration with the program. "I would rather it be handled by someone else . . . too much of a bother."

14. What are your B'nai Mitzvah students greatest:

Problems : (i.e. Family, financial, reading, psychological)

Complaints:

The most effective way to report the responses to this question is to itemize the different problems and complaints, vis a vis the B'nai Mitzvah students, as perceived by the Hazzan.

Problems :

- _____ Hebrew Reading!
- _____ lack of motivation.
- _____ busy suburban schedules and too many other competing interests.
- _____ lack of self-confidence.
- _____ lack of parental support.
- _____ psychological stress as a result of:
 - (a) divorced parents;
 - (b) peer pressure;
 - (c) chanting in front of the congregation.
- _____ insufficient personal experience with Judaism at home/in the shul.
- _____ tone-deafness/a-musical.
- _____ apathetic to Jewish "things."

Complaints:

- _____ "Missing televised Angel (baseball) games."
- _____ lack of understanding and support by their parents.
- _____ they hate Hebrew School.
- _____ Haftarah is too long.
- _____ Students do not know how to daven.
- _____ my parents cannot help me at home . . . I need more time.

_____ Why spend so much time preparing for the event, when it's over in just a few hours?

A number of Hazzanim responded by expressing their own personal problems and complaints in dealing with the B'nai Mitzvah:

_____ lack of consistency in their students progress. 'Self-motivated in the early stages, then a lull, followed by a return to their work as the invitations go out.

_____ "I occasionally feel that I am striving too much towards perfection. My feeling is quality not quantity, Perhaps I place too much pressure on my students."

_____ My students are far too alienated in services.

15. How would you evaluate your success in your current B'nai Mitzvah program?

Successful: 87 %

Good/Fair: 9%

Not Successful: 4%

Evaluation of one's measure of success is a highly subjective issue. Listed below are responses from different Hazzanim showing how they measure the success of their programs.

_____ My boys and girls all do beautifully. Many come back to read more Haftarah and Torah portions. In addition, I develop close relationships with many of the students.

_____ I even have B'nai Mitzvah students who read in all of our High-Holiday services with the High-Holiday trop.

_____ It has been successful from the standpoint of the student learning what he or she wanted ... and the congregation is very satisfied with the results.

_____ After completing the program, my students have developed a personal sympathy for Judaism. In that respect they are successful. However, I'm largely disappointed with their lack of attendance at service-s and level of observance in general.

_____ Excellent. A balance of training by the ritual director, hazzan, and assistant rabbi.

_____ The good students do well — poor students do not!

- _____ I am 80% successful in my eyes ... 100% successful in the congregations'.
- _____ Quite successful. I am the first in my school to teach the ta'amim and avoid using a tape which is memorized.
- _____ Relatively good. But I have difficulty inspiring the kids to do more than the bare minimum. I'd like to see them do as much as possible.
- _____ I could be more effective if the children were adequately prepared in reading Hebrew.
- _____ In terms of an effect on the average student's life – poor.
- _____ Most of my students and their families come out of the experience with positive feelings. This is what I believe to be most important.
- _____ My children are well-prepared, motivated, and confident on the pulpit. I always have a good rapport with them.
- _____ Most (students) successfully learn the invaluable skills of Torah and Haftarah cantillation.
- _____ Surprisingly good. They tend to avoid disgracing themselves or the congregation. Occasionally we produce an individual with a voice, knowledge, and a trace of n'shama.
- _____ My weakest students come through very nicely. Great success.

16. After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, how many students continue on to:

- _____ Confirmation.
- _____ Hebrew High School.
- _____ Attending services.
- _____ Other _____

Confirmation : 75%

Hebrew High School: 50%

Attending Services: 0%

Other (Youth Group) : 50%

Chronologically, beginning with Confirmation, three-quarters of all B'nai Mitzvah return to be confirmed. However, the high percentages may be misleading because in many cases it is a requirement for all the B'nai Mitzvah to promise to continue onto confirmation as a condition for having a Bar/Bat Mitzvah,

By the time the latter reach Hebrew High School the 75% who return for confirmation are reduced to 50% (i.e. a reduction of 33% — all in one year).

Not surprisingly, the majority of the respondents reported that hardly any B'nai Mitzvah attend services once they celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The various reactions to this phenomena range from, "it is a hopeless condition," to "no more or less than before."

With regard to youth programming, half the student body tends to become involved. In addition, a post-Hebrew High School class occasionally develops when there is a demand for it.

17 Do you have tutors/assistants in your B'nai Mitzvah program?

___ Yes — No If so, How many? — Ages — -

Sexes — -

Yes: 70%

No: 30%

How Many? One or Two.

Ages: Average age: 16; Range: 14-21.

Sexes: Equal number of males and females function as tutors.

Seventy percent of the respondents have at least one or two tutors assisting in their B'nai Mitzvah program. The typical tutor has been described as being a high school or college student, of either sex. In addition, most cantors are frequently assisted by the ritual director, sexton, rabbinic intern, or layman who help those B'nai Mitzvah students plagued with reading problems, tone-deafness, etc. ...

18. How long in advance is the student required by Temple policy to attend services? (i.e. frequency per month, months in advance).

Frequency Per Month :

Once: 15%

Twice: 26%

Three times: 22%

Every week: 37%

Months In Advance:

Two months: 9%

Three months: 12%

Four months: 3%

Six months: 21%

- One year: 44%
- Two years: 8%
- Five years: 3%

No Set Policy: 20%

Based on the figures above, the norm indicates that the B'nai Mitzvah student is required by Temple policy to attend services nearly every week, beginning anywhere from six months to a year prior to their date. One out of every five synagogues do not have a set policy regarding the attendance of services by the B'nai Mitzvah.

As we have all realized in our own programming, there is always a great disparity between theory and practice. The general sentiment is that although the students are encouraged to attend services regularly, the Temple policy is poorly enforced.

19. What "tools" do you use in your B'nai Mitzvah program?

Do you . . .

- 79% use a tape.
- 17% teach by rote.
- 7% use a report card.
- 67% have a **Trop** program.
- 8% have a reward system (Please explain) _____

- 9% Hand-sign (Chieronomy) .
- 12% use colored pencils.
- 16% use flashcards.
- 21% use transliterations (When?) _____

- 4% use slides.
- 9% use poster boards.
- 1% use films.
- 22% use blackboard.
- 26% use printed music.
- 24% Hertz Chumash.

B'nai Mitzvah publications:

50% Hamaftir (**Shilo**).

7% A Guide to Haftarah Chanting (K'tav).

5% A Guide to Torah Reading (K'tav).

7% Haftarah Chanting (Jewish Ed. Pub.).

0 % Computer programming.

8% Play educational games.

_____ Other _____

The percentages listed above indicate the popularity of the 'tools' or aids used by cantors in their B'nai Mitzvah program. For example, in the first category, it reads "70% use a tape;" this means that 70% of the hazzanim surveyed use a tape in their B'nai Mitzvah program.

Many respondents qualified the use of certain 'tools' in their program. For instance, many said "they only record a Haftarah for a student on rare occasions, when the child desperately needs it." Most felt that the tapes should include just the Haftarah/Torah b'rachot and trop; not the student's Hafarah.

Though one out of every five Hazzanim use transliterations, their usage is carefully guarded. "We use them (transliterations) very infrequently and only when the child has a learning disability (e.g. dyslexia) or an extreme deficiency in Hebrew reading."

Various respondents were pleased to be able to hand-out printed music to the musically gifted students. This, of course, facilitated learning of the b'rachot and trop in far less time than was normally expected.

Under the category of 'other' a few interesting ideas were submitted. They include: (1) having the B'nai Mitzvah sign a contract obligating them to pledge tzedaka, attend services, and perform g'milut chasadim; (2) writing a comprehensive handbook for the B'nai (Mitzvah, including a simplified trop system, with recordings and printed music, and guidelines for private study; (3) "inject them (the B'nai Mitzvah) with the fear of God."

RECORD REVIEW

Synagogal Art Music : 17 th- 18 th Centuries
Recorded Live, August 3, 1978 In Jerusalem
Produced by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Jewish Music Research Center

No one even knew that such music existed. The 18th century, especially appeared largely as a void in Jewish musical history books until Prof. Israel Adler located these long-missing musical gems. The fact that they were found for the most part in public libraries is both noteworthy and significant, for they lay neglected and unperformed until they were revived by a Jewish musicologist, from a Jewish university in a Jewish state.

This recording is something of a milestone in Jewish music, as much for its presentation as for its content. The jacket contains a description in both Hebrew and English of the works on the recordings; this printed text increases the recording's value many times, not only because it is presented with first-rate scholarship but because it makes it possible for any interested listener to both hear and understand an authentic presentation of the musical efforts of our people at a distant stage in our history.

The music was recorded at a live concert at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on August 3, 1978, by the Cameran Singers and Chamber Ensemble under the excellent direction of Conductor Avner Itai, who has since achieved considerable fame with this very choir. Special soloists on this recording (all achieving fine performances) include soprano Gilah Yaron, alto Mirah Zakai, tenors Nigel Rogers and Louis Garb, baritone Willy Haparnas, harpsichordist Valery Maisly and narrator Ehud Leibner. In the background, but always present, one senses the perceptive touch of the musicologist Israel Adler, who not only discovered the music but took an active part in planning its interpretation. Using his profound knowledge of the period, he guided the performers in their presentation, delighting in their improvisation which is so much a part of the 17th and 18th century style. Having been present myself at the concert I can testify to the excitement of both audience and performers — an excitement which is communicated in the recording.

Ben Steinberg, a noted composer and lecturer, is the Music Director of Temple Sinai, Toronto. He conducted the North American premiere of this music on a broadcast of the C.B.C.

The music itself, ranges from simple to majestic. If not in each case musically memorable, the pieces are at times charming and always fascinating to the listener. The two 12th century piyyutim from the Cairo Genizah (fragments of which are pictured in the printed introduction) represent a carefully considered attempt at authenticity in performance and are intriguing in their antiquity. Salamone Rossi's early 17th century wedding song for double chorus is performed with understanding and crisp pronunciation. In fact, the Hebrew throughout this recording is a pleasure to hear. Less effective in this section is the choral treatment of the traditionally quiet "echo" group. While there are indeed, fewer voices in this group, the dynamic contrast should have been greater.

The extracts from the ceremony for the 1786 inauguration of the Siena Synagogue open with a beautifully read narration in both Hebrew and English from the Seder Z'mirot Velimud, Livorno 1786. This alternates with sung portions and proceeds in a style typical of late 18th century Italy.

Next follow works by Avram Caceres and C.G. Lidarti from the 18th century Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam. These pieces (Chishki Chizki, Hamesiach Il'mim, Le'el Elim, Norah Elohim, Kol Haneshamah and Befi Yesharim) are performed with zest by soloists, choir and instrumental ensemble. An especially beautiful soprano solo is Lidarti's Kol Haneshamah, with its exciting almost Mozartian Halleluyah ending. The Befi Yesharim would be a welcome addition to any choral event. Although there are melismatic runs which could cause problems for amateur choruses, I have conducted this piece in concert many times and audiences have loved it!

Carlo Grossi's 17th century "Cantata Ebraica in dialogo" offers a text which should encourage the morning minyan of every congregation, as the choir members, representing the "Watchers of the Dawn" fraternity, explain to a passerby why they meet to pray each morning. In this performance, while there are a few soloist pitch problems, the choir sings its repeated chorus sections beautifully, varying the verses through tempi and dynamics.

Portions of the Hoshanah Rabbah cantatas of 1732 and 1733 from the Jewish community of Casale Monferrato, Italy, contain not only a court discussion among three characters (an accuser, a defender and God) but some of the most tuneful instrumental pieces on the recording, ranging from a lovely legato sarabande to a sprightly, "off-the-string", dancelike overture.

Perhaps the most musically inspiring find of all is Louis Saladin's 17th century "Divertissement" for a Circumcision at the Comtat Venaissin in southern France. Apart from its Jewish associations, it is an exhilarating piece of music which may properly be as valued by listeners today as it was prized by its original community. Its performance on this disc is a splendid one, both stirring and majestic.

Israel Adler's immensely important work in locating this music and in organizing its presentation has enriched our knowledge of Jewish History. No library should be without this recording which is a treasure, for it offers us musical pleasure, pride in our peoplehood and insights into our past.

Ben Steinberg

MUSIC REVIEW

Michael Isaacson. *Biti* (My Daughter), for medium voice and harp with alternate guitar chording. New York: Transcontinental Music (991300), c1982. 4 pp. (\$2.00)

Michael Isaacson has once again created a most useful effective composition for the cantorate. While, "Biti," an original poem in Hebrew by Rabbi Kerry Baker, is not very idiomatic in its flow or feel, it seems to have served Isaacson well with results that are more than just good. The song, in a conventional A A B A form for medium voice and harp would sound fine with piano too. It could even be re-arranged to include a flute obligato by using an inner voice played an octave higher. I caution colleagues to check the Hebrew text (which unfortunately is published only in transliteration) for mistakes and typos.

Isaacson certainly knows how to write a lovely tune and this melody, no exception, sings easily and gracefully. It also hovers a bit on the pop/show-tune genre with its melodic leaps of sevenths which add to its charm. For those of us who are always looking for a good solo to sing at a Bat Mitzvah, "Biti" is a real find.

Ben Steinberg. Eilu D'varim (These Are The Obligations), for Two Voices, Optional cello and piano. New York: Transcontinental Music (991228), c1983. 12 pp. (\$.95)

Using only a part of the well-known Eilu D'varim text, from the Birchot Hashachar, Ben Steinberg has created an impressive little ensemble piece that is singable, practical, and above all Jewish in its feeling. Eilu D'varim always conjures up memories of the Rapaport recitative or the more recent duet-dialogue by William Sharlin. Steinberg has taken a somewhat simpler, more direct approach to the text eschewing completely the recitative style of Rapaport and avoiding the difficult ensemble problems of the Sharlin.

Two voices (medium high), piano and cello are called for in this delightful composition which I recently heard beautifully performed by student-cantors. I was won over completely not only by its warmth and gentle flow but also by the authentic modal quality of the work.

After an eight measure introduction for cello and piano we have the following: an A section with a refrain, a B section with the refrain, the return of the A section without the refrain, a C section with the second part of the refrain, and finally the B section again with the refrain and a short coda.

The two voices, which first sing alone soon overlap, imitate melodically and at the end of the sections join in unison for the refrain. All this is accomplished in a deceptively simple manner with style, taste, and great skill. The cello part, too is nicely woven into the fabric of the piece and adds immeasurably to its success.

Steinberg, who writes so well for singers, because he obviously loves them, has fashioned an appealing, useful, much needed work based on authentic modal phrases. It is a work which is worthy of any synagogue setting or concert platform.

Lawrence Avery

Lawrence Avery is the beloved hazzan of Beth El Synagogue in New Rochelle, New York. He is also a composer and arranger and has been a member of the faculty of Hebrew Union College's School for Sacred Music for many years.

ENCORE! Eight duets for Tenor and Baritone with Piano. Arranged by Charles Heller. Published by Toronto Council of Hazzanim, Canada, 1983.

Drawing on traditional Hebrew and Yiddish songs, Charles Heller has written well-crafted vocal and piano parts in this collection of eight two-part arrangements. This is primarily light-hearted material with vocal parts that are relatively unsophisticated. Heller nicely varies the typical harmonies in parallel thirds and sixths with just enough unisons, counterlines, and antiphonal parts to keep things interesting. The harmonies in the piano parts have been carefully voiced, and while they are certainly not atypical, there are just enough altered chords to spruce up the simple I, IV, and V triads that form the backbone of these songs.

For those with somewhat more adventurous musical inclinations, the arrangement of Mi Ha-ish should be noted. Here Heller fashions a piano accompaniment with some very fresh and unusual harmonies and with a lovely melodic and rhythmic filigree which give that part a life of its own and which complement the plaintive melodic line to give a mood of haunting reverie.

The arrangements are for tenor and baritone (or two tenors) ; though in one setting, the baritone must sing a G (above middle C) which would seem more appropriate for a second tenor. All of the arrangements are probably accessible enough to be used successfully by amateurs and, if transposed down 1/2 to 1 1/2 steps, some would be appropriate for two part choir.

Shlomo Shuster

Shlomo Shuster has been the hazzan of Niles Township Jewish Congregation for almost a decade. He serves currently, as well, as the Chairman of the Mid-West Region of the Cantors Assembly.