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JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC, *Volume XV, Number 2*

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DAVID KUSEVITSKY (1911-1985): A BRIEF RETROSPECTIVE

SAMUEL ROSENBAUM

Some time between dusk and dawn on the 15th of Av, 5745, the soul of David Kusevitsky slipped quietly from our midst into the hand of God. In that sad moment, the entire congregation of Israel became mourners. Those who loved and appreciated the beauty, the meaningfulness, the elegance, the authenticity, the *d'veykut* of the songs of this David found themselves impoverished, bereft of a communal treasure that had inspired and comforted them for over a half century.

As Rabbi Baruch Silverstein, with whom David Kusevitsky served in extraordinary harmony for almost four decades, said in his moving eulogy:

“*Vayipaked m'kom David*”, and David’s place is empty.” Our Temple is in mourning...and we are not the only mourners. David Kusevitsky was not only the cantor of the Temple Emanu-El of Boro Park. He was the hazzan of *k'lal Yisrael*. Like that first David, he was the “sweet singer of Israel”, known and admired in Los Angeles as well as in New York, in Tel Aviv as well as in London.

“Wherever he went, he was hailed as the greatest cantor of our age, the brilliant heir to the *keter hazzanut*, the crown of hazzanut, worn by Rosenblatt, Sirota and his own older brother, Moshe. As did they, he elevated us to the heights of Jewish joy and comforted us through the valley of Jewish tears. His voice had the power, as Bialik put it, “to elicit flames from dormant hearts and to kindle sparks in sightlesseyes.”

Kusevitsky’s death must have evoked similar sentiments, must have filled the hearts of all who may read these lines, so there is little point in recapitulating them here. There is a need, however, to begin to assess, however briefly here, Kusevitsky’s contributions to the art and craft of the hazzan, beyond his extraordinary ability to stir a congregation in prayer or an audience in concert.

Samuel Rosenbaum is the Managing Editor of the “Journal of Synagogue Music” and Executive Vice President of the Cantors Assembly. He is now serving his 40th year as hazzan of Temple Beth El of Rochester, New York.

As a start we must accept the fact that he was a tower in hazzanut, with a voice, a breath and a technique that never seemed to give out, that never seemed to perform at any level but perfection. But these are, in the end, only tools and we must look beyond them.

What was rarer, more beautiful and remarkable was the heart and spirit of the man and the use to which he put them.

Maybe it was his early service in the Polish army that gave him his courtly and elegant bearing which carried over to his singing. Or maybe it was the understandable need of the youngest of four brothers to equal and even surpass the others. Whatever the root of it all, it was this elegance, this dignity, this sense of complete assurance that marked all the days of his life, at the **amud** and away.

What is even more surprising is that all of this framed a soul that was gentle, humble, caring, modest and accessible to all.

In a world where there are altogether too many pretenders, it was refreshing to find a man who was genuine through and through. It is not surprising that worshippers sensed this and permitted him to break down the walls that separate so many of us from a true spiritual encounter with the One who hears and accepts prayer. Even a casual meeting with Kusevitsky was impressive. You sensed immediately that you were in the company of greatness.

Besides the countless many who will remember his tefilot with love, there are dozens of students of the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America whom he taught and coached with sensitivity and dedication for many years. For Kusevitsky this was a true labor of love.

He once told me:

“Where will they hear the sound of authentic traditional hazzanut which we inherited from the burned-out world of Eastern Europe, if not from those of us who escaped? In past generations there were hundreds of European trained hazzanim serving countless congregations where you could hear - where you could almost feel and touch the sounds of the **nusah** of Jewish prayer. Today, these hazzanim and their synagogues have almost all disappeared.

“Those of us who are left owe a debt to our roots. Whether or not my students follow my style will be their choice; my responsibility is to provide them with the material with which they can make an intelligent choice.”

So, Kusevitsky stood - like a colossus - with one foot in Smargon, Lithuania where he was born and another in 3080 Broadway in late 20th century America, inviting *kol dichfin..* “let all who are in need come and learn”.

We are comforted that modern electronic wizardry makes it possible for the Kusevitsky voice to survive for uncounted future generations. Hopefully, the young hazzanim who will follow will seek not to imitate Kusevitsky, he cautioned against that; but that they will make the heart of his tefillot, its *nusah*, its flavor, a living part of their sacred calling.

ROSSI, MONTEVERDI AND RUBENS: AN UNLIKELY TRIUMVIRATE OF BAROQUE BEGINNINGS

DANIEL CHAZANOFF

In reconstructing the life and times of Salomone Rossi, one finds that he was part of an unlikely artistic triumvirate which led Italy from the late Renaissance into the early Baroque. Rossi, a native of Mantua and Claudio Monteverdi, a native of Cremona were hired in that order by Duke Vincenzo I (Gonzaga) as court musicians. The third member of the trio, however, was not a native Italian but a Fleming, i.e. Peter Paul Rubens, who was born in Antwerp. Isn't it remarkable that three such innovators were employed by the Mantuan Court at the same time?

Since Rossi and Monteverdi, as musical colleagues, have been discussed previously, in some detail, it is the writer's purpose at this time to focus upon some phases of their work which are unique in the movement from Renaissance to Baroque. However, the third and most unlikely member of the trio, Rubens has not been discussed in the context of Rossi's life before. The Flemish painter is an enigma in an Italian court. How this came about is an interesting story.

Of the three, Rossi was the first to be hired by Vincenzo I; he served the Gonzaga Court from 1587 to 1628 which is the last trace of him. Monteverdi was hired in 1590 and served the Court until 1612 when he was released. Through a chance meeting with an aide of Duke Vincenzo I, Peter Paul Rubens became a painter to the Mantuan Court in 1600 and served there until 1608 when he returned to his native city, Antwerp.¹

To fully understand and appreciate their contribution we need to differentiate between the terms Renaissance and Baroque in the context of the three masters being discussed.

According to Van Loon the Spanish word *barrocco* meant a large, but irregularly-shaped pearl which was not well-proportioned.* This symbolism applied to the arts, during the Baroque, implied following the

Daniel Chazanoff has written extensively on his research into the life and creativity of Salomone Rossi. Several years ago he received a grant from the National Foundation of Jewish Culture to continue his work. During the summer of 1984 he spent some eight weeks in Italy continuing his investigation of Rossi thanks to a grant from the Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation of Rochester, New York and a stipend from the Cantors Assembly.

principles of classic masters but, at the same time, infusing extravagant features.³ Baroque style, therefore, grew directly out of the style of the Renaissance and remained closely related to it in a modified and disguised form.⁴ Applied to the three masters under discussion we find common threads which pervade their works even though they pursued two different artistic media: sound and color.

Renaissance to Baroque: Rossi

Salomone Rossi, father of the trio sonata, the classic Baroque chamber music form borrowed two elements from the Renaissance in creating the new style. First, the violins in dialogue used canonic imitation found in Renaissance choral music. Second, the keyboard part reminds one of the lute accompaniment to Renaissance lute songs. This new instrumental music form was established in 1607 when Rossi published his *First Book of Sinfonias and Galliards for 3 to 5 voices* (the same year in which the first great opera, *Orpheus*, was produced by Monteverdi).⁵

Another area of Rossi's innovation was the madrigal. In his *First Book of Madrigal for five voices accompanied by the chitarrone* (bass guitar), dated 1600, he established a harmonic bass line for contrapuntal vocal form which heretofore had no accompaniment.⁶ Two years later, in 1602, his *Second Book of Madrigals for five voices* contained a basso continuo accompaniment (the continuo implied a keyboard accompaniment).⁷

Rossi wrote seven books of madrigals during his lifetime; all seven include a harmonic bass line accompaniment which places them at the beginning of the Baroque rather than at the end of the Renaissance. It is interesting to note that Claudio Monteverdi "...adopted the basso continuo in his fifth book..." of madrigals.* This occurred in 1605 or five years after Rossi's first experiment with accompanied madrigals.⁹

Renaissance to Baroque: Monteverdi

In the movement from Renaissance to Baroque, Monteverdi became the first great composer of opera. His production of '*Orfeo*' in 1607 stands as a landmark, incorporating elements of the Renaissance secular drama (verse, action and music) in a new way. Music, in Monteverdi's hands, became an integral part of the production rather than incidental. Verse became the musical recitative punctuated by orchestral chords - and orchestral interludes were furnished by a large ensemble considering the time in which it was performed. Donington lists the instrumentation as follows: 10

- 2 harpsichords
- 2 double basses of the violin or viol family
- 10 standard members of the violin family
- 1 double harp
- 2 small violins in the French style used by dancing masters
(these transposed an octave above the standard violin)
- 2 archlutes (but 3 are later indicated)
- 2 chamber organs of wood (flue pipes)
- 3 bass viols
- 4 trombones (but five seem required)
- 1 regal (portable organ)
- 2 cornetts (short wooden horns of narrow conical bore)
- 1 little flute (doubles the sopranos of a chorus, 2 octaves above)
- 1 clarino (long trumpet played very high)
- 3 clarinos (muted trumpets played lower)
- No drum part is written but the lowest trumpet part
(marked alto and basso) has the appropriate rhythms.

Several comments are necessary here. Since there was no established instrumentation for the orchestra at the time of Monteverdi's 'Orfeo', the writer suspects that player availability determined the instrumentation of Monteverdi's orchestra. In the same light, the master probably sought every available musician in Mantuan territory to make a large assemblage possible.

Renaissance to Baroque: Rubens

Shortly before his 23rd birthday, on May 9, 1600, Rubens left Antwerp for Italy. 11 In a statement accredited to his nephew, Rubens went there "in order to study at close quarters the works of the ancient and modern masters and to improve himself by their example in painting." 12

Within four weeks of leaving Antwerp, Rubens was fortunate enough to attract the notice of Mantua's Ducal Secretary of State, Annibale Chieppio, who became a steadfast friend. 13 The chance meeting took place in Venice during June when Chieppio attended the Carnival in the company of Duke Vincenao. 14 By October, Rubens entered the Duke's service in Mantua as a court painter, he served the Gonzaga Court until 1608. 15

While Rubens served Vincenzo I in Mantua, his models for emulation became Andrea Mantegna and Giulio Romano both of whom were brought to that city 100 years before by the great Isabella d'Este. 16 Giulio Romano, prior to entering the service of the Mantuan Dukes, was "...Raphael's principal collaborator in the Vatican..." 17 According to Wedgwood, he "... has the distinction of being the only artist mentioned by

Shakespeare.“18 In Act V, Scene 11 of *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare pays tribute to Raphael’s most important pupil as follows:

. ..the princess hearing of her mother’s statue, which is in keeping of Paulina, - a piece many years in doing, and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity, and could put breath into his work, would beguile nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape: he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione, that they say one would speak to her, and stand in hope of answer -

Rubens had to be impressed by what he saw in Mantua. “No other collection in Europe at that time offered so wide a range for study.”19 as the ducal palace in that city. The writer has been there and can say that it exceeds all expectations. Picture an area of 34,000 meters; in the context of sport, this would be equivalent to 400 football fields filled with art. Such splendor would have to be a source of inspiration to anyone in the creative arts.

During his 8 years in Mantua, Rubens had the opportunity to travel in the company of the Gonzagas or, as an envoy to various parts of Italy.20 Drawing upon exceptional energy and talent, Rubens explorations in Italy were most successful.21 Jaffe says that the master “. ..observed and recorded with loving care, antiquities of every sort and size, intact or broken.. “22 When his drawings were sold, 17 years after his death “. ..his heirs released a flood of visual intelligence.“23

In the movement from Renaissance to Baroque, Rubens drawings become the skeletal structure: it is his embellishment of the drawings which leads us into the Baroque. To cite one example, his painting, *The Birth of Venus* began as a drawing taken from a fresco of Giulio Romano.14 To the figure of Venus, Rubens adds nymphs and **cupids**.25 The painting pays tribute to Romano, whose fresco was completed 100 years before.

Summary

By coincidence, the years of Rubens tenure in Mantua were also the years in which Rossi, Monteverdi and Rubens simultaneously served the Gonzaga Court. If Rubens “...became the fountainhead of what we now call the Baroque style”26 in art, then Rossi and Monteverdi were his musical counterparts, since they contributed individually and collectively to the formative stage of the musical Baroque. Yet, while Monteverdi and Rubens are well-known figures in the history of the arts, Rossi’s innovations are still to be appreciated more fully.

Footnotes

1. Michael Jaffe, *Rubens and Italy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977) p.9.
2. Hendrick Willem Van Loon, *The Arts* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), p.234.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Claudio Sartori (ed.), *Encyclopedia della Musica* (Milano: G. Ricordi and Company, 1964) IV, 61.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Nigel Fortune, "Monteverdi and the Second Pratica" in *The Monteverdi Companion* by Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (ed.) (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1972), p. 192.
9. Denis Arnold: *Monteverdi* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1963) p. 174.
10. Robert Donington, "Monteverdi's First Opera" in *The Monteverdi Companion* by Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (ed.) (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1972) p. 258.
11. Michael Jaffe, *op. cit.*, p.7.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Michael Jaffe, *op. cit.*, p.45.
18. C. V. Wedgwood, *The World of Rubens* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1967), p.32.
19. C. V. Wedgwood, *op. cit.*, p.3 1.
20. Michael Jaffe, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
21. Michael Jaffe, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. Michael Jaffe, *op. cit.*, plate 106.
25. Michael Jaffe, *op. cit.*, plate 108.
26. Michael Jaffe, *op. cit.*, p.8.

ABRAHAM BAER ON HIS 150TH BIRTHDAY

INGRID LOMFORS

(We share with our readers some interesting correspondence between one colleague, Hazzan Maynard Gerber of Stockholm, myself and a young Swedish college student, Ingrid Lomfors.) SR.

January 7, 1985

Journal of Synagogue Music
Cantors Assembly
150 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10011
USA

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing a copy of an article about Abraham Baer, written by a member of the congregation in Gothenburg, Sweden. I have translated the article into relatively readable English because I thought that you might find it interesting enough to publish in the Journal. If it's too long in length, you might just want to print parts of it.

The author, Ingrid Lomfors, is a young girl who is now studying at Brandeis for the year. I am writing to her and sending her a copy of the translation, along with several corrections about Baer's book. I have never met Ms. Lomfors, and don't know how she knows about Baer, because I don't think many of the congregants in Gothenburg are acquainted with his name.

At any rate, let me know if you can use the article. Here is Ms. Lomfors address in case you have to have her permission to print the article:

Brandeis University
Hornstein Program
Lown Building
Waltham, Ma. 02254

Sincerely yours,
Hazzan Maynard Gerber

January 18, 1985

Ms. Ingrid Lomfors
 Brandeis University
 Hornstein Program
 Lown Building
 Waltham, Massachusetts 02254

Dear Ms. Lomfors

I am writing with double purpose: to make your acquaintance and to request permission to reprint an article which was published in Sweden recently regarding the 150th birthday of Abraham Baer.

Our organization is composed of over 400 cantors who serve congregations in the Conservative Movement in the United States, Canada, Israel, Australia and Sweden. Cantor Maynard Gerber of *Judiska Forsamlingen in Stockholm*, is a member of our Assembly, a graduate of our Cantors Institute, and was kind enough to send me the article and a translation.

Among the things we do is publish a semi-annual Journal of Synagogue Music. The leading Jewish composers, musicians, cantors and musicologists have contributed from time to time and we would like very much to publish your article.

On a personal basis, I would be curious to know of your interest in synagogue music and whether or not you are doing any other work in that field from which we all might benefit. I hope it is not imposing upon you when I ask you to write me something about yourself and your work.

Faithfully yours,
 Samuel Rosenbaum
 Executive Vice President

Cantors Assembly
 150 Fifth Avenue
 New York, New York 10011

January 30, 1985

Dear Hazzan Rosenbaum,

I am glad that you find the article about Abraham Baer interesting. You are more than welcome to publish it in the Journal of Synagogue Music.

It was more or less by chance that I decided to research about Baer, than out of a profound interest in synagogue music. When I understood that he was an important figure with a great impact on Jewish music I thought of honouring him on his 150th birthday. His life and work are also part of Gothenburg's history, therefore I am glad to inform you that the congregation celebrated his birthday by giving a concert of his music, just a few weeks ago.

Although I play and sing Jewish music the synagogue music is yet a undiscovered field to me. I am a student of Contemporary Jewish Studies and after completing my studies at the end of this semester I will return to my position as a Jewish Community worker.

If you wish, I will be happy to send you material, if I come across subjects of your concern upon my return to Sweden.

Please send me a copy of the article when it has been published.

Sincerely yours,
 Ingrid Lomfors
 Hornstein Program
 Brandeis University
 Waltham, MA 02254

Ps. If it is your policy to reward contributors financially I shall be happy to receive a standard fee. Ds.

THE GREAT FORGOTTEN SON

INGRID LOMFORS

This year is the 150th birthday of the world famous cantor, Abraham Baer. He was born in Gothenburg, Sweden, where he was active between 1857 and 1894. Here he began working on his famous work ***Bael Tfillah***, a collection of synagogue melodies from around the world. During the fifteen years during which Baer worked on the book, he became a widely known name in both Jewish and secular music circles. Baer's musical contributions enriched Jewish cultural and religious life. His name lives on all over the world, but in Gothenburg, he remains the great forgotten son!

In the year 1857, a young man auditioned before a cantorial selection committee in the synagogue of Gothenburg. He came from East Prussia, but had been a student of the famous cantor, Isaac Heyman of Amsterdam, for quite some time. He was now called to Gothenburg as the ***hazzan sheni***, upon the recommendation of the congregation's Rabbi

Wolff. Baer's cantorial knowledge, voice and musical abilities were tested for three days. He passed the examinations before a committee which consisted of Rabbi Wolff, Mr. Nissen the choir director, and Mr. Czapek the organist, and began serving the synagogue of Gothenburg.

The Christian organist-composer, Czapek, became impressed with Baer's musical abilities. He himself had become quite well known in music circles, and was later elected a member of the Royal Academy of Music. Abraham Baer, however, was musically superior to him. He had learned to modulate by ear, something which few cantors today are able to do. They usually need the help of the organ or musical notes to transpose from one key to another. Baer was, however, forced to be satisfied with rehearsing the boys' choir and assisting the chief cantor, despite his exceptional talents.

At this time, several hundred Polish Jews had come to the city to live. They lived poorly and in crowded quarters. The German Jews didn't readily want to associate with the newcomers, but felt that Baer could devote a few hours a day to teaching the "pollacks".

Baer worked hard but his salary didn't go very far. In 1859, he wrote the following to the congregation's board of directors:

"With due consideration to the fact that I have become a father and that the price of food has risen, I hereby apply for an increase in salary."

The cantor earned at that time 1,850 riksdaler a year, while his rabbi's salary was between four and five thousand riksdaler.

The synagogue choir at that time consisted of twelve boys who received a small amount of money for singing, but not enough to hold their interest after they were finished with school. Baer though, had become somewhat popular as a Hebrew school teacher, and was able to get a few of the Polish boys in his classes interested in joining the choir. By 1861, he had built up a large Jewish boys' choir in the synagogue.

After several years, both the chief cantor and the choir director died, which meant that Abraham Baer could devote more time to music. At that time, all synagogue music was learned by rote. There was little written music for the choir or for the organist. Baer knew many synagogue melodies from Eastern Europe, and he began to write them down. The choir and organist finally received a book of music for the first time, which consisted of more than 300 pages. The liturgy was changed somewhat and has survived in that form until now. The services of the Gothenburg Synagogue follow the score that was introduced by Baer.

It is thought that Baer learned to notate music from his non-Jewish colleagues. This ability belonged to very few cantors at that time. Those who studied hazzanut learned the melodies by heart. Each synagogue had its own musical tradition which varied according to the Ashkenazic, Polish or Sephardic nusah.

After several years in Gothenburg, Baer began working on the book which came to be the most significant work ever produced on Jewish music. This work came to give Baer a world-famous name. For fifteen years, Baer collected synagogue melodies from around the world. No one really knows how he was able to do this. Since he had contact with cantors and Jews in the field of music all over the world, he is believed to have obtained the origins and history of these melodies through correspondence. It is also likely that Baer came in contact with the Sephardic musical tradition through his trips to Amsterdam. The work gradually became a scientific product of a musical genius. It was finished in 1877, and was entitled “*Baal Tfillah, oder Derpraktische Vorbeter*”, and contains 1500 liturgical melodies. The distinguished book received its other name because it even contains instructions for cantors. For the most part, Baer had collected melodies for all Jewish rituals. However, there are also melodies for home and life-cycle events in the book, such as *brit milah*, weddings and funerals.

There are three different melodic alternatives for every prayer. Baer wasn't satisfied with collecting melodies from just one tradition, but instead gives the reader the Ashkenazic, Polish and Sephardic versions. Baer composed a few of the melodies himself. Some come from his home town, Filehne. There are even compositions of Sulzer, Naumbourg and Lewandowski found in the collection.

The work is also historically important since many of the melodies are from congregations which are no longer in existence.

The title page of the book contains a picture of the Gothenburg synagogue, and makes the collection an important cultural asset in the city's history.

The result of Abraham Baer's long labor awakened unparalleled attention among both Jews and non-Jews around the world. Letters and thanks from near and far attest to his greatness. When Baer celebrated his twenty-five years of service in Gothenburg in 1882, he received countless letters of congratulations which were reminders of his contributions to Jewish life. Baer is the only “Gothenburger” who has a place in Jewish encyclopedias.

Baal Tfillah has been published in six editions between 1887 and 1954; the last one being in New York.

Baer was memorialized in a ceremony in Gothenburg, 100 years after his birth. At the Jewish community's 200-year anniversary celebration, however, he was only named incidentally.

Is his name going to be completely forgotten now at his 150th birthday?

A PSALM OF CELEBRATION: TO LEO ROSENBLUTH AT 80

AUGUSTIN MANNERHEIM

(Reset in English by Samuel Rosenbaum)

The skin of his face has been creased
a hundred fold,
and the fleshiness of middle age has disappeared.
The force which pulls him down to the earth
slowly overcomes the force which holds him upright.
But when he sings the psalms of his people
or sings the prayer-text for the day
the voice is that
of a young man.

The secret lies in the larynx;
the same which once long ago belong to David, Jesse's son.
Through the ages to this day,
one cantor after another
may inherit it.

As one gives up his last song
another is heard to pick it up.
Like a precious treasure chest
it is held close and passed on
through Kings, prophets and diaspora.

To this day the 80 year old larynx does not age.
It knows intimately the mysteries of the pause and the connector
in the sacred texts,
The treasure chest rests safely
till it must again move on,
The song still keeps him and the treasure chest erect
as it instructs and delights in Stockholm's Great Synagogue.

Augustin Mannerheim is a well-known Swedish journalist and music critic who composed this psalm in tribute to Kanter Leo Rosenbliith, internationally known hazzan/ composer/ concert singer and Hazzan-Emeritus of the *Mosaika Forsamlingen i Stockholm*. We are grateful to Hazzan Maynard Gerber who now serves that Stockholm congregation for sending the poem to us.

Leo Rosenbluth was born in Bavaria in 1904 into a rabbinic family. Following a traditional yeshivch education he went on to study music

theory, philosophy and religion at the University of Frankfurt am Main. He also attended the Hoch'sches Konservatorium where he studied music theory, composition, conducting and the viola.

Rosenbluth began to serve as a **baal keriah** after his Bar Mitzvah, and as Kantor at the early age of 15. In 1931, he became Chief Kantor of Stockholm's great synagogue, **Mosaiska** Forsamlingen. Throughout the years, until his retirement in 1977, he maintained the highest standards of Jewish liturgical tradition and quality musical performance. He strove always to renew and to revitalize the quality of Jewish liturgical music by holding fast to ancient traditions and concepts, integrating them with modern musical development.

He is a prolific composer. While specializing in liturgical music, he has, nevertheless, produced a broad variety of compositions in many forms: art songs, oratorios, orchestral works, and a number of commissions from the theater and television.

He won first prize in a composers competition sponsored by The Jewish Cultural Congress in New York in 1948; he was twice the recipient of the Culture Prize awarded by the City of Stockholm (1974-1975) and of a scholarship of the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm in 1976.

Many hold that Kantor Rosenbluth's greatest contributions to the great stream of Jewish liturgical music is his determination and special ability to serve as a securely footed bridge from the past to the present, one foot firmly planted lovingly and deeply in our treasured musical hazzanic traditions, and the other standing firmly on the ground of contemporary musicology and craftsmanship. He enhances both worlds even as he draws his raw material from both, proving again that a true artist can paint the old melodies in new colors without destroying their integrity or their accessibility to the worshipping Jew.

Readers may want to acquaint themselves with Kantor Rosenbluth's major opus, "Hashirim Asher L'Yehudah", published in 1979 by the Cantors Assembly Foundation, a compendium of compositions for the entire liturgical calendar of the year.

REPORT ON A TRIP TO MOSCOW

MAYNARD GERBER

Dear Colleagues,

*I have-just received the minutes **of** the Executive Council meeting **of** August 27th. and was very much interested in the section on Soviet Jewry. Our community here has a committee that sends people to the Soviet Union on a regular basis to make contact with refusniks. I was sent to Moscow at the beginning of February this year. Not **only did I meet with refusniks**, but I was also allowed to chant the sabbath morning service in the main synagogue. I made contact with the young cantor, Vladimir Pliss, and he asked me to return the next day to record chazzanut for him. I sat **for** nearly two hours and recorded. He also asked me to send him cantorial tapes. I sent a tape to him in care **of** the rabbi, and I later received a letter from Pliss, thanking me and inviting me to return to Moscow and sing again in the synagogue. I just recently sent an extra copy I had **of** Gowseiw's "Neginot Yaakov", but have not as yet heard from him. (He had told me that materials would have a greater chance of getting through to him if I sent them c/o the rabbi.)*

I'm enclosing a detailed report of my trip. I hope you will find it worthwhile.

I and three others from Stockholm, left for Moscow via Helsinki, on Friday morning, February 1, 1985. Upon arrival at Moscow's international airport at approximately five o'clock in the afternoon, we proceeded through passport control. The first person in our group who presented her passport experienced what must have been about a fifteen minute's delay before being allowed to go through. The next two people in our group did not have such a long delay. I was the last one in our group, and the passport control officer had some doubts as to whether or not my face matched the one in the passport I had presented to him. (I must admit that the photo in my passport is not very clear anyway.) After being asked to take off my hat by another officer who had been called over to us, and after turning this way and that way, I finally decided to try presenting my Swedish driver's license as another source of identification. That seemed to break the ice, and I was at long last given the honor of being allowed into the Soviet Union.

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We continued on to customs. I was the last one in our group to pass thru. The first three in our party had little or no trouble, but I, who was last, did have some difficulties, I was asked to open my bags, and quite a bit of interest was aroused when the customs officer discovered some Jewish music in my possession. The text under the notes was transliterated, with Latin letters. There were however, Hebrew letters at the bottom of some of the pages, as well as a few pictures of Jewish rituals, such as a woman lighting the sabbath candles. I saw one of the officers point specifically to the latter, and then realized that I was in for some difficulties. I explained to the three or four officers who had by now gathered around me to study this “dangerous” material, that I was a singer and that I was going to sing these songs in Helsinki, on my way back to Stockholm. I was eventually asked to leave my baggage where it was and to follow one of the officers. We proceeded to an office where I was asked to empty all of my pockets. I did so, placing some coins, my wallet, some tissues and a comb on the desk. I was then asked point blank where my address book was. I had a little spiral notebook with me containing the addresses of relatives in the States, to whom I was going to send postcards from Moscow, but I couldn’t seem to find it. I found out later that I had inadvertently left it in my portfolio which was with my luggage at the customs desk. At any rate, I said that I had had one, but it looks as though I probably forgot it back in Stockholm. I was then told to take a seat and to wait. The officer then left the room and I just sat and waited for something else to go wrong! I sat and wondered what the result of all of this was going to be. Sometimes I was alone in the room, and then someone would wander in, look at me, and leave. I tried to remain calm and unassuming and to show that I was willing to cooperate in any way I could. I took out some candy to suck on and asked the 2 or 3 people who had now returned to the room, if they would like to try a little Swedish candy, but no one was interested. After what seemed to be about 15 minutes, I was asked to sign two papers. Since they were in Russian, I asked what it was I was signing. One paper had to do with my being bodily searched and the other was a new customs declaration, this one being in Russian, as compared to the original one in English I had filled out on the plane, and which I was earlier asked to turn in to one of the customs officers in the room with me. I was given my address lists back, much to my surprise, and was given a receipt for the music which was being taken away from me. I was told that I was to present this receipt upon **my** departure on Monday morning, and that I would then receive all of my music back. I was now free to go! I must say in all fairness, that I was not abused in anyway during this ordeal. I even felt that the people involved didn’t want me to jump to any conclusions, or panic so to say. I thanked them for

“holding” the music for me during my stay in Moscow, saying that it made my load a little lighter. I left the room and went back to the customs desk where my luggage was waiting for me. I packed everything up, and joined the other three people in my group, who were very glad to see me again, and, of course, vice versa!!

Before we entered the two cars waiting to take us to our hotel, I very quickly told my friends that my address lists had been discovered. We didn't know what to do now - if it was safe to contact the people on the list or not. The ride from the airport to the hotel took about 40 minutes, so that we all had time to think things out, even though we never said much in the taxis for fear of the drivers eavesdropping. (One never knows who can understand Swedish nowadays.)

When we arrived at the hotel (Intourist) we checked in and went to our respective rooms. I shared a room with a member of the Swedish parliament who was in our group, and the other two had separate rooms. The leader of our group, immediately went out of the hotel to phone one of the refusniks from a public telephone. She returned and told us that he and his wife could meet with us tonight. We took a taxi there. While at their apartment, I asked the wife to translate my new Russian declaration, and from what she read to me, it seemed as though nothing was different compared with the original one in English which had been taken from me during the interrogation. She told me, however, that the receipt for my music was a little more interesting. There it stated that I had been in the possession of religious material and Hebrew, and that I could get everything returned to me upon presenting said receipt at the airport. We related everything that had happened to me at the airport, but they didn't seem to think anything of it, and said that we should go ahead and meet the people whom we had planned to meet. The details of the rest of what transpired at this visit can be found in the reports of the others in my group.

On Saturday morning, I went to Moscow Synagogue and arrived shortly before 10 a.m.. Services had not yet begun. I sat down towards the back of the synagogue, in front of two elderly men who were deep in conversation. People looked at me a bit, but no one approached me. I took off my coat and turned to the men in back of me and told them in my broken Yiddish that I was a chazzen (cantor) from Stockholm. They asked if I wanted to sing and I immediately answered yes. One of them took me to the rabbi's office. I immediately recognized the rabbi from a t.v. program shown on Swedish television several months back, and from a photo in our community bulletin with regards to an interview with him. I

felt like telling him that I recognized him from these two above-mentioned sources, but decided against it. I felt that the less we spoke, the less complicated things would be.

I told the rabbi who I was, and that I was just in Moscow as a tourist. He took me out to the sanctuary to meet the cantor and to discuss how we should divide the service up. The rabbi's English was somewhat limited, but his Hebrew was pretty good. The same for the cantor. The latter is 30 years old, trained as a musician, and knows very little about cantorial music. I will tell more about him later.

The cantor did the first part of the service. His pronunciation of Hebrew was very old-fashioned, although accurate. He had a very light voice, which didn't seem to have too much resonance. His use of the various synagogue modes (musical scales), was somewhat accurate, but questionable in a number of places. I would say that there were probably around 150 people present in the synagogue - mostly older people, and predominantly men. During the time the cantor sang, I sat next to two elderly men in one of the wings of the bimah (stage). We spoke to each other now and then in Yiddish about me, about the cantor whose style of chanting the prayers they didn't particularly like, and about things in general. I didn't ask anything about how things are for them Jewishly. I didn't see any point to it since we all know what the score is in the Soviet Union anyway. At one point, a man came near us to fetch his prayer shawl, and I noticed that he had some medals pinned on his suit jacket. I asked him about the medals, and he told me that he had gotten them during World War II. One of his hands was injured and kind of hung lifelessly. He told me that it was a war injury from Hitler. I took this man to be someone of importance in the synagogue, since he kept his prayer shawl up on the bimah. He was also dressed a little better than the usual worshipper. He proudly related to me that one of his children lived in New York. (If this man is a government plant, as we usually assume about the synagogue leaders in Moscow, I thought it strange that one of his children "saw the light" and settled in America. But this is just plain curiosity on my part.)

It was finally my turn to take over the services. I stepped forward and began chanting the prayer before taking out the Torah scroll from the ark. Up until now, there had been a constant mumbling throughout the congregation, which is not unusual in traditional synagogues. But as I ascended to the reading desk and began to sing, I sensed that there was now almost complete silence in this huge sanctuary. As I looked at the faces of the people standing to the left and to the right of me, I saw that their eyes were all glued to me, and that they listened to each syllable and

to each letter as I chanted. I was given the Torah scroll to hold. I faced the congregation and began to sing "Shema Yisreal" - the declaration of our belief in the One and Eternal God, the very foundation upon which Judaism is based, and which the Soviets are so bent upon destroying. I don't think I have ever sung this prayer with as much conviction as I did that morning. In Jewish tradition, the cantor is considered to be the congregation's spokesman before God. At this moment I felt more than ever before in my life, that I was truly proclaiming the words of the Shema for the congregation. It was simultaneously **an** appeal to God to help these captives and protest against the atheistic Soviet system. As I proceeded to carry the Torah around the congregation as is customary, people energetically responded to me with the traditional sabbath greetings, some in Yiddish, some in Hebrew: "Gut shabbes", or "shabbat shalom". One man said to me: "Am Yisrael Chai", the people of Israel still lives!" I nearly broke down in tears. I felt so helpless, and yet I knew that I was inspiring them and giving them hope. I just wished that I could do more. As I came back to the bimah, I handed the Torah over to the shammes (sexton) and sat down to rest during the Torah reading.

The Torah reading took place at three different places in the sanctuary simultaneously. Obviously there was no lack of people able to read out of the scroll, which is in itself an art. The young cantor came over to me and we began talking about the services and other things. He wondered if I could meet with him before leaving Moscow, and record various melodies. He had no real access to cantorial materials and wondered if I could help him. We set a date for the next day (Sunday) at 10 a.m., there in the synagogue.

I was given the honor of going up to the Torah on the bimah, as the seventh man. Afterwards I discussed with the rabbi and cantor how the rest of the service would continue. After the conclusion of the haftarah (prophetic reading), I was to begin officiating again, and when it would be time for the prayer for the county, I was to stop and wait for the rabbi to come and stand beside me, and he would then chant this prayer, This proceeded as planned, and we were even joined by the cantor himself and one other elderly man. The cantor and this layman hummed chords as the rabbi chanted the prayer for the USSR, and I even joined in simply for the sake of the music. As awkward as it felt for me to have to stand and listen to a prayer being chanted for a country that was oppressing our people, I wondered if the rabbi felt equally as awkward having a capitalistic Zionist at his side. At any rate, afterwards the service continued as in any normal synagogue. At the end of the service I said good-bye to the rabbi. He had heard from the cantor that I would be returning to the synagogue on the

following day, but unfortunately he himself would be unable to be with us. I said I understood and that was that.

I left the sanctuary which by now was almost empty. I don't really remember anyone coming up to me. I went out into the foyer and looked carefully at pictures of various aspects of Jewish life, such as a family conducting a Passover seder, the baking of matsot, people at prayer, etc., etc.. It was obviously an attempt to reassure tourists like me, that Jews are able to practice their religion. (The following day at the conclusion of my meeting with the cantor, I asked him if these photographs were really true or not. I think his answer was a sincere one. He said that some are more true than others. Some religious practices are easier to fulfill than others. I said I understood what he meant.) After looking at these photos, I went outside, where a group of some 25 adult worshippers had assembled to talk with one another. No one, however approached me, and I simply returned to my hotel.

Before leaving the subject of my synagogue visit, I should mention that there were three young men in their 20's, who sat next to the rabbi on the bimah during the entire service. They had nice prayer shawls on and seemed to be able to follow the order of the service. The cantor told me that these three, who were Sefardic Jews from within the Soviet Union, were studying to be ritual slaughterers and mohalim, those who can perform ritual circumcision. I had thought that the rabbi was training them to become rabbis, but the cantor said no and gave me the above explanation.

In the afternoon, I rejoined the other three in **my** group, and we made one visit to a refusnik in the afternoon, and one in the evening. The details of these visits can be found in the individual reports of my traveling companions.

On Sunday morning, I returned to the synagogue at 10 a.m.. I happened to walk into the smaller sanctuary and realized that a service was about to begin. There was a small group of about 10-15 men (including some in their late teens or early 20's) who wore prayer shawls and tefillin. At just about the same moment I had walked in, in walked the cantor. Together we walked through the main sanctuary to his office. In the main sanctuary there was a young man, probably in his early 20's, wearing just tefillin, and who was praying by himself. I wondered to myself why he was in there by himself, instead of praying together with the others in the smaller sanctuary.

The cantor's office was a rather small, narrow room on the side of the

bimah. It was virtually empty in terms of books or even music. There was a desk, a few chairs and a sofa. He brought out a tape recorder and prayer book. While he set up the tape recorder, I looked through the prayer book and it must have been printed in the Soviet Union, because it contained the prayer for the USSR. I couldn't find any copyright year in it.

The cantor wanted me to record some congregational melodies for sabbath morning service. After recording a few, we were joined by a man probably in his early 70's, who sings in the synagogue choir. He had been present to make sure that I recorded certain pieces which he wanted the cantor to learn. After recording everything, the cantor went out for a minute and came back with a bottle of Russian vodka. We drank three glasses each, as is customary, and within a few minutes I began to feel the effects! (I forgot to mention that I had brought some chocolates with me as a present for the cantor. He was very touched by this gesture. He told me that he was divorced, had an eight year old son, but was going to remarry shortly. His fiance likes chocolates very much, and this would surely make a big hit with her. He left the room and came back with two Russian chocolate bars for me!)

The Cantor asked if I could send him some cantorial tapes, as he would like to learn different styles. I told him that I had brought some Jewish music with me, but that everything had been taken from me at the airport. He was surprised at this. Nevertheless, I told him that I had doubts about the Jewish tapes getting through to him. He told me that they should be able to get through the mail if I sent them to the rabbi. He gave me the rabbi's name and address of the synagogue, and I said I would give it a try. He now had to leave, so we said good-bye. I went back to the smaller sanctuary to take some photos. I took a photo of a large copy of the Hebrew prayer for the USSR which was hanging on the wall there. I felt so intoxicated that I dropped my camera on the floor! Several older men were sitting around a table talking and studying Torah. I asked if I could take a picture of them, but they preferred not. I went back out to the foyer to look at the bulletin board pictures again, hoping to get sober enough to be able to walk a straight line back to my hotel. As I stood there, I noticed a young blondish man also standing around, kind of glancing at me. He eventually came over and stood next to me. I said nothing, wondering if this was someone following me. He finally mumbled something in Russian. I said that I was American and spoke no Russian. From what I could make out, he was telling me that he was Jewish, and that's about as far as our conversation could go. I said "shalom" left the synagogue and "stagged" back to the hotel, still feeling the effects of the vodka.

In the afternoon, I and one other person from our group met with a group of 15 teen-agers in an apartment. This group, under the leadership of a female music teacher in her mid-20's, meets on a regular basis at the homes of different youngsters in the group, to learn about Judaism through music. I taught them a few songs and then they sang for me in Hebrew and even in Yiddish. I was very impressed with their singing, but even more impressed with their courage to risk meeting secretly, and with their determination to learn about their Jewish heritage. Looking at these young people, I couldn't help but think about all of our spoiled Jewish children in the West, who dislike giving up their free time to go to religious school. Here were youngsters who were not only seeking religious instruction of their own freewill, but were even going against their government at the risk of being discovered.

Our hostess, in whose apartment this group was meeting, was a woman in her late 30's. (Her husband was not at home.) She seemed very nervous about having us there, and asked us to please not speak in the hall when we would leave. I marvelled at her excellent English, which she said she had studied in school. We found out that she and her family had applied for an exit visa five years ago, had been refused, and had not applied since. I saw various Jewish books in English in the apartment in addition to various Jewish objects. She even had a small Star of David around her neck.

At the end of our stay, I sat down with the music teacher to ask her what materials she would like from us. She said that she needed cassette tapes, tape recorders and Jewish music. I took her address and told her we would do our best to help her continue her valuable work with these young people. She also showed us photographs of a Purim spiel they had put on last year, complete with beautiful costumes. I could only admire in complete amazement the drive that these people have.

We said our good-byes and reluctantly went on our way, making sure we didn't talk in the hall or in the elevator. As we were on our way out the building, I thought about the fact that here they have a rabbi and a cantor and a synagogue, but yet these two factions, i.e. the religious establishment, and this group of young people could not be united. How ironic and even perhaps perverted the situation is!

In the evening we met with a group of doctors and their spouses in an apartment. The details of this visit can also be read in the individual reports of my traveling companions. The only thing I have to add is that after the lecture given by one of the members of my group, I sang some Hebrew and Yiddish songs which was very much appreciated. We spent

about four hours here with these courageous people, and it was a wonderful conclusion to the weekend.

When we came to the airport the next day, check-in went very smoothly. I presented the receipt for my music. The check-in girl made a telephone call, and a man came out to me within a few minutes with all of my material. I signed out for the music and was handed everything back with no difficulties. This time my luggage was searched very superficially, as if just going thru the motions. If they knew we had met with all of these refusniks, they certainly didn't seem to be concerned that we might be smuggling out anything.

As the plane lifted into the air. I thanked my grandfather who left Russia for America in 19 12. If he hadn't, it would probably have been one of **my** children among those teen-agers we had met the day before, and maybe I myself would have been one of the refusniks. My trip to Moscow and whatever I can do for the Soviet Jews from now on, is my way of showing my thanks for the hand of cards fate dealt out to me. I just hope that the rest of the Jews who want to leave the Soviet Union, will someday be able to look back and be thankful that they got out in time.

THE BRITISH AND HALEVY'S "LA JUIVE"

AKIVAH ZIMMERMAN

On the **150th** anniversary of its premiere, we pose the question: Why **did** British authorities prohibit the performance of Halevy's opera, "La Juive", in Jerusalem?

The Jews have long enjoyed a love affair with The Opera. Even in Eastern Europe, where they would normally eschew all other forms of the theater, the Jews permitted themselves the pleasures of the operatic stage. Many noted singers boasted Jewish origins, and melodies derived from opera found their way into both the music of the Hassidim and the songs of the Hazzanim.

An endearing, though ill-fated, experiment was launched in England some seventy years ago, when the conductor-composer Samuel Alman joined forces with the celebrated baritone, Joseph Vinogradov, to establish an exclusively Yiddish opera company. A similar enterprise was attempted in Warsaw, for which the composer Heinech Cohen wrote an opera on the theme of David and Bathsheba. The Jews of the Polish capital inevitably flocked to their own ethnic opera, temporarily deserting the city's secular Opera House. And since a considerable proportion of the opera-going public in Warsaw comprised Jews, their absence was sorely felt, and resulted in a drastic diminution of revenue. Polish authorities reacted quickly by simply prohibiting the founding of a Yiddish Opera in Warsaw.

Ultimately, though, an opera based on a Jewish theme, and composed by a Jew, was to prove enormously popular. This opera - which has been translated into 21 languages - was chosen to inaugurate the

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During the working day he is a bank official, but at all other times he is a journalist, a biographer, an investigative reporter, a historian. His great and all-consuming passion is the hazzan and the things a hazzan does or has done, within or without the parameters of his professional calling.

second era of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and was to become a staple of that company's repertoire until 1936. The work was the French opera "La Juive", composed by Jacques Françoise (Yakov Ephraim) Fromental Halevy, with libretto by Augustin Scribe. (The latter had scores of French libretti to his credit).

Halevy was born in Paris in 1799. His father, Elie Halfon Halevy, was a Hebrew poet who wrote, inter alia, odes of praise for Napoleon. To commemorate one of the Emperor's victories, the elder Halevy composed his "Song of Peace", which was included in a service held in Paris to mark Napoleon's triumph in battle. Leon, Jacques' brother, was a professor of French literature in Paris, and we know of other brothers, too; namely, Ludovic, Daniel and Elijah.

Jacques Halevy was accepted into the Paris Conservatory at the age of ten, where he studied composition. At twenty, he won the prestigious Prix de Rome, and was awarded a government grant to support his studies in Italy. Following graduation, he taught at the Conservatory, becoming professor of counterpoint and fugue in 1833. His students included Gounod and Bizet.

Halevy was appointed conductor of the Paris Opera, though he also served as synagogue choir director for Hazzan Samuel Naumbourg. Most of his time, however, was dedicated to composition.

His liturgical compositions include a setting of "Min Hameitzar"; and, in 1820, the "Shir Hama'alot Mimamakim", for three voices. This last piece was written for a memorial service to the Duc de Berry held in the synagogue in the Rue Saint-Avoye, now Rue du Temple. His cantata "Noe" (Noah) was completed posthumously by his son-in-law, Bizet.

Although he composed about 20 operas in all, only "La Juive" was destined for great popular success. The opera saw its Paris premiere in February 1835, and was to be performed in France during its first 50 years approximately 500 times. The opera is noted for both its dramatic tension and the innately "Jewish" musical spirit which moves it.

The plot concerns an episode in Jewish-Christian relations, and the action takes place in Constance, Switzerland in 1414. Eleazar, the local prince, has been exiled from Rome by the Duc de Brogni. Rome had been attacked - before Eleazar's banishment - by forces from Naples. Brogni's castle has been destroyed and his wife murdered. His young daughter, Rachel, however, has been saved by Eleazar, who brings her to his home in Constance.

While Brogni joins the Church in a fit of religious fervor, and finally attains the exalted status of Cardinal, his daughter - famed now for her beauty - is brought up wholly in the Judaic tradition.

An aristocrat named Leopold has fallen in love with Rachel. In order to be near her he takes the guise of a youthful artist named Samuel, and enters the service of Eleazar. When Leopold returns from war victorious, a religious holiday is proclaimed to celebrate his triumph. Eleazar and Rachel, however, refuse to observe the Christian festival, and go about their business as usual. When a noise is detected emanating from Eleazar's workshop, Ruggiero, the Mayor of the city, decides that both must be put to death.

Cardinal de Brogni arrives unexpectedly, and postpones the execution.. Leopold - still disguised as Samuel the artist - is invited to celebrate the Seder on Passover Night at the house of Eleazar and Rachel. At this point in the opera, the aria, "Dieu de nos peres" is sung, describing the Exodus from Egypt. (Hazzan David Moshe Steinberg was later to adopt the melody for the liturgical passage, "Hama'avir Banav", which similarly depicts the Exodus.)

During the Seder ritual, Brogni and his men burst in, and Rachel's true identity as Brogni's daughter is revealed. While she is willing to be martyred for her Jewish Faith, her father's heart is hardened against coming to her aid. It is here that the poignant aria, "Rachel, quand du Seigneur" is sung. The aria has justly remained one of the star items in the repertoire of dramatic tenors.

It is intriguing to note that Halevy had intended Eleazar's role to be sung by a bass. The tenor Adolphe Nourrit, however, who was to appear in the original cast, persuaded the composer to change it to a tenor role. Indeed, Nourrit himself was responsible for the text of the aria, "Rachel, quand du Seigneur."

This aria, too, was adapted by various hazzanim to suit liturgical passages - most popularly, "Hashamayim shamayim L'Hashem", from the Hallel. Some hazzanim used the melody for "Lo Teivoshi" (in the "Lecha Dodi") on Friday Night, while others, still, could be heard chanting it on Kol Nidre night for the "Hass Kateigor" verses.

The opera's American debut came in New Orleans in 1844, and the following year saw its first performance in New York. The role of Eleazar was an especial favorite of the tenor Enrico Caruso, who regarded it as his finest role. The great singer is said to have been obsessed by the

profundities of Eleazar's character, and the challenge these provided him. In order to prepare for the part, he would visit, over a six-month period, many of New York's synagogues, listening intently to the most gifted hazzanim of his day chant the Shabbat Services. Caruso, it is said, admired Yossele Rosenblatt and Gershon Sirota in particular. Eleazar, in fact, marked Caruso's last role on the operatic stage. For during one performance of "La Juive" in 1920, he suffered a haemorrhage from which he was later to die.

The first staging of the opera in Eretz-Israel was an occasion for much controversy. The Mandatory Government, pressured by representatives of the Catholic Church in Jerusalem, sought to prohibit its performance in the Holy City. The Hebrew poet, U. Z. Greenberg, voiced stern opposition to any such ban, explaining that his concern was motivated less by a need to assert the merit of the work, than by his objection to the apparent surrender of the Jewish institutions in the face of a challenge by the Mandatory Government.

In 1924, a production of "La Juive" was staged in Jerusalem by Mordechai Gulinkin, a pioneer of opera in the Holy Land. The City's Latin Patriarch, however, complained to the Mandatory authorities that the performance had been purposely planned to coincide with a visit to Palestine by an emissary of the Pope. The Spanish Consul, too, protested the performance, suggesting that the Cardinal, as he appeared in the opera, bore a suspicious resemblance to Alfonso, King of Spain. As a consequence, the British Governor met with the head of the Zionist administration, Colonel Kish, and the two reached a compromise. Thereafter, the Cardinal's garb was not to appear overly ecclesiastical, and the singer taking the part of de Brogni was to sport a false beard so as to minimize any resemblance to the clean-shaven Spanish monarch!

U. Z. Greenberg, who used the pages of the 'Hapoel Hatzair' to publicize his views on the subject, wrote in the July 4th, 1924 issue: "It is The Cross which dictates matters in Jerusalem! A Christian leader in the impoverished City of David has dared to do what the Pope himself couldn't do in Catholic Rome, and what the cruel leaders of Russia and Poland have failed to do. They have passed sentence on Halevy's "La Juive"!"

The opera's conductor, Mordechai Gulinkin, described in a letter to the newspaper, 'Ha'aretz', the changes he had been forced to introduce: "The Cardinal will no longer wear a red cloak and a crucifix on his chest. There will merely be a black cloak, and no crucifix." He continued: "Certainly the prospect of a total ban of "La Juive" could not have been

tolerated, and although, regrettably, our success has been limited, I do not think that we could have achieved more than we did.”

While arias from “La Juive” could be heard in the concert and recording performances of the hazzanim Itzhak Mann and Moshe Kusevitsky, I am not aware of any complete performance of the opera ever having been staged in Israel. In contemporary times, for example, the managers of the Addis de Philip opera company have stated that a production of “La Juive” is quite beyond their musical and logistical capabilities.

One of the opera’s most recent performances took place in London in 1973, and featured the New Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Antonio Del Almeda. Tenor Richard Tucker - who was often compared to Caruso - ‘played Eliazar. Moreover, just as “La Juive” represented Caruso’s final performance on stage, so was it one of Tucker’s, last appearances before his untimely demise in January 1975. It is moving to recall, also, that during those historic performances in London, Richard Tucker was wearing the very costume in which the legendary Caruso had been attired more than half a century before.

Translated by Aryeh Finklestein

TRANSLATOR’S AFTERWORD

Two of the names in Akivah Zimmerman’s essay have relevance for me.

Among my early recollections is the bus trips from Petah Tikva to Tel Aviv which I took with my late father to the home of Isaac Mann, one of the great voices of our century (and a coach of Gigli). I can still see my father standing beside the piano, and Isaac Mann coaching him (my father was younger than I am now) in the vocal scales. Towards the end of the lesson I, too, would join in the singing.

Aryeh Finklestein is the Hazzan of A. G. Beth Israel Congregation of Chicago. In addition to his distinguished career as a Hazzan, he has also achieved recognition as a translator.

MUSIC SECTION

The synagogue music of the great Viennese hazzan, Salomon Sulzer (1804 - 1890), is well known throughout the world. His personality and creativity constituted major influences upon the music and form of the synagogue service over the last 150 years.

Recently, scholars have shown a renewed interest in the works of this great master. The long awaited re-issue of Sulzer's classic synagogue anthology "*Shir Zion*", first published in 1839 and 1865, has begun with the recent publication of a part of this work: *Shir Zion (1839) Erster Teil Sabbarhliche Gesange, Denkmaler Der Tonkunst in Osterreich, Band 134* (Graz: Akadamische Druck-u Verlagsanstalt 1983; Eric Werner, ed.)

(The Journal of Synagogue Music will publish a review of this publication in a future issue.)

In addition to his synagogue works, Sulzer composed a number of occasional pieces of a non-liturgical nature, which he dedicated to friends and dignitaries. We reprint here two such pieces. They are lieder for voice and piano: *Die Briefe*, dedicated to Sophie Jaques and *An Sie*, dedicated to Clara Stockel-Heinefetter.

ABRAHAM LUBIN. EDITOR

DIE BRIEFE

Gedicht von Vincenz Zusner.

In Musik gesetzt

für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte
und

der hochwohlgeborenen

SOPHIE JAKUES
GEBORNEN EDLEN VON WERTHHEIMSTEIN

hochachtungsvoll gewidmet

VON

^(Alomani)
S. SUTZNER.

3te Werk.

Eigenthum des Verlegers.
Eingetragen in das Fürstenthum Wien.

N^o 9434.



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WIEN,

im Verlage der k. k. Hof- u. priv. kais. Musikalienhandlung,

Tobias Haslinger's Witve & Sohn,

Kohlmarkt N^o 281.

DIE BRIEFE
op. 8
VINCENZ ZUSNER.

Mässig.

Singstimme. *p* Deine Briefe, mir so theuer, über =

Pianoforte. *p*

p gab ich heut' dem Feuer, dass die Menschen nie er = fahren, was wir uns auf Erden

cre = = scen = = du

p wa = ren, was wir uns auf Er = den wa = ren.

(9 4 3 4.)

Eigenthum und Verlag der k. k. Hof-Conservatoriums- und Musikalienhandlung
des *Thales Haslinger* in Wien.

9

p

Schwei = gend sah ich in den Glu = then dei = ne theu = = ren Zei = len.

p *cresc.*

blu = ten und mit ih = ren Träu = men al = len nach und nach in Staub zer =

acceler.

p

fal = len, nach und, nach in Staub zer = fal = len.

ritard.

p

hoch der Flam = = men lei = ses Knistern schien mir heimlich zuzu =

trém.

trém.

flie = stern, die = ser Blüt = = ter stum = me Kla = gen will ich

still nach Oben tra = gen, dort der Him = mel soll es wissen wie

ff poco accelerando *mf*

f *poco acceler.*

— man eu = er Glück zer = ris = = sen und für

mf *p*

eu = re herben Züh = ren wird er einst Ersta ke = wä = ren, und für

p

6

eu = re herben Zäh = ren wird er einst Ersatz ge = wöh = =

ff

cresc. f

Detailed description: This system contains the first line of music. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower two staves. The lyrics are 'eu = re herben Zäh = ren wird er einst Ersatz ge = wöh = ='. The piano part features a dynamic marking of *ff* and includes markings for *cresc.* and *f*.

= = = = = ren, und für eu = re herben Zäh = ren wird er

acceler. f acceler.

Detailed description: This system contains the second line of music. The vocal line continues with the lyrics '= = = = = ren, und für eu = re herben Zäh = ren wird er'. The piano part includes markings for *acceler.* and *f acceler.*.

einst, wird er einst Er = sata

f ritenuto. riten. p colla parte p

Detailed description: This system contains the third line of music. The vocal line has the lyrics 'einst, wird er einst Er = sata'. The piano part includes markings for *f ritenuto.*, *riten.*, *p*, *colla parte*, and *p*.

wöh = ren.

ppp ppp

Detailed description: This system contains the fourth line of music. The vocal line has the lyrics 'wöh = ren.'. The piano part includes markings for *ppp* and *ppp*.

AN SIE.

Gedicht von M. Salomon.

In Musik gesetzt

für eine Singstimme und Begleitung des Pianoforte

und

der wohlgeborenen

FRAU

Clara Stöckel-Heinefetter

achtungsvoll gewidmet,

von

Salomon.

S. SULZER.

5te Weide.

Eigenthum der Verleger.

N^o 630.

Bitte tragen in das Archiv



der Musikalienhändler.

Pr. 30. v. C. M.

WIEN.

Im Verlage der k. k. Hof- u. priv. Kunst- u. Musikalienhandlung
Tobias Haslinger's Witwe und Sohn.

Katalinische Nr. 281.

1857.

40044

An Sie.

3

Moderato.

Singstimme.

Pianoforte.

Soll ich e - wig in die ban - ge Brust das Ge -

passionato.

heimnis meiner Liebe schliessen, nie die Göttin meines Selns be - grüssen mit dem

un poco mosso.

(9 6 2 0 .)

Eigenthum und Verlag der k. k. Hof-Kunst- und Musikalienhandlung
Thobias Haslinger's Witwe u. Sohn in Wien.

Ju - bel neu geschaff - ner Lust, mit dem Jubel neu geschaff - ner Lust ...?

Ach! ver - gebens mahlt mit Anmuths - zügen mir — die Fanta - sie das Glück

mel - ner lei - sen Hoffnung. Ach! verge - bens, ach! verge - bens, zu - beste - gen

Ihres schönen Auges flücht - gen Blick, Ihres schönen Auges flücht - gen Blick!

Nimmer

agitato

ritard.

rit.

wird ihr trau=tes Lächeln mir die Er=füllung meiner Wünsche wü=ken, tiefer

wird in Gram die See = le = sin = ken, und doch, folg=lich hol= des Au = ge

dir! Nimmer wird ihr trau=tes Lächeln

6

mir — die Er-fül-lung meiner Wün-sche wü-n-schen, tiefer
 wird... in Gram die See-le ein-ken, und doch fol-ge ich 'n holdes Au-ge
 dir... Und es fessele mich das tiefste Schwei-gen, wie es nur... auf kü-h-len
 Grä-bern ruht, wie es nur auf kü-h-len Grä-bern ruht,

oppure
ff
p
Recit.
f *ritard.*

T. H. 9630.

Più lento.

sollt' auch gleich mich Sehnaucht nieder hen - gen.

pp *rit.* *Adagio*

poco mosso.

e - wig lod're doch des Her - zens Glut, e - wig e - wig des Herzens Glut

e - wig lod're doch des Herzens, des Her - zens

Glut.

ri - tar - dan - do.

pp *rit.* *morendo.*

PSALM 30
A NEW SETTING FOR CHOIR AND ORGAN

LEE ROTHFARB

Psalm 30
(selected verses)

A psalm of David. A song for the dedication of the House.

I extol You, O Lord,
For You have lifted me up,
and not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O you faithful of the Lord, sing to Him,
and praise His holy name.

For He is angry but a moment,
and when He is pleased there is life.
One may lie down weeping at nightfall;
but at dawn there are shouts of joy.

You turned my lament into dancing,
you undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy,
that (my) whole being might sing hymns to You
endlessly;
O Lord my God, I will praise You forever.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Lee Rothfarb holds a Visiting Assistant Professorship in Music Theory at the University of Michigan, School of Music. He earned degrees from the Eastman School of Music (BM, composition), where he studied with Warren Benson and Samuel Adler, from the Hartt School of Music, University of Hartford (MM, theory), and from Yale University (Ph.D., theory). His scholarly work focuses on aesthetics and theories of music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Rothfarb's interest and involvement in Jewish music goes back to teenage years, when he served as accompanist for synagogue choirs. This activity eventually led to an interest in solo liturgical music, particularly Biblical and prayer chants, and their melodic/modal bases.

The piece printed here is a recent one, written for the dedication of a new organ at the Temple of Aaron, St. Paul, Minnesota. It received its first performance there on April 6, 1984. The music is lyrical, harmonically colorful and rhythmically varied. It pays special attention to the stress patterns, flow and, above all, to the sense of the Hebrew text. In a straight-forward three-part reprise form with coda, the music blends smooth, tranquil sections with more agitated and restless ones. Once singers orient themselves to the sounds, they will discover the clear directional logic of the melodic/ harmonic progressions, which facilitate the preparation of the work. The piece is gratifying to sing and achieves a good audience effect.

PSALM OF DEDICATION

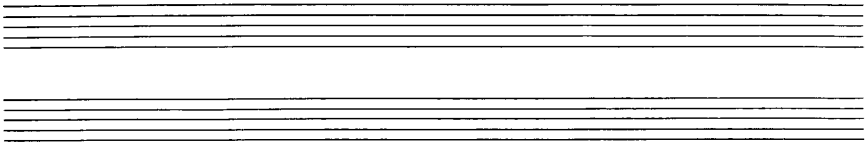
Psalm 30:1-2;5-6;12-13

Lee Rothfarb

$\text{♩} = ca. 120$

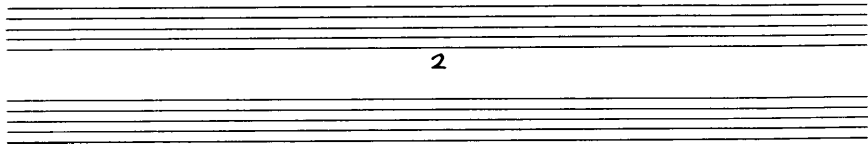
The musical score is arranged for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Organ. It begins with a tempo marking of approximately 120 beats per minute. The lyrics are: Miz-mor Shir Miz-mor shir cha-nu-. The organ part features a prominent chordal accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte).

© 1984
by Lee Rothfarb



Vocal score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The lyrics are: -kat ha ba-yit l'-Da vid rit. The score includes dynamic markings like *dim.* and *rit.* and various time signatures such as 5/4, 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4.

Piano accompaniment for the vocal score. The right hand part features chords and melodic lines, with dynamic markings like *dim.* and *rit.*. The left hand part provides harmonic support with chords and a bass line. Time signatures include 5/4, 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4.



A *

cantabile
♩ = 68-72

cantabile
mp A-ro-mi-ni-cha A-do-nai Ki di-li-ta-ni

cantabile
mp A-ro-mi-ni-cha A-do-nai Ki di-li-

cantabile
mp A-ro-mi-ni-cha A-do-nai

cantabile
mp A-ro-mi-ni-cha A-do-nai Ki di-li-

cantabile
mp A-ro-mi-ni-cha A-do-nai Ki di-li-

cantabile
mp

* First time through, sopranos and tenors sing soprano line; other voices rest. Second time through, all voices sing their own parts.

ki di-li-ta-ni *mp* v-lo si-mach-ta v-lo si-mach-ta
-ta ni *mp* v'-lu si-mach-ta lo v'-lo si-mach-ta
ki di-li-ta-ni A do nai *mp* v'-lo si-mach-ta
-ta ni A do nai *mp* v'-lo v'-lo si-mach-ta

~2

4

Handwritten musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four staves: three vocal staves and one piano accompaniment staff. The second system has two staves: a vocal staff and a piano accompaniment staff. The music is in 3/4 time and features lyrics "oy-vai li" and "li. oy-vai li". There are dynamic markings like "mf" and "rit." and a first ending bracket.

mf oy-vai li oy — vai li

mf oy-vai oy-vai li. oy-vai li

mf oy-vai li oy — vai

mf oy-vai li oy — vai li

mf

rit.

B

2

mp Za — mi — ru La — do — nai Za — mi — ru

mp Za — mi — ru La — do — nai Za — mi — ru

mp Za — mi — ru La — do — nai

mp Za — mi — ru La — do — nai Za — mi — ru

mp

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four staves: two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and two piano staves (Right and Left Hand). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. A bracket with the number '2' spans the first two vocal staves. The lyrics are: 'Za — mi — ru La — do — nai' followed by 'Za — mi — ru'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more active treble line with chords and melodic fragments. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The piano part includes a *mp* dynamic marking.

Musical score for a vocal and piano piece, page 53. The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four staves: two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and two piano staves (Right and Left Hand). The second system has two staves: a vocal staff and a piano staff. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are in Russian. The score includes dynamic markings such as "cresc." and "p.".

cresc.
 Za — m' — ru La — do — nei cha — si — dav 2 v' — ho — du v' — ho — du p.
 cha — si — dav 2 v' — ho — du v' — ho — du p.
 Za — m' — ru cha — si — dav 2 v' — ho — du v' — ho — du p.
cresc.

7

Handwritten musical score for a vocal piece. The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four staves: three vocal staves and one piano accompaniment staff. The second system has two staves: a vocal staff and a piano accompaniment staff. The lyrics are "f-ze-cher kod-sho" repeated across the vocal staves. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, *dim.*, and *mf*. The score is written in 5/4 time and features various key signatures and melodic lines.

accel. poco a poco

mp cresc.

mp cresc. l.h.

mf

ped.

mf

9

C

$\text{♩} = 116-120$

Musical score for vocal and piano accompaniment, measures 1-4. The score is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 116-120$. The vocal line is written in a soprano clef, and the piano accompaniment is in a bass clef. The piano part includes a complex rhythmic pattern in the first three measures, with a 2+2+3 eighth-note triplet in the first measure of each of these measures. The lyrics are "f ki re-gu b'-a-po".

$\text{♩} = 116-120$

Musical score for piano accompaniment, measures 5-8. The score continues in 2/4 time with the same key signature. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern in the first three measures, with a 2+2+3 eighth-note triplet in the first measure of each of these measures. The dynamics include *f*, *mf*, *f cresc*, and *sfz*. The lyrics are "f ki re-gu b'-a-po".

Handwritten musical score for a vocal piece, page 57. The score consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The music is in G major and 4/4 time, with various time signature changes (2/4, 3/4) indicated. The lyrics are "ki re-ga b'-a-po ki ki ki re-ga b'-a-".

System 1 (Vocal and Piano):

- Staff 1 (Vocal): $\text{ki re-ga b'-a-po ki ki ki re-ga b'-a-}$
- Staff 2 (Vocal): $\text{ki re-ga ki ki ki re-ga b'-a-}$
- Staff 3 (Piano): $\text{ki re-ga ki ki re-ga b'-a-}$
- Staff 4 (Piano): $\text{re-ga ki ki re-ga b'-a-}$

System 2 (Piano):

- Staff 1 (Piano): re-ga b'-a-
- Staff 2 (Piano): re-ga b'-a-
- Staff 3 (Piano): re-ga b'-a-
- Staff 4 (Piano): re-ga b'-a-

D

mf *cha-yim* *bir'-tao no* mp decel.

mf *cha-yim* *bir'-tao no* mp

mf *cha-yim* *cha-yim*

mf *cha-yim*

mf *cha-yim*

mf *cha-yim* *bir'-tao no* decel.

mf *cha-yim* *bir'-tao no* mp

E

♩ = ca. 84

2 ba-e-rev ya-lin be-chi

desol.

2 ba-e-rev ya-lin be-chi

Handwritten musical score for voice and piano. The score is written on multiple staves. The top system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "vi-la bo-ker ri-na". The tempo is marked "♩ = ca. 72". The second system shows the piano accompaniment with lyrics: "vi-la bo-ker ri-na". The tempo is marked "♩ = ca. 72". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics like "rit.". The page number "15" is written at the bottom.

♩ = ca. 72

vi-la bo-ker ri-na

rit.

vi-la bo-ker ri-na

♩ = ca. 72

rit.

rit.

15

F

♩ = 68-72

2 Ma-fach-ta mis-pi-di P'-ma-

2 Ma-fach-ta mis-pi-di P'-ma-

2 Ma-fach-ta mis-pi-

2 Ma-fach-ta mis-pi-

16

The musical score consists of four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are in Russian and are as follows:

Soprano: -chol li pi-tach-ta pi-tach-ta sa-ki va-t-az-rei-ni
Alto: -chol li pi-tach-ta sa-ki va-t-az-rei-ni
Tenor: -di pi-tach-ta sa-ki va-t-az-rei-ni
Bass: -di pi-tach-ta sa-ki va-t-az-rei-ni

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are written below the corresponding vocal lines.

va-t'az-rei-ni sim-cha sim-cha
va-t'az-rei-ni sim-cha sim-cha sim-cha
va-t'az-rei-ni sim-cha sim-cha
sim-cha sim-cha

The musical score consists of four staves for voice and piano. The top three staves are vocal lines, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The music features a mix of 7/4 and 3/4 time signatures. The piano part includes chords and melodic lines that support the vocal melody. There are dynamic markings such as *mp* and *pp* throughout the score.

G

Handwritten musical score for a vocal piece. The score is written on five systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "i' - ma-an y'-za-mer - cha che - vod v'-lo yi-dom". The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "i' - ma-an y'-za-mer v'-lo yi-dom". The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "cha - vod v'-lo yi-dom". The fourth system shows the piano accompaniment with markings "poco rit." and "a tempo". The fifth system shows the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking "p". The key signature has two flats and the time signature is 3/4.

♩ = ca. 116-120

3 + 2

mf

vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-men-similita

vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-mar-cha-cha-vod vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-mar

mp

y'-za-mar-cha-cha-vod y'-za-mar

vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-mar-cha-cha-vod

mp

mf

mp

20

Detailed description: This is a musical score for voice and piano. It features a complex rhythmic structure with multiple time signatures: 3/4, 4/4, 3/8, 5/8, 2/4, and 3/8. The tempo is marked as approximately 116-120 beats per minute. The score includes a vocal line with Russian lyrics and a piano accompaniment. Dynamics range from mezzo-piano (*mp*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*). A '3 + 2' measure rest is present in the first system. The lyrics are: 'vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-men-similita', 'vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-mar-cha-cha-vod vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-mar', 'y'-za-mar-cha-cha-vod y'-za-mar', and 'vi-lo yi-dom y'-za-mar-cha-cha-vod'. The score is divided into two systems by a double line.

3 + 2 *f*

-cha cha - vad vi-lo yi - dom vi-lo yi - dom

-cha cha - vad vi-lo yi - dom vi-lo yi - dom

-cha cha - vad vi-lo yi - dom vi-lo yi - dom

vi-lo yi - dom vi-lo yi - dom

21

H

Musical score for voice and piano. The score consists of four staves for voice (Soprano, Alto, Tenor/Bass) and two staves for piano (Right and Left Hand). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 5/8. The lyrics are: A-do-nai E-lo-hai E-lo-hai P-o-
A-do-nai E-lo-hai E-lo-hai P-o-
A-do-nai E-lo-hai A-do-nai E-lo-hai P-o-
A-do-nai E-lo-hai A-do-nai E-lo-hai P-o-

Handwritten annotations above the staves include: $3 + 2$ above the first measure of the Soprano line, and $2 + 2 + 3$ above the final measures of the Soprano and Alto lines. The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and various note values.

Handwritten musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four vocal staves and one piano staff. The second system has two vocal staves and two piano staves. The lyrics are "-lam A-do-nai E-lo-hai I'-o lam o de-ka". The score includes various musical notations such as time signatures (3/4, 4/4), key signatures (one sharp), and performance instructions like "rit.", "a tempo", and "pesante". There are also some handwritten annotations like "2 + 2 + 3" and "ff".

Lyrics: -lam A-do-nai E-lo-hai I'-o lam o de-ka

Performance instructions: rit., a tempo, ff, pesante

Handwritten annotations: 2 + 2 + 3

Handwritten musical score on ten staves. The score is divided into two systems by a vertical bar line. The first system contains four staves with melodic lines in treble and bass clefs, featuring long notes and slurs. The second system contains two staves with more complex rhythmic patterns and slurs. Below the second system, there is a handwritten date "Feb. 16, 1984" and the number "24" centered at the bottom.

MUSIC REVIEW

“THE LADY OF THE LAKE”

“ANGEL LEVINE”

PAUL KAVON

Hadassah B. Markson, innovator and artistic director of the annual Jewish Opera at the 92nd Street “Y”, now in its fifth year, has added impressively to the oeuvre by commissioning the noted composer, Elie Siegmeister to write two new works, “The Lady of the Lake” and “Angel Levine”. These two relatively short operas received their world premieres on Saturday evening, October 5, 1985.

With these operas, based on stories by Bernard Malamud with librettos provided by Edward Mabley, Siegmeister, composer of six other operas and numerous works in many media, has made a significant contribution to the limited repertory of Jewish opera.

A sense of total professionalism manifested itself throughout the performances. Amy Kaiser conducted the orchestra of 16 instrumentalists and the combined casts of 12 accomplished singers with consummate expertise. The direction of Dan Held, the sets of Tony Castrigna and the lighting of Victor En Yu Tan contributed to the overall excellence of the production.

In “Angel Levine”, the longer, more dominant work, Nathan Manishevitz, a poor tailor, is told by the doctor that his wife, Fanny, is very ill and has only a short time to live. Manishevitz, racked by problems throughout his life, pleads with God to somehow miraculously save his wife.

His prayers are answered in the person of Alexander Levine, a black Jewish angel dressed in natty street clothes, who suddenly appears much to the surprise of the unbelieving Nathan. The tailor challenges Levine repeatedly for proof that he is indeed a Jewish angel, even asking him to recite (sing) the blessing over bread and wine, in Hebrew. Despite the angel fulfilling these demands, Manishevitz is still not convinced, and a frustrated Levine leaves for Harlem.

Subsequently, at the urging of his sick wife, Nathan pursues Levine to 116th Street, first looking for him in a black synagogue, where a trio of black worshippers are *davening in talleitim* and studying Talmud, and

Hazzan Paul Kavon is a member of the Cantors Assembly and the President of the American Society for Jewish Music.

finally finding him in a seedy Harlem night club. (Here Seigmeister uses elements of jazz and blues with considerable skill.) When Manishevitz assures Levine that he truly believes that he is a black Jewish angel sent from God. Levine goes back to the apartment and cures Fanny.

The first opera, “The Lady of the Lake”, concerns itself with a young Jewish tourist, Henry Blumberg, who falls in love with a beautiful young lady while visiting an Italian island. When she asks him his name and if he is Jewish, Blumberg, fearful that she would not marry him should he be a Jew, gives her a false name. Similarly, beset by identical fears, the lady responds to Blumberg’s inquiry also with a name other than her own. Toward the conclusion of the opera, when Blumberg proposes marriage, the woman shows him her concentration camp number, tells Blumberg that she cannot marry him because she is Jewish and the opera ends with Blumberg never able to reveal his true identity.

While the contents of both operas have basically Jewish themes, none of the music is intrinsically Jewish, with brief exceptions being an almost shofar-like trumpet in the overture to “Angel Levine”, and perhaps the *Motzi* and *Kiddush hrachot* that Levine sings to prove his Jewishness.

The major caveat of this listener on hearing these operas is their unrelenting modernism. Both works are permeated with wide intervallic skips in the vocal lines, a feature unfortunately prevalent in most contemporary opera. Throughout the evening one longed for a sustained melody to relieve the unremitting note-hopping.

Despite this, it is good to report that Jewish Opera is alive and flourishing on a high artistic level at the 92nd Street “Y”.

IN THE MAIL

Editor:

Please consider including Robert Strassburg's resume and catalog of Jewish works on the occasion of this distinguished composer's 70th birthday this past September (1985).

It will constitute a genuine pleasure for those who are already familiar with Strassburg's manifold contributions to Jewish music and an unexpected treat for those who have yet to experience the pleasure of knowing him.

Michael Isaacson
Encino, Ca.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT STRASSBURG

Robert Strassburg is Professor Emeritus of Music at California State University Los Angeles. Over 13,000 students have taken his humanities courses since 1966. A great part of his creative energies have been spent as a teacher, composer, conductor, writer, musicologist, poet and organist for over 35 years.

His activities in the music world, include studies with Walter Piston, Igor Stravinsky and Paul Hindemith. He was recipient of a Harvard fellowship in composition, 1939-40; a Boston Symphony scholarship in composition with Hindemith at Tanglewood in 1939; a Macdowell fellowship in 1946 from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He received his Bachelor of Music from the New England Conservatory, his Master of Arts from Harvard University, and his Doctor of Fine Arts from the University of Judaism in Los Angeles.

As a conductor, his activities included music director for Ragan Instructional Films, 1941-44; the conductorship of the New York Ballet Theatre, 1949-50; conductor of the Cantors of Miami, 1950-60; director of the Festival of the Americas for the City of Miami, 1958; guest conductor of the Bogota Festival of Music, where he was the first American conductor to be invited to conduct the Orquesta Sinfonica de Columbia, 1959; conductor of the Hillel House Sinfonetta, 1958-60 at the University of Miami; conductor of the Los Angeles Zimria chorus in Israel, 1966; and conductor of many pageants and festivals.

As a composer he has composed a wide variety of music including over forty documentary film scores. In 1953 he composed and directed an

historical pageant for the City of Miami Beach on the subject of Miami pioneer days called *Sand in Your Shoes*. In 1955 he was selected by the Greater Miami Music Clubs as "Composer of the Year". While a director of the Palm Beach Play House he composed incidental music for *King Lear*, *Rose Tattoo*, *Anne of a Thousand Days*, *The House I Live In* and other plays. His compositions also include two Torah Services, many Psalm settings for solo as well as chorus, the folk opera *Chelm* (commissioned by the Westchester Opera Company), music for the Sabbath and High Holy Days, instrumental music, secular and liturgical songs and choral settings. His Torah services commissioned by Cantor Ray Smolover of White Plains Jewish Community Center, have served that congregation for the past 30 years.

As a teacher, music director and administrator he was chairman of the Composition and Theory Department at the Philadelphia Music Settlement School, 1943-47; lecturer on music history theory and harmony at Brooklyn College 1947-50; music director at Brandeis Camp Institute, 1947-50; he was music director of the Brandeis Camps of the East, 1949-51; music director of Temple Emanuel, Miami Beach, 1950-52; music director of Coral Gables Temple, Florida, 1952-60; music consultant of the Jewish Centers of Greater Miami, 1950-56; conductor-director of the 7th Annual Music Festival of Miami; Faculty member and humanities music specialist for the Humanities Department of the University of Miami, 1958-60; assistant dean, School of Fine Arts, University of Judaism, Los Angeles, 1960-66; Gave 120 broadcasts on music of the Bible over KGBS network in Los Angeles, 1961-63; music director-organist at Temple Beth Shalom, Encino, 1961-67. Conducted cantors, children's choirs and adult choirs in the Max Helfman city-wide memorial at the Shrine Auditorium, 1963. UCLA extension lecturer on music of the Bible, 1963-64. Professor of music at CSULA from 1966 to the present. Music director of Temple Emanuel, Beverly Hills, 1967-74. Founding director of the Roy Harris Archives at CSULA, 1973. Chairman of over 200 events at CSULA for the Bicentennial Celebration in 1976. Recipient of his University's Outstanding Professor Award in 1977. Director of the Bloch Festival at CSU LA, 1980. Vice President of the Los Angeles Jewish Composers Council, 1981-82, and vice president of the Friends of Music CSU LA.

He is the author of the biographical study of *Ernest Bloch: Voice in the Wilderness*; a collection of poems, *Fire and Fret*; an appreciation text for his course Music in World Culture at California State University, *Music Art and You*.

ROBERT STRASSBURG'S MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

*LITURGICAL MUSIC**LITURGICAL WORKS*

TORAH SERVICE I (1949) For Cantor, Choir and Organ
 Prelude
 Lo Yareyh
 S h'ma
 Emet Elohe
 Hine Ma Tov
 Ohr Zaruah
 Yimloch Adonay

CHELM -A comic folk opera in One Act (1955)

Libretto by Ray Smolover

TORAH SERVICE II (1970) For Cantor, Choir and Organ

PSALMS

PSALM 3 (1954) Cantor, SATB, Piano
 PSALM 134 (1960) SATB, a capella
 PSALM 117 (1965) SATB, Organ (Mills Music)
 PSALM 121 (1970) Cantor, SATB, Organ
 PSALM 150 (1972) Cantor, SATB, Organ
 PSALM 54 (1979) Solo Voice, S or T

MUSIC FOR THE SABBATH

Torah Service I (1949) Cantor, Choir, Organ
 May the Words (1955) SATB, Organ (Transcontinental)
 Meditation (1955) SATB (Humming), Organ (Trans)
 Ve'Ohavta (1963) Cantor, SATB, Organ
 Kindling the Sabbath Lights (1970) Cantor, Rabbi, SATB, Organ
 Torah Service II (1970) Cantor, Choir, Organ
 Bayom Hahu (197 I) Cantor, SATB, Organ

MUSIC FOR HIGH HOLY DA YS

Hotiu L'Adonay (1970) Cantor, SATB. Organ
 Harninu (1970) Cantor, SATB, Organ
 Adonay Hu Elohim (1971) Cantor, SATB, Organ
 Al Chet (1972) Cantor, SATB, (Organ optional)
 Dark'cho (1973) Cantor, SATB, Organ
 Eso Ainai (1973) Cantor, SATB, Organ
 Ma Tovv (1984) Cantor, SATB, (Organ optional)

CHANUKAH

- Festival of Lights Symphony, String Orchestra
 in three movements (1955)
 Al Hanissim (1956) SATB (a Capella)
 Yafey Nofe (1964) Cantor, Solo Quartet, SATB, Piano

LITURGICAL SOLO SONGS

- Hashiveynu Elecha,
 Chassidic Melody (1949) Medium high voice
 Set Me As a Seal, Solomon:8 (1953) Tenor or Soprano and Organ
 (A Wedding Song)
 The Rabbi of Bacharach,
 H. Heine (1963) Tenor or Soprano and Piano
 Shir Hashirim (1983) Tenor or Soprano and Piano
 (A Wedding Song)

INSTRUMENTAL LITURGICAL MUSIC

- Torah Sonata for Piano (1950)
 1. Munach
 2. Segol
 3. Prophets (Portrait of Isaiah)
 4. Zarko
 Voice of the Psalmist (1954) for Cello and Piano
 1. Psalm 1
 2. Psalm 117
 3. Psalm 3
 Tercentenary Suite (1954) for Viola and Piano
 1. 1654 - Prayer of Thanksgiving
 2. 1776 - The Pursuit of Liberty
 3. 1883 - Give me Your Tired Your Poor
 4. 1954 - "Truly God is Good to Israel"
 Tropol Suite (1955)
 Setting of Torah Sonata for String Quartet
 Festival of Lights Symphony (1955)
 Patriarchs (1958) Four Biblical Portraits for String Orchestra
 1. Moses
 2. David
 3. Job
 4. Elijah
 A Gilgul Fun a Nigun (Migrations of a Melody), 1962
 On a text by Y.L. Peretz for Narrator, Baritone, and Chamber
 Orchestra.

SECULAR COMPOSITIONS

SONGS

Walt Whitman Cycle (1946) for Tenor and Orchestra (or Piano)

- I. Beautiful Women
2. Youth, Day, Old Age and Night
3. Gliding Over All

Mother and Babe (1948),

W. Whitman Tenor or Soprano

I Am He That Aches With Love

(1952), W. Whitman Tenor or Soprano and Piano

Three Songs on Texts of

Heinrich Heine (1955) Tenor or M.S.

1. Comes My Love
2. Despair
3. Over Me

Two Folk Songs (1956)

1. The Little Horses Medium Voice
(American Folk Melody)
2. B'yom Kayitz Medium Voice
(Ch. N. Bialik Melody: A Saphir)

The Sobbing of the Bells (1963),

W. Whitman Tenor or Soprano

Come Said My Soul (1966),

W. Whitman Tenor or Soprano

Love's Sorrow (198 1)

Tenor or Soprano

Amorous Bird (198 1).

Tenor or Soprano

Om Mani Padme Hum (1982),

A Tantric Meditation Tenor or M.S.

Love's Tetraology, Four Songs on

Texts by R. Strassburg (1985) Tenor or M.S.

INSTRUMENTAL

Rhapsodic Dialogue for Violin and Piano (1942)

Fantasy on Three American Folk Songs for Violin, Cello and Piano (1950)

Fantasy and Allegro for Violin and Orchestra (1955)

Three Meditations for Piano (1984)

Hunting the Deer - Theme and Six Variations for Piano

CHORAL

Triology for Women's Voices (1980)

1. Love Unrealised,
2. Love Alone,
3. Love's Prayers,

A Whitman Song Cycle

"Leaves of Grass" (1985)

- Old Age, W. Whitman
 Back Unto These Days,
 W. Whitman

Tenor, Chorus, Narrator
 and Orchestra

2 Part Men and Women

Tenor, Baritone Solos

SATB, 2 pianos

STRASSBURG'S COSMOGONY**BOOKS OF POEMS BY ROBERT FULTON STRASSBURG**

1. THE ROOTS OF MAN 1942
2. THE HUMAN CONDITION 1975-76
3. FIRE AND FRET 1976-77
4. ALL THAT JAZZ 1976-79
5. OUT OF THE DEPTHS 1977
6. LOVE'S COSMOGONY 1977-78
7. PROMISE OF THE AGE 1978
8. INEFFABLE MUSIC 1978
9. LOVE'S MYSTIC ENCOUNTERS 1978-79
10. PORTRAITS 1978-85
11. ELEGIES 1980
12. SEASCAPADES 1981
13. CRESCENDOS AND DIMINUENDOS 1982
14. EYE MAGIC 1982
15. WERBILY POEMS 1982
16. CARDIAC REVERIES 1982
17. SOUL MUSIC 1982
18. CURRENT POEMS 1985 - PRESENT