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JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC, *Volume I, Number 3*  
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## HAZZANUT IN IRAN

LAURENCE D. LOEB

The Jews of Iran have flourished for 2500 years under conditions which have varied from difficult to impossible. I am now here in Iran through the generosity of the Cantors Assembly to try to unravel some of the broken threads of knowledge concerning this, the largest Jewish community in Asia.

My wife and I are living in Shiraz, a city of about 200,000 located in the southwest of Iran. There are 8,000 to 10,000 Jews still living here. Although 12,000 have gone on aliya to Erets Yisra'el, the natural increase in recent years has somewhat offset emigration losses.

About one half of the Jews live in a ghetto area called the Mahalleh. These people have tended to group in certain neighbor-families (often 8 to 9 children). Many such families live in one room having little or no furniture, and raise their children on sun-baked mud floors.

The other half of the community has recently escaped the Mahalleh. These people have tended to group in certain neighborhoods and most of them belong to the middle class.

The foregoing introduces you to the Jew of Shiraz, whose economic condition is precarious, but whose religious life is permeated with warmth and security. Shiraz is known among Iranian Jews as a pious, religiously-oriented community.

The Jewish school system is run by Otsar Hatora. Many of the Jewish children, however, attend non-Jewish schools. Total school attendance among Jewish children is 100% whereas it is only 45% among non-Jews. Many of the men speak some Hebrew which they have learned from the daily repetition of tfillot.

There are fourteen Synagogues in Shiraz; eleven are in the Mahalleh, and three — outside. Those outside the Mahalleh are new and quite nice; richly carpeted and, as far as the *torot* are concerned, expensively ornamented. A few of the Synagogues in the Mahalleh have been newly decorated. The others are mostly dilapidated.

Members of the Cantors Assembly will be interested to know that the roles of *Hazzan* and *Shaliah Tsibbur* are distinct here,

**LAURENCE LOEB is a graduate of the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He is pursuing important field research in Iran, on a grant from the Cantors Assembly, which will lead to a PhD. in Ethnomusicology.**

and their manner of performance is worthy of discussion.

The **Hazzan** functions as an administrator of the Synagogue. He conforms to the old Mishnaic understanding of the term, which meant “overseer.” The collection of money for the selling of kbodot (**aliyot**, etc.) is his responsibility. It is he who announces important events in the life of his congregation. He takes the responsibility for announcing important decisions of the community leadership. In Shiraz, the **Hazzanim** have a committee of three who, since the Six Day War, have undertaken to raise money from all the congregations for Israel. Substantial amounts have been raised this way, since even the poorest donate something. As far as I have observed, the **Hazzan** does not act as a **shaliah tsibbur**, although it is not yet clear whether this is coincidental or intentional.

Before we proceed to discuss the **shaliah tsibbur**, there are two other positions within the orbit of Synagogue organization that are particularly interesting:

**Shamash:** his task is the physical maintenance of the Synagogue including the turning on of electricity and keeping the building and courtyard clean. His duties include those of watchman. The **shamash** lives on the Synagogue grounds with his family and is frequently non-Jewish. The Jewish **shamash** is usually destitute and accepts such a position out of need rather than choice.

**Gabay:** His function in the community is mainly extra-synagoga. He is responsible for collecting and distributing money for the poor. A part of this money is collected daily in the Synagogue. He knows the needs of all the poor and allocates accordingly. There are very few **gabayim** in Shiraz, and only one is completely trusted by all members of the community.

It is the role of **shaliah tsibbur** that I find most interesting. Anyone may serve as **shaliah tsibbur** and all are amateurs, i.e. none are paid for their services. Every **knisa** (Synagogue) has several persons who serve in this capacity.

Outside the Mahalleh, most **shlihey tsibbur** are graduates of the Yeshiva who are in great demand for their superior command of Hebrew, and ability to read Tora according to the **ta'amim**. However, the **shaliah tsibbur** need not always be a **ba'al kore**. Here, outside the Mahalleh, prayers are almost always recited entirely in Hebrew. Sometimes the **haftora** may be translated at sight into **'judji** (Judaeo-Persian),

It is inside the Mahalleh that the role of **shaliah tsibbur** assumes its greatest import.

The **shaliah tsibbur** who presently serves as my chief informant takes great pride in his competence. "I'm the last **shaliah tsibbur** in Shiraz who weeps while praying. On Rosh Hashana many women come to **knisa** only in order to hear me." I can attest that this was not merely boastful bragging; indeed many men came there for the same reason. There are, however, other **shlihey tsibbur** who also weep during tfilla.

In many respects this informant is typical of most **shlihey tsibbur** here. He is close to fifty years of age, has a wife and five children and lives in a small clean house at an extreme end of the Mahalleh. He is a poor man, who earns a living by working part-time with his brother selling cloth, and part-time assisting a gold merchant. His father was **shaliah tsibbur** in the same **knisa** before him.

In the Synagogue, poverty and misery are wellsprings of **kawanna** permeating the tfilla of the **shaliah tsibbur**. On Monday and Thursday, Shabbat and Yom Tob, and especially during Slihot, his demeanor assumes a new dignity as he ascends the **bima**.

Like all **ba'aley tfilla** here, he is able to chant at a pace unequaled by Ashkenazic Jews. Since **tfillot** are recited out loud by the **shaliah tsibbur** and the total volume of prayer recited here each time exceeds that of the Ashkenazim, there is a necessity for haste.

Nevertheless, the art of Hazzanut is highly-developed here, although it is different in style from our own. The Persian **shaliah tsibbur** can easily produce as many elaborate trills as any Ashkenazic or Oriental Hazzan, but this is usually not done. My impression has been that (except for very few prayers) Synagogue music is substantially different from either Persian art music or folk music.

The artistry of the **shaliah tsibbur** lies in his choice and interpretation of tfilla. Here, for the first time, I have seen **shlihey tsibbur** free to choose **which** prayers they wish to recite and **how** they wish to recite them. The **matbe'a shel tfilla** remains, but **piyyutim** and **limmud** of all kinds may be spontaneously selected by the **shaliah tsibbur**. Sometimes, he may introduce an old prayer not found in modern siddurim but which may exist in **kitbey yad**. Occasionally, he is aided by a **'samikh'** who stands nearby and alternates with him in chanting the **piyyutim**. Certainly, the western Hazzan with his closely regimented service suffers by comparison with his Persian counterpart who still retains this traditional prerogative of the **shaliah tsibbur**.

The uniquely creative aspect of the Shirazi *shaliah tsibbur* lies in his interpretation of *tfilla*. The *shaliah tsibbur* not only allows himself complete emotional involvement in his prayer, giving vent to joy, sadness, contrition and awe, but he makes these prayers understandable even to the least educated man or woman present. He *translates at sight* from poetical Hebrew and Aramaic into the Judaeo-Persian speech of the Mahalleh. In this personal, individualistic translation the text is elaborated on, enlarged upon, examined and even explained (though not in a pedantic manner). These translations, as much as I understand of them, are quite beautiful and represent a remarkable artistic achievement. During these translations the *shaliah tsibbur* is either maintaining the basic rhythmic pulse (if the Hebrew version has one), continuing the same melody (if it is a set one), or improvising within the mood of the text. Tension is highlighted by the use of *Sprechstimme*, shouting, barely audible whispering and voice masking. Indeed, few of the vocal dramatic techniques of western opera are lacking here. Many in the congregation, both men and women, weep with the *shaliah tsibbur*. His performance is entirely motivated by the text; as the mood of the text changes, a parallel transition is apparent in the mood of the *shaliah tsibbur*. Frequently he alternates between Hebrew and Persian using the latter to accentuate those aspects of the *tfilla* which he considers most important or most pertinent to his congregation.

Although the *shaliah tsibbur's* comprehension of Hebrew is clearly substantial, the older *shlihey tsibbur* have studied very little Hebrew formally. Where does this mastery of Hebrew emanate from? Perhaps this translation-interpretation itself, serves as an important pedagogic mechanism here, and possibly a covert role of the *shaliah tsibbur* is that of teacher.

From this brief analysis of the importance of *Hazzanut* in the religious life of the Jews in Shiraz, we can come to understand the interesting separation of roles among the various Synagogue functionaries. Further elaboration on the Synagogue as an institution here, will follow at some later date.

## A SECOND LANDMARK CASE

On November 13, 1967 the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit handed down a decision of historic significance to the cantors of America.

In the case of "IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF STUART M. KANAS, BY MATTHEW KANAS, HIS FATHER, FOR A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS" the Court held that Cantor Kanas had been unlawfully induced into the United States Army and granted the Writ of Habeas Corpus directing the Army to release him forthwith, without prejudice to whatever further classification procedures may be in order within the Selective Service System. The Court held that he had established a prima facie case for a ministerial IV-D Selective Service classification, and that his Queens, New York Local Draft Board had no basis in fact nor any evidence before it that gave them the right to deny him a ministerial exemption.

This decision establishes for the first time in American jurisprudence a number of guide lines by which the ministerial status of a hazzan may be determined. It establishes thereby a significant legal precedent to buttress a similar decision in the recent Tax Court Case (Salkov vs. Commissioner of Internal Revenue).

For these reasons the Editors include here the entire decision rendered by the United States Circuit of Appeals.

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UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
For the Second Circuit

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No. 120-September Term, 1967  
(Argued September 19, 1967 Decided November 13, 1967)  
Docket No. 31516

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IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF STUART M. KANAS, *by*  
MATTHEW KANAS, His Father, for a Writ of Habeas Corpus,  
*Petitioner-Appellant.*

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MAJOR GENERAL T. R. YANCEY, Commanding Officer,  
Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York,  
*Respondent-Appellee.*

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Before:

LUMBARD, *Chief Judge,*  
WATERMAN AND FEINBERG, *Circuit Judges.*

Appeal from a judgment of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, John F. Dooling, Jr., **J.**, denying a petition for a writ of habeas corpus on the ground that registrant's classification by the Selective Service System in Class 1-A rather than Class IV-D was based upon a sufficient basis in fact. Reversed.

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HERBERT S. GARTEN, Baltimore, Maryland (Fedder and Garten, S. Ronald Ellison, Baltimore, Maryland; Joel L. Jacobson, Commack, Long Island, New York, on the brief), **for Petitioner-Appellant.**

CARL GOLDEN, Assistant United States Attorney (Joseph P. Hoey, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, on the brief), **for Respondent-Appellee.**

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FEINBERG, **Circuit Judge:**

Stuart M. Kanas was inducted into the Army on June 28, 1967. His father, Matthew Kanas, petitioned the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, on his son's behalf, for a writ of habeas corpus. The application claimed that Stuart's induction was unlawful because he was a cantor employed by a Jewish congregation in Pennsylvania, and thus entitled to exemption from the draft as a "minister of religion." On June 29, following a hearing, Judge Dooling denied the writ, but stayed his order pending this court's review. We reverse. The writ releasing Stuart M. Kanas from

50 U. S. C. App. §456(g) provides: Regular or duly ordained ministers of religion shall be exempt from training and service (but not from registration under this title. 50 M. S. C. App. §466(g) provides: (1) The term "duly ordained minister of religion" means a person who has been ordained, in accordance with the ceremonial, ritual, or discipline of a church, religious sect, or organization established on the basis of a community of faith and belief, doctrines and practices of a religious character, to preach and to teach the doctrines of such church, sect, or organization and to administer the rites and ceremonies thereof in public worship, and who as his regular and customary vocation preaches and teaches the principles of religion and administers the ordinances of public worship as embodied in the creed or principles of such church, sect, or organization. (2) The term "regular minister of religion" means one who as his customary vocation preaches and teaches the principles of religion of a church, a religious sect, or organization of which he is a member, without having been formally ordained as a minister of religion, and who is recognized by such church, sect, or organization as a regular minister. (3) The term "regular or duly ordained minister of religion" does not include a person who irregularly or incidentally preaches and teaches the principles of religion of a church, religious sect, or organization.



the Army is granted without prejudice to any reclassification his local board finds proper following a new hearing.

From September 1961 until June 1966, the registrant was a student at the Hebrew Union College--Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music in New York. There, while he studied to become a cantor, he enjoyed a II-S deferment.<sup>2</sup> In a June 1962 letter to the local board, the Hebrew Union College described the registrant's program and the College's goal as follows:

The program of studies in which Mr. Kanas is currently enrolled . . . requires five full years of attendance and leads to the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Music and diploma as Cantor. Our graduates are trained to serve as qualified functionaries in conducting religious worship and other religious activities in synagogues of all denominations in Judaism.

Upon graduation, the registrant received this degree and certification as a cantor. On June 24, 1966, the registrant notified his local board, No. 66 in Flushing, New York, of the change in his status, and told the board that he had been "elected as a resident clergyman" by Congregation Melrose B'nai Israel, a synagogue in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania. On July 7, the Congregation informed the board that the registrant was employed "for an initial period of two years as Cantor and Musical Director of our Synagogue," and that the Cantor and his wife "have taken residence close to the Synagogue."

The local board thereupon initiated reclassification procedures; it invited the registrant to appear at the next board meeting and to bring all information pertinent to his status. The board also sent him SSS Form 127, entitled "Current Information Questionnaire." The registrant did not attend the meeting, but completed and returned the Form; on it he characterized his job as "Cantor" and, in response to the request that he "give a brief statement of his duties," described them as "Pastoral duties, Conduct Worship Services, Teach children in Hebrew School." He also noted "other occupational qualifications" — "Play Saxophone and Clarinet." On this record, without written opinion, the local board on August 10, 1966 unanimously classified registrant I-A.

By letter to the local board dated August 14, 1966, the Congregation defined the position of "Reverend Cantor Kanas" in more detail.

**'Arguably the registrant was eligible for a IV-D exemption as a divinity student during this period. However, his failure to claim such a status while in school neither waived nor jeopardized his present claim.'**

He is a regular minister of our Congregation, co-officiating with the Rabbi at all worship services. As a minister of our Congregation he also has the right to perform marriages and funerals and any other such ministerial duties.

Reverend Kanas is also a teacher of the principles of our faith in our Religious School and is director of all music at the synagogue, etc.

This letter was construed as an appeal by the registrant's employer from the I-A classification, see 32 C. F. R. 51626.2. The Government Appeal Agent also appealed. The latter referred to the Congregation's letter, and then stated his "strong personal belief" that IV-D should and does include cantors, because they are "vitaly needed as an instrument of the Jewish religion and its observance." He also thought that IV-D should include "lesser officers than merely ministers and priests in other religions."

In January 1967, the New York City appeal board, two to one, upheld the I-A classification. The board found that registrant's "regular" vocation was that of "Cantor and Musical Director," and that "by far the major portion of his time" was spent in that capacity. Moreover, "most, if not all, of his claimed ministerial functions involve, in major degree, the exercise of his ability and qualifications as Cantor." The board concluded, without more explanation, that these ministerial functions in his role as cantor were "more or less irregular and incidental to his duties as Cantor and Musical Director." The board also noted the apparent "concession" of the Appeal Agent that cantors were not presently within the IV-D exemption, and refused to act in a manner which might enlarge the class of those eligible for IV-D. An appeal to the President was unavailing, and the registrant's induction in June 1967 followed.

Judicial review of Selective Service determinations is severely limited; only if there exists "no basis in fact" for a classification will a court interfere. See *United States v. Seeger*, 380 U. S. 163, 185 (1965) quoting from *Estep v. United States*, 327 U. S. 114, 122-23 (1946); *Cox v. United States*, 332 U. S. 442, 452-53 (1947) <sup>3</sup> This does not mean, however, that a local board is free to disbelieve all evidence in the record in the absence of any impeaching or contradictory material.

The task of the courts in cases such as this is to search the record for some affirmative evidence to support the local board's

<sup>3</sup>This test has recently been literally repeated in the statute. 50 U. S. C. App. §460(b)(3), as amended, Pub. L. No. 90-40, §8 (c) (June 30, 1967.)

overt or implicit finding that a registrant has not painted a complete or accurate picture of his activities.

But when the uncontroverted evidence supporting a registrant's claim places him *prima facie* within the statutory exemption, dismissal of the claim solely on the basis of suspicion and speculation is both contrary to the spirit of the Act and foreign to our concepts of justice.

*Dickinson v. United States*, 346 U. S. 389, 396-97 (1953).

We have carefully searched the record before us, and have set out its relevant portions above. We note that there is no intimation in the record that the registrant is not in fact performing full time the duties for which the congregation hired him. Moreover, the basic facts in the record appear undisputed. We find that the registrant made out a *prima facie* case for classification IV-D and that there is no affirmative evidence to rebut his claim. We make these findings with full awareness that the registrant must bear the burden of establishing his right to an exemption, and that the ministerial exemption is a narrow one. See *Dickinson v. United States*, 346 U. S. at 394-95; 32 C. F. R. 11622.1 (c).

The only Selective Service statement before us concerning the basis of the registrant's I-A classification is the appeal board's opinion. One possible interpretation of that opinion is that because registrant is a "Cantor and Musical Director" his primary occupation is musical by definition. Consequently, the ministerial functions he performs are secondary and he does not qualify for a IV-D exemption. This theory constitutes a ruling that a person denominated "Cantor and Musical Director" is *per se* not qualified. Judge Dooling did not so construe the action of the board, and we would also be loath to do so since each classification must be determined on its particular facts, not on the basis of any blanket characterization. See, e.g., *United States ex rel. Hull v. Stalter*, 151 F. 2d 633, 637-38 (7th Cir. 1945). Moreover, we believe that at least in some instances cantors may qualify for IV-D.4 There is a surprising paucity of cases on the point; whether this shows that such exemptions are usually allowed, we simply do not know. In any event, the statute requires that a "regular minister of religion" be one who "as his customary vocation preaches and teaches the principles of religion . . ." 50 U. S. C. App. §466( g) (2). In *Dickinson*, the Supreme Court identified "regularly, as a vocation, teaching and preaching the principles

<sup>4</sup>We attach no importance to the difference in title between a "Cantor" and a "Cantor and Musical Director."

of his sect and conducting public worship in the tradition of his religion” as the “vital test” of a registrant’s claim. 346 U. S. at 395. The legislative history of the ministerial exemption reveals that IV-D classification is intended “for the leaders of the various religious faiths and not for the members generally.” S. Rep. No. 1268, 80th Cong., 2d Sess. 13 (1948). We are aware that this standard was formulated with the particular problems of Jehovah’s Witnesses in mind, but it seems likely that under this test the cantor described in *Abraham A. Salkov*, 46 T. C. 190 (1966), would qualify for IV-D exemption. To give the tenor of that decision, we quote from it briefly, 46 T. C. at 198:

Regardless of the theoretical power of a Jewish layman, what in fact does Cantor Salkov do and what are his functions? He is a spiritual leader. He teaches. He performs pastoral duties. He is the minister-messenger of the Chizuk Amuna Congregation, commissioned and licensed by the congregation and by the Cantors Assembly of America to officiate professionally and regularly in the sacred religious service of the Jewish people. His functions are beyond any “minister of music.” ... For long periods of both prayer and service he is the only person standing at the pulpit. At all times he and the rabbi share the pulpit. Historically and functionally he is a *sui generis* minister. We do not decide whether Stuart M. Kanas is such a cantor. But he cannot be denied IV-D solely on the ground that he is a “Cantor and Musical Director.”

An alternative interpretation of the board’s opinion, and the one adopted by the district court, is that the board found as a fact that the registrant’s activities as a minister were merely “irregular and incidental” to his other functions, which it regarded as non-ministerial. The difficulty with this approach is that the distinction between the two types of activities is nowhere stated and, even if it were, there is a total lack of evidence to support any such breakdown. The record shows that the registrant co-officiates with the rabbi at services of worship, conducts funerals and, perhaps, marriages,<sup>5</sup> teaches Jewish principles to children, and supervises all

**5The Government contends that despite claims that the registrant has the right to conduct marriages, the law of Pennsylvania forbids it. See Purdon’s Penna. Stats. Ann., Tit. 48, §1-13. In *United States v. Burnett*, 115 F. Supp. 141 (W. D. Mo. 1953), inability to perform marriages was held irrelevant. In any case, in view of the basic evidentiary flaws in the record, we need not now resolve this question. We note, however, that on a SSS Form 127 received by the board in May 1967, the registrant states that he does officiate at marriages.**

music at the synagogue. Nowhere is there any record support for an allocation of time between the admittedly ministerial duties, which the board found “irregular and incidental,” and the music supervision which the board apparently thought to be registrant’s primary occupation.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the record is totally devoid of any consideration whether the musical aspect of a cantor’s work is, in fact, unrelated to preaching and teaching the principles of the faith. As already noted, “suspicion and speculation” cannot fill the need for *som e* “affirmative evidence” to support the board’s conclusion. See *Witmer v. United States*, 348 U. S. 375 (1955). It seems to us that the registrant has made out a prima facie case at least equal to others that have been held sufficient, e.g., *Blatter ton v. United States*, 260 F. 2d 233 (8th Cir. 1958); *Schuma n v. United States*, 208 F. 2d 801 (9th Cir. 1953); *United States v. Scott*, 137 F. Supp. 449 (E. D. Wisc. 1956).

The board possesses broad investigative powers. It may subpoena any necessary witnesses, 32 C. F. R. 91621.15, and invoke the facilities of local, state and national welfare and governmental agencies, 32 C. F. R. 91621.14. Before this court, both parties referred to material which might have been helpful to the local board or the appeal board; e.g., appellant relied on *Salkov, supra*, which contains a detailed description of the functions of a cantor, and the Government brought to our attention a decision of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, which incorporated the results of a survey of leading authorities of the three major branches of Judaism.<sup>7</sup> In cases such as this, involving difficult determinations of whether a complex of activities are sufficient to qualify for IV-D status, placing informed opinions before the local or appeal boards in a proper manner would seem desirable. Cf. *Eagles v. United States ex rel. Samuel s*, 329 U. S. 304 (1946) ; *United States ex rel. Goodman v. Hearn*, 153 F. 2d 186 (5th Cir.), cert. granted, 328 U. S. 833, case dismissed, 329 U. S. 667 (1946); *United States ex rel. Trainin v. Cain*, 144 F. 2d 944 (2d Cir. 1944), cert. denied, 323 U. S. 795 (1945) ; *United States ex rel. Leuy v. Cain*, 149 F. 2d 388 (2d Cir. 1945).

In view of our decision we need not consider the other bases of

**\*In meeting his burden of presenting a prima facie case, registrant would have been well advised to do more than merely file SSS Form 127, with its short and general job description. However, he has done enough in the absence of any contradictory evidence.**

**In re Gershon Ephros. S. S. Account No. 155-26-9022 (Decision of Appeals Counsel. March 11, 1965).**

appeal or the propriety of Judge Dooling's action on the motions made below. One claim deserves mention, however. The appeal board emphasized a "concession" made by the Government Appeal Agent; the registrant argues that under these circumstances he was denied due process because the Agent filed his handwritten appeal on the registrant's behalf without consulting with him at all. An appeal agent is called upon "To be equally diligent in protecting the interests of the Government and the rights of the registrant in all matters"<sup>8</sup> — a demanding if not impossible obligation. See Note, *The Selective Service*, 76 *Yale L. J.* 160, 168-69 (1966). It has been suggested that an appeal agent tends to identify with the local board<sup>9</sup> and that most registrants are unaware that his service is available to them.<sup>10</sup> We do not know whether these criticisms are accurate, but at least as to the latter, the Selective Service System now commendably provides that:

Whenever a local board places a registrant in ... I-A ... it shall, at the time the Notice of Classification ... is mailed, also inform the registrant that the Government Appeal Agent is available to advise him on matters relating to his legal rights, including his right of appeal. "

However, this does not deal with the problem presented here where apparently the registrant himself did not appeal (although his employer did) and the Appeal Agent took his own appeal in support of the registrant's position without consulting with him. Such a situation is probably unusual, but whether an appeal agent is protecting the interests of the Government or the rights of the registrant, it is essential that the registrant receive a copy of the memoranda submitted to the appeal board by the appeal agent and be given sufficient time in which to reply. In such a case, the registrant should be in no worse position than if he had taken his own appeal; in the latter event, he has the right to file a statement on his own behalf before the appeal board. 32 C. F. R. 01626.12 "[T] he right to file a statement before the Appeal Board includes the right to file a meaningful statement, one based on all the facts in the file and made with awareness of the recommendations and arguments to be countered."

<sup>8</sup> 32 C. F. R. §1604.71(d) (5).

<sup>9</sup>See Note, *Fairness and Due Process Under the Selective Service System*, 114 *U. Pa. L. Rev.* 1014,1030 (1966).

<sup>10</sup>See Note, *The Selective Service System: An Administrative Obstacle Course*, 54 *Calif. L. Rev.* 2123, 2148 (1966).

<sup>11</sup>*Selective Service System, National Headquarters, Local Board Memorandum No. 82 (as amended July 27, 1967).*

***Gonzales v. United States*, 348 U. S. 407, 415 (1955). If a special theological panel had been set up to pass upon the validity of the registrant's claim to a IV-D exemption, he clearly would have had the right to examine its report in order to explain, correct, or deny it. *Eagles v. United States ex rel. Samuels*, 329 U. S. 304 (1946). A registrant should be given equal procedural safeguards when an appeal agent interposes his views as to a registrant's theological status.<sup>12</sup>**

**The writ of habeas corpus is granted and Stuart M. Kanas is ordered released forthwith from the Army, without prejudice to whatever further classification procedures may be in order with the Selective Service System. See *United States v. Jakobson*, 325 F. 2d 409, 417 (2d Cir. 1963), *aff'd sub nom. United States v. Seeger*, 380 U. S. 163 (1965); *United States ex rel. DeGraw v. Toon*, 151 F. 2d 778 (2d Cir. 1945); *United States ex rel. Levy v. Cain*, 149 F. 2d 338,342 (2d Cir. 1945) .**

**Judgment reversed.**

<sup>12</sup>That such a procedure is possible is supported by the language of the regulations dealing with Government Appeal Agents under the 1917 and 1940 Acts. In each case, the Agent was required to

care for the interests of ignorant registrants and, where the decision of the local board is against the interests of such persons and where it appears that such persons may not take appeals, dut to their own non-culpable ignorance, to inform them of their rights and assist them to enter appeals

32 C. F. R. §603.71(a) (Cum, Supp. 1944); Selective Service Regulations §47 (1917). Interpreting an earlier part of this regulation, which directed agents to appeal deferments which should be reviewed. the New York City Director of Selective Service, Arthur C. McDermott, told Agents under his jurisdiction that

In the interests of justice, it would seem only fair that when a Government Appeal Agent takes an appeal, he should notify the registrant and also furnish him with a copy of any memorandum submitted to the Appeal Board in support of the appeal in time to afford the registrant an opportunity to submit a memorandum in reply.

New York City Selective Service Headquarters, Bulletin No. 16 (Jan. 30, 1941).

## JOSHUA SAMUEL WEISSER: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

PAUL KAVON

JOSHUA SAMUEL WEISSER ( PILDERWASSER ), throughout his lifetime, actively strove to maintain the finest traditions of Hazzanut both in America and abroad. At a time when Hazzanut, particularly in the orthodox synagogues, was degenerating into cheap theatricalism and vulgar sensationalism, Joshua Weisser was one of those who vigorously and dramatically opposed this desecration of our religious services.

Hazzanut during Weisser's younger years, shortly after the turn of this century, was in a chaotic state. The era of the "star hazzanim" had brought with it seemingly endless displays of vocal acrobatics and operatic exhibitions replacing the once-dignified, traditional, **nusachdik** service. In many synagogues one could hear the latest tune from vaudeville set to a sacred text, or a prayer like **Eitz Chayim Hi** being chanted to an aria from Pagliacci. The synagogue had become the concert hall, opera house or theater, and the congregants came no more to pray, but to listen and be entertained.

It was in this climate that Joshua Weisser began to publish his works for the synagogue. Well aware of this deterioration of the religious service, Weisser fought to return the synagogue to **aoodath hakodesh** through liturgical compositions that combined the best elements of traditional Hazzanut with the materials of pure **nusach**. In all his works for the synagogue, Weisser constantly employed traditional **nusach, nusach** many generations old, **nusach** that had sustained our liturgy from time immemorial. He strove continually to eliminate what he collectively termed "the foreign elements" that had made their way into the service. A review of his music for the synagogue proves that Weisser followed this plan to the letter. In any history of synagogal music, Joshua Weisser must be named as one who helped restore sanity to the synagogue service out of the chaos that was rampant at the time.

Joshua Weisser made his greatest contribution in the area of the Hazzanic recitative. Despite being "single-line" music, the creation of the recitative is no easy matter. Weisser, in a combination of **nusach** and traditional motives, gave form and style to the artistic recitative and brought it to its highest level. Suffice to say that in addition to being the most prolific, Weisser was also one of the fore-

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most composers of the recitative the history of Hazzanut has known.

However, Weisser's work did not begin and end with the recitative alone. As will be revealed by this study, he also wrote synagogue choir compositions, secular songs, incidental music and notated a vast number of Hassidic *nigunim*.

Joshua Weisser also made important literary contributions in a considerable number of newspaper articles detailing the problems of the Hazzan and of hazzanut in America. His work in this area (each article is discussed in detail in the section "Literary Contributions") resulted in a number of beneficial reforms.

Finally, a personal word about Joshua Weisser. The writer of this article was a member of the Weisser choir during the years 1934-37, and sang in many services and concerts under his personal direction. At a time when the field of Jewish religious music was saturated with untrained and make-shift choir leaders and conductors, Weisser was a virtual oasis in the desert. He was a highly accomplished musician and was exceptionally gifted in the handling of diverse musical forces. I fondly remember several concerts in which Weisser sang and conducted his choir of twenty male singers plus an orchestra of twenty-five players in many of his much requested compositions. (Weisser also made the orchestrations himself.)

Joshua Weisser devoted his lifetime to the best interests of synagogue music. He worked tirelessly on behalf of the Hazzan and for the constant improvement in the Cantorate. Above all he sought to further the finest traditions of Jewish life generally. One could only have profited, working and associating with this religiously devout and musically gifted man.

JOSHUA SAMUEL WEISSER (PILDERWASSER) was born in 1888 in Nova Ushitza, in the province of Podolya, Russia. The son of Abraham Aba and Sarah Pilderwasser, Weisser was bred from his early childhood on the Hassidic melodies and *zemirot* of his father. Young Weisser first learned solfeggio from the local Hazzan, Sachna Kagan and his son, Reuben. He soon became a "noten fresser," proficient at reading music at sight, taking rapid musical dictation and composing melodies. In addition, Weisser had a pleasant alto voice and added to his musical knowledge by singing in the choirs of Hazzan Samuel Weinman<sup>2</sup> in Saroke, Bessarabia, Hazzan Leib Shapiro' in Vinitza, Russia, and in the choir of a Hazzan Eiliyohu Yablontchick also in Vinitza.

**'Literally "note-eater a term used to denote one who can read music rapidly and correctly at sight.**

While at Vinitza, Weisser studied theory and harmony with a Professor Karatkoff of the local conservatory. It was during this **time**, at the age of 16, that Weisser wrote his first composition for Hazzan and choir, ***Moh Oshiv*** a selection from the ***Hallel***. This first composition was to bring Weisser more than local fame, and to this day it is sung in many congregations.

At 21, Weisser was appointed Hazzan of the Synagogue of Vinitza, his first position as a Hazzan. He now had the opportunity to perform the many synagogal compositions that flowed from his prolific pen. It was while he was Hazzan of Vinitza that the famed Hazzan-Composer of the Rostov-on-the-Don Synagogue, Mordecai Eliezar Gerowitsch came to Vinitza. Gerowitsch was enthusiastic at the beauty of Weisser's (then Pilderwasser's) compositions. One, originally written as a ***Mimkomcho Malkenu Sofia*** Gerowitsch adapted to the text of ***Emes Ki Ato Hu Yotsrom***. In addition to frequently performing this composition himself, Gerowitsch later included it in his own compilation "Shirei Zimroh, Volume IV," under the name of "Joshua Pilderwasser."

In 1914, at the beginning of the first World War, Weisser migrated to the United States. With the adoption of a new land, the young Hazzan-Composer also adopted a new name, dropping Pilderwasser for the name Weisser. In America Weisser began a highly productive career where he developed into the most prolific composer of music for the synagogue. In addition to gaining prominence as a composer, Hazzan, conductor and teacher, Weisser also became active in setting the standards of traditional Hazzanut here.

For a time, after his arrival in America, Weisser took only high holiday positions. However, with his appointment, in 1923, as Hazzan of the large Allen Street Synagogue, "Tifereth Israel" on New York's lower East Side, Weisser began a long series of yearly positions as Hazzan. After four years at "Tifereth Israel," Weisser held the following posts as Hazzan: The Nachlat Tzvi Synagogue on East 109 Street (4 years); the Tremont Talmud Torah Synagogue in the Bronx (4 years) ; Shaare Tefiloh Synagogue, Brooklyn (2 years) and

**2**Eliyohu Zaludkowsky, writer on Hazzanic subjects and figures, in ***KVLTUR-TRAEGER FUN DER IDISHER LITURGIE***. Detroit. 1930, identifies Weinman as a well-known Hazzan of Saroke, Tarnopole and other cities in Russia, and states that Weinman was a son of the famous Hazzan Ephraim Lutzker.

**3**Ibid. Zaludkowsky identifies Shapiro as the Hazzan of the Dubow-Kiev Province. Shapiro was a facile improviser and a composer of a large number of liturgical selections.

the Chevrath Tehillim Synagogue, also in Brooklyn (2 years).

After this Weisser did not hold down yearly positions, but devoted more and more time to teaching and composing, taking only high holiday and Passover assignments. His last active period as a Hazzan was during the years 1944-1950, when Weisser officiated as Hazzan for the high holiday and Passover Services annually at the Flagler Hotel in New York's Catskill Mountains.

From his earliest days in the United States Weisser championed many beneficial reforms for the Cantorate, and was instrumental in many of the advances made by the Cantorate, especially in America. In 1937 he was one of the leaders in the formation of "The Cantors-Ministers Cultural Organization" consisting of some of the foremost Hazzanim of the time, such as Kwartin, Hershman, Roitman, Glantz, Katchko, etc. In 1939-40 Weisser was president of The Jewish Ministers Cantors Association of America. In addition, Weisser was a member of the Society of Jewish Composers.

Joshua Weisser was also renowned as a teacher and coach of hazzanim. He wrote countless recitatives and compositions to fit the particular style of each his many students.

Weisser was twice awarded the first prize in world-wide contests for the best liturgical composition. In two separate competitions conducted in 1937 by the cantorial publication "Die Chazonim Welt," published in Warsaw, Poland, Weisser won the first for his musical setting of the *Musaph K'dushah* of the Sabbath Morning Service and the second for his *Mi Sheoso Nisim* (see below).

After a long and successful career as composer, teacher and performer of Jewish liturgical and secular music, and while in the last stages of preparation for printing his "Shirei Beth Hakneseth, Volume II," Joshua Weisser passed away on March 12, 1952.

MUSICAL EX. 1  
 Mi SHEOSO NISIM

MI SHE O SO NI SIM LA VO SE — NU V'BU AL O SOM M'AVDUS L'CHE RUS — HU YIG  
 AL O SO NU B' KO-ROV VI KA RETZ N DO CHAI — NU MAI RA BA KAN POS HO  
 O — RETZ CHA VE RIM KAL YIG RO-EIL — V'NO MAR — O MEIN —  
 RASH CHO DESH A — DOR YI YE BAYOM HA CHA MI SHI U VA YOM HA SHI — SHI HA BO O LE NU V AL

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED WORKS OF  
EVALUATION OF ALL PUBLISHED WORKS OF  
JOSHUA WEISSER

a) LITURGICAL WORKS'

NAME OF PUBLICATION:	CONTENTS OF WORK:	YEAR PUBLISHED and PUB. CO.	NO. OF PGS.:	NO. OF SIZE:
*T'filah Jeschua <sup>2</sup>	50 Recitatives for the High Holy Days	1915; Eagle Advertising and Novelty Co., Brooklyn, N.Y.	50	Quarto
Kinoth L'Tishoh Beov	4 Recitatives for Tishoh Beov	1918; Published by the composer. New York.	12	Small
*Shiroh Chadosh <sup>3</sup>	60 Compositions for Hazzan and choir for Selichoth and the High Holy Days	1919; Joseph P. Katz, New York.	205	Quarto
Rinath Joshua, Vol. I	75 Recitatives for Sabbath and Festivals	1927; Joseph P. Katz, New York.	88	Octavo
Rinath Joshua, Vol. II	80 Recitatives for Selichoth and the High Holy Days	1929; Metro Music Co., New York.	67	Octavo
Minchath Joshua	Mincha and Maariv Service (Weekday) for Hazzan alone	1930; Metro Music Co., New York.	30	Small
Shirei Joshua	Selected Recitatives for radio and concert performance	1935; Metro Music Co., New York.	22	Octavo
Baal T'filoh, Vol. I	130 Recitatives for Sabbath and Festivals	1936; Metro Music Co., New York.	143	Octavo
Baal T'filoh, Vol. II	140 Recitatives for Selichoth and the High Holy Days	1940; Metro Music Co., New York	154	Octavo
Avodath Hahazzan, Vol. I	150 Recitatives for the Sabbath: congregational singing; Sabbath <i>zemiroth</i> : Hebrew and Yiddish folk songs; 30 Hassidic melodies	1943; Metro Music Co., New York.	159	Octavo

\*out of print.

'All of the liturgical works are unaccompanied with the exception of *SHIREI JOSHUA* which has a few introductory measures for piano at the beginning of each selection.

\*The name "Jeschua" is obviously a printing error and should read "Jehoshua" for it stands correct in the Hebrew title.

<sup>3</sup>Written in collaboration with Hazzan Samuel Kavetsky.

Avodath Hahazzan, Vol. II	239 Recitatives for the High Holy Days; congregational singing; compositions for two voices; 10 Recitatives for radio and concert performance; 36 Hassidic melodies	1948; Metro Music 300 Co., New York.	Ortavo
Shirei Beth Hakneseth, Vol. I	26 compositions for Hazzan and choir for Sabbath and Festivals, as well as 13 Recitatives for Hazzan alone	1951; Shulsinger Pub. Co., New York City.	165 Octavo
Shirei Beth Hakneseth, Vol. II	88 compositions for Hazzan and choir for the High Holy Days, as well as 15 Recitatives for Hazzan alone	1952; Shulsinger Pub. Co., New York City.	332 Octavo

#### b) SECULAR SONGS FOR VOICE AND PIANO

TITLE:	WORDS BY:	YEAR PUBLISH- ED and PUB. CO.:	NO. OF PGS.:
Erwach Mein Folk	Dr. D. DeWaltoff	1927; Dr. DeWaltoff, New York	4
*Der Alter Hazzan	Joshua Weissrr	1928; Metro Music Co., New York.	8
*Der Lamden Reb Sender	Morris Rund	1932; Metro Music Co., New York.	8
Bar-Mizva	Abraham Singer	1932; Weisser and Singer. New York.	6
In Yidishen Shenkl	Morris Rund	1934; Metro Music Co., New York.	6
Die Drei Shlumiels	Abraham Singer	1935; Weisser and Singer, New York.	2
Bain Mishmor Hoemek	Philip M. Raskin	1939; Metro Music Co., New York.	8
Oy-Oy, Cha-cha!	H. Nomberg	1939; Metro Music Co., New York.	4
El-Shaday	Morris Rund	1939; Metro Music Co., New York.	4
Dem Flüchtling's Vieg Lied	Alice M. Jaffin	1939; Metro Music Co., New York.	4
I Love You O America	Dr. Ezekiel Leavitt	1941; Metro Music Co., New York.	4
Israel	Aaron Chait	1949; Joshua Weisser, New York.	4

\*arranged for voice and piano by Henry Lefkowitz.

'All selections are in Yiddish except I LOVE YOU O AMERICA which is in both Yiddish and English.

## c) INCIDENTAL MUSIC AND MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

NAME OF PUBLICATION:	CONTENTS OF WORK:	YEAR PUBLISH- ED and PUB. CO.:	NO. OF PGS.:	FO. SIZE:
Yiddish un Chasidish	135 Poems of Eliezer Schindler, 60 of which were set to music by Weisser	1950; Shulsinger Publishing Co., New York.	243	Octavo
The Haggadah of Passover	Special illustrated edition of the Haggadah with 12 Passover songs composed and arranged by Weisser	1950; Shulsinger Publishing Co., New York.	6 6	Quarto

## d) NOTATION OF HASSIDIC MELODIES

NAME OF PUBLICATION:	CONTENTS OF WORK:	YEAR PUBLISH- ED and PUB. CO.:	NO. OF PGS.:	FO. SIZE:
Kuntres Tifereth Yisroel	Publication of Grand Rabbi Saul Taub of Modzitz for which Weisser notated the Hassidic <i>nigunim</i> of Rabbi Taub and other Hassidic Rabbis	Published periodically during years 1943-1946 by Shulsinger Publishing Co., New York.	Varies with each edition	Small
Sefer Hanigunim	175 Hassidic songs, some with words, transcribed and arranged by Weisser. Also contains Habad version of Torah trop as notated by Weisser.	1948; "Nichoach," New York.	1 4 7	Quarto

LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS<sup>1</sup>

TITLE OF ARTICLE:	PLACE OF PUBLICATION:	YEAR AND DATE OF PUBLICATION:
(The Hazzan in America and the Hazzan in the Old World)	Die Hazzonim Welt <sup>2</sup> , Warsaw, Poland	May, 1934
(Choir Singing in the Synagogues, Part I)	Die Hazzonim Welt, Warsaw, Poland	Sept. 1934
(Choir Singing in the Synagogues, Part II)	Die Hazzonim Welt, Warsaw, Poland	Oct. 1934
(Hazzanut in the Form of Compositions and Recitatives)	Die Shul und Die Hazzonim Welt, Warsaw, Poland	Nov. 1936
(Hazzanut Auditions)	Die Shul und Die Hazzonim Welt, Warsaw, Poland	June, 1937

<sup>1</sup>All articles are written in Yiddish.

<sup>2</sup>Organ of the Agudas *Hahazzanim* of Poland, published monthly in Warsaw, Poland.

<sup>3</sup>Name of publication changed from *Die Hazzonim Welt* to *Die Shul und Die Hazzonim Welt*. November, 1936.

TITLE OF ARTICLE:	PLACE OF PUBLICATION:	YEAR AND DATE OF PUBLICATION:
(Hazzanut in the American Reformed Temples)	Die Shul und Die Hazzonim Welt, Warsaw. Poland	Mar. 1938
(The Importance of the Present Moment)	Der Sheliach-Zibur <sup>4</sup> , New York, (Vol. I No. 1)	July. 1935
(What is Hazzanut? Art, Profession or Sacred Calling?) <sup>5</sup>	Der Sheliach-Zibur, New York. (Vol. I, No. 2)	Sept. 1935
(The Year 1935 for the Hazzanim)	Der Sheliach-Zibur, New York	Sept. 1935
(My Associations with the Recently Deceased Hazzan Arya Leib Rutman)	Der Sheliach-Zibur, New York	Sept. 1935
(Hazzan Razumni and His M'Chalkeil Chayim)	The Jewish Morning Journal. New York	Jan. 25, 1943
(Hazzanim and Hazzanut in the American Synagogues)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	Mar. 4, 1943
(The Famous Hazzan Razumni and the Makerever Rebbe)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	Mar. 11, 1943
(Hazzanut in the Form of Compositions and Recitatives)	The Jewish Morning Journal. New York	Mar. 18. 1943
(My Associations with Hazzan Arya Leib Rutman)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	Apr. 13, 1945
(Untitled Article on Correct Accentuation of Hebrew)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	Apr. 27, 1945
(On the Occasion of Zavel Zilbert's 25th Year in America)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	May 4, 1945
(An Article Concerning the Establishment of a Cantorial School)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	May 4.1945
(On the Late Hazzan Jacob Leib Wassilkowsky)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	May 25, 1945
(Preparing for a Good Hazzanim Season)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	June 1. 1945
(The Plans to Collect and Publish Cantorial Creations and the Useful Effort of Hazzan Gershon Ephros in This Area)	The Jewish Morning Journal. New York	June 8, 1945
(Concerts of Hazzanim)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	June 15. 1945

4Organ of the Jewish Ministers Cantors Association of America.

5Published under Weisser's original name of "Pilderwasser."

<sup>6</sup>These articles appeared in The Jewish Morning Journal (a Yiddish language daily newspaper published in New York) under the general heading In Der *Welt fun Hazzanut un Neginah*, a series devoted to Hazzanic matters.

TITLE OF ARTICLE:	PLACE OF PUBLICATION:	YEAR AND DATE OF PUBLICATION:
(Qualifications that Synagogues Seek in the Hazzan)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	June 29, 1945
(Cantorial Auditions)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	July 6, 1945
(What Is Hazzanut? Art, Profession or Sacred Calling?)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	July 13, 1945
(On the Late Joseph Katz)	The Jewish Morning Journal. New York	July 20. 1945
	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	Aug. 3,1945
(Selicha Moods)	The Jewish Morning Journal. New York	Aug. 31, 1945
(The Liturgy of the High Holy Days and Its Modes)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	Sept. 7. 1945
(The Liturgy and Modes of Yom Kippur)	The Jewish Morning Journal, New York	Sept. 14. 1945



Although Joshua Weisser made important contributions in several areas of Jewish vocal music, his greatest productivity and most valuable creativity was in the field of the Hazzanic recitative. Weisser's highly prolific output in this area covered practically every conceivable type of sacred service a hazzan could be called upon to perform.

Analysis of Weisser's liturgical works reveals the development and evolution of several different styles of composition, the styles changing to constantly keep pace with the needs of the time. Weisser, continually aware of the changing attitudes in both religious and secular music, did not isolate himself and continue to write in an outmoded style, but was flexible enough to adjust to the changing demands made upon the composer. If his earlier works were often written in a highly emotional style, with many melismas, frequent repetition of words and an overabundance of grace notes, Weisser's later creations were much more conservative, with a cleaner and purer vocal line, and invariably devoid of the ever-emotional approach, the endless melismas and grace notes, and the constant repetition of words.

The most significant factor to be noted in an analysis of the composer's liturgical publications is the great emphasis and importance Weisser himself placed on the retention of traditional *nusach* in all of his works for the synagogue. Actively opposed to the inclusion of operatic and theatrical tunes in the music of the liturgy, Weisser was always conscious of his responsibility to perpetuate the age-old traditions of Hazzanut. Regardless of how modern the writing might be, the inclusion of traditional liturgical motives was always of primary importance to Weisser. Because of this, his liturgical compilations are virtual storehouses of these motives of traditional Hazzanut.

**The following, from Weisser's own introduction to *AVODAS HAAZAN. VOLUME I*, clearly defines his credo regarding liturgical composition: "I have attempted while writing these recitatives to draw from the oldest, most authentic sources of Jewish music, and at the same time from the rich creative Jewish music of a much later period; namely. THE ANCIENT TRADITIONAL PRAYER CHANTS AND THE VARIOUS CHASSIDIC MELODIES. I have been very careful, however, to select that which is purely Jewish in character, and have cleansed the old melodies of the foreign elements that have slipped into and entrenched themselves upon our Jewish melodies during the many years of the diaspora I have aimed to create a liturgical work based on genuinely JEWISH TRADITIONAL PRAYER CHANTS . . ." (Ed.; The capitals are Weisser's.)**

Prior to an analysis of Weisser's individual liturgical works, it is necessary to discuss the composer's frequent use of the *Ahavoh Rabboh* mode. This mode is found in abundance throughout all of the works for the synagogue.

A. Z. Idelsohn in "Jewish Music"<sup>2</sup> discusses the *Ahavoh Rabboh* mode in detail, and the following from Idelsohn applies to this study of Weisser's liturgical works:

"The (Ahavoh Rabboh) mode is based on the tetrachords e-f-g<sup>#</sup>-a+ b-c-d-e, or their equivalent steps in other notes . . . If we investigate the traditional songs of the various communities, we find the interesting fact that this mode is not at home in all of them. Proceeding geographically we find that the Yemenite, Persian, Babylonian, Moroccan, Italian, Portuguese, and Western German communities do not use this mode at all, while those communities which are living in environments that are or were predominantly Tartaric-Altaiic use it very much; for example, in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, in Asia Minor, on the Balkan (sic), in Hungary, Roumania, in Ukraine and Volhynia. Going further north to Poland, Lithuania and Northern Germany, we find that the usage of this mode diminishes gradually."

This mode came to be much liked by the Jews of the countries mentioned above, so that it became a real channel of Jewish expression, especially for moods of excitement, for the stirring passion of pain, of love, and faith in God. The more the Jewish people in those countries were persecuted for their religion, the more passionate became their expression of love for it. For such intense sentiments they adopted this Tartaric Oriental mode, full of fire and romanticism.

For certain parts of the prayers on Sabbaths and Festivals, but foremost on the high holidays, the Ahavoh Rabboh mode is employed in those countries. Especially in Ukraine and Volhynia it became the vehicle of tense emotion. We can perceive the power of this mode only when we study the compositions of the hazzanim in Eastern Europe of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is therefore little wonder that to Weisser, born in the Ukraine, and bred in traditional Eastern-Ashkenazic Hazzanut, the Ahavoh

\*A. Z. Idelson "Jewish Music in its Historical Development," 1929 Henry Holt and Company, New York. (535 pp)

Rabboh mode was of extreme importance and was utilized extensively in many of his compositions.

With his first published work T'FILATH JESCHUA (Recitatives for the High Holy Days published in 1915), Weisser already demonstrated the ability to create a varied melodic line within the confines of traditional *nusach*. The *Chamol Al Ma'asecho* and *Zerok Olenu* are good examples of Weisser's melodic writing:

MUSICAL EX. 2  
Rabboh

CHAMOL AL MA'ASECHO

CHA MOL AL MA SE-CHO — V' SE AACH — B' MA A SE CHO V' YOM — RU L' CHO —  
CHO — SE CHO B' ZAD — KACH A MU — SE — CHO TU K' DASH O — DON AL KOL MA SE — CHO.

MUSICAL EX. 3  
Andante Religioso

ZEROK OLENU

ZE-ROK O LE NU NA YIM T' HO-RIM V' TA NA RE NU K' MO — SHE KO-SUV V' SO  
RAK TI A LE CHEM MA — YIM T' HO-RIM UT HAR — TEM MI KOL CHA TO SE CHEM  
U — MI — KAL SI LU LE CHEM A TA HER ES — CHEM.

Of the longer and more involved recitatives, the *V'al Kein* is the best of this particular collection. These opening measures illustrate the style in which the composition is written:

The name "Jeschua" is obviously a printing error and should read "Jehoshua" for it stands correct in the Hebrew title.

MUSICAL EX. 4  
Rec. Kei

V'AL KEIN

V' AL — KEIN V'AL KEIN KA VEH L' CHO A DO NOI E LO HE NU LI ROS M' HE — ROH B' SIF  
E RES U SE — CHO L' HA A VIR GI LU LIM MIN HO ORGT — VHO E — LI LIM KO ROS YI KO RE  
SUN — YI KO — RE — SUN L' SA KEN O LOM B' MAL CHUS SHADAI B'  
MAL CHUS SHADAI V' CHOL B' NEI BO SUR YIK RU BISH ME CHO YIK RU BISH ME — CHO.

A few of the recitatives of this first publication are written in a highly emotional style typical of a good deal of Eastern-Ashkenazic hazzanut of this period (1915), and employed with great success by many of the “star” hazzanim at the turn of the century, both in Europe and America.

A representative example of this over-emotional writing, with its frequent repetition of words, and its inclusion of “extra-textual” material (e.g. “oy”), is the *Al Tashlichenu Minfonecho*:

Al Tashlichenu Minfonecho

MUSICAL EX. 5  
Rec. Kei qano

AL TASHLICHENU MIFONECHO

AL TASH LICHENU AL — TASH LICHENU AL — AL — AL TASH LI CHE — NU MIL FO NE CHO  
AL — TASH LI CHE NU MIL FO NE — CHO OY V' RU — ACH — KAN SHI CHO OY V' RU ACH OY KOD SHE CHO  
OY V' RU ACH OY KOD SHE CHO OY V' RU ACH OY KOD SHE CHO AL — AL TI KACH MI ME NU.

Prominent in this work, as well as the composer's other earlier creations, is the overabundance of grace notes and appoggiaturas to be found in each recitative. It is apparent that Weisser wanted to notate even the smallest nuances he felt belonged to a particular composition. Perhaps Weisser, aware of a lack of ability on the part of a number of hazzanim to properly interpret a recitative, wanted

to prevent the interpolation of incorrect grace notes in his compositions. In any event, a study of these grace notes, and how Weisser applied them to the hazzanic recitative, would be profitable to the student of Hazzanut in the learning of his craft.

*KINUS L'TISHOH BEOV*, written in 1918, fulfilled a need for a work of its kind in the field. Consisting of four recitatives, *Tzadik Rabbi Elozor*, *Eini Eini Yordo Mayim*, *Socho Hoisho L'Novi Yirmiyo* and *Eli Tziyon*, it is written in old style, much like the material found in Weisser's first work. The same comments made there are also applicable here, with the additional point that this is not as vocal a work as his first, the tessitura often lying much too high throughout all four selections.

The only work in which Weisser collaborated jointly with another composer was the *SHZROH CHADOSHO*,<sup>4</sup> (Sixty compositions for Hazzan and Choir for Selichoth and the High Holy Days), written with Hazzan Samuel Kavetsky and published in 1919. However, there are no Weisser-Kavetsky compositions as such, half of the book being by Kavetsky and the other half composed by Weisser. For the purposes of this paper we will deal only with the material by Weisser, and since much of the material is later included, in modified form, in "Shirei Beth Hakneseth, Volume II," analysis and comparison of the two works will be made later in our discussion of "Shirei Beth Hakneseth, Volume II."

In *RINATH JOSHUA, VOLUME I*, (75 Recitatives for Sabbaths and Festivals published in 1927) we can readily see the composer's development in his handling of the recitative. Although we still have the repetition of words plus the excessive grace notes, now the modulations are more varied and the entire work much more singable because it is written in a comfortable and essayable tessitura. Now the vocal line is more majestic because the emphasis is taken away from the continual high notes and the complete range of the voice is utilized. An excellent example of this is to be found in this fragment from *Ono B'choach*:

MUSICAL EX. 61

CHA SIN — KO-DOSH — CHA SIN KO DASH B' ROV TUV CHO B' ROV TUV CHO B'

ROV TUV CHO NA HELA DU SECHO NA HEL A DO SE — CHO YO CHID G'EH L'AM CHO P'NE L'

AM CHO P'NE — SOCH RE K'DU — SHO SE — CHO K'DU — SHO SE — CHO

<sup>4</sup>Weisser later took many of his compositions found in this volume, modified them musically (to avoid repetition of words), applied correct Hebrew accentuation to the text, and published them together with new material in *SHZREZ*

**Hamchabe Es Haner** is a fine example of the Talmudic style, a style in which Weisser was a master. It begins:

MUSICAL EX. 7  
Lento - *Andantissimo*

HAMCHABE ES HANER

HAM CHA BE ES HANER MIP NE SHE HU MIS YO RE MIP NE OV DE KO CHO VIM MIP  
NE SHE HU MIS YO RE MIP NE OV DE — KO CHM — VIM MIP NE SHE HU MIS YO RE MIP NE — LIS TIM  
HAM CHA BE ES HA NER MIP NE SHE HU MIS YO RE MIP NE SHE HU MIS YO RE MIP  
NE — RU ACH MIP NE — RU ACH RO — OH NI BISH VIL HA CHO LE SHE YI — SHOU PO-TUR PO-TUR.

Beside being capably set and well integrated pieces, the **Av Horachamin** (full of traditional *nusach* motives), and the **Ribono Shel Olom** of *Sfira* (practically an exercise in sequences, and demonstrating Weisser's capability of working with this device), could both serve as excellent "lessons in hazzanut."

Another high point of this volume is the composer's setting of the Psalms of the **Hallel**.

And finally, for the first time, we get a hint of congregational singing in this Hassidic-styled **Yism'chu**:

MUSICAL EX. 8  
Moderato - *Allegro*

YISM'CHU B'MALCHUSHO

YIS M' CHU B'MALCHUSHO SHAM ASHMA BE SHA BOS SHAM RE HA BOS I KOR EI O-NEG AM M' KAD SHE JH V' I  
KULAN KU LOM YIS B' U YIS B' U V' YIS AN GU MI TU — VE — CHO U VAM V' I — RO — TE' SO  
RO TE' SO RO TE' SO SO — RO TE' BO V' KI — DASH TO YKI — DASH TO EMEH DAS YO MIM O SO — KO RO SO O  
SO KO RO — SO ZE — CHER L' MA — SE — L' MA SE B' RE — SHIS.

From its opening pages *RINATH JOSHUA, VOLUME II*, (80 Recitatives for Selichoth and the High Holy Days, published in 1929), is a work that frequently approximates “pure” *nwach*. While continuing the advances noted in *RINATH JOSHUA, VOLUME I*, this volume is written in a thoroughly traditional style and a section from the *Ovos* will serve to adequately illustrate this feature of the work:

MUSICAL EX. 9

LBHQ

BORUCH (OVOS)

BO — RUCH A-TO — A DO-NOI E LO HE NU VE LO HEI — A VO SE-NU E LO

HE AV RO HOM — E LO HE YITZ CHOK VE LO HE — YA KOV HO EL — HA

GO — DOL — VHA NU — RO EVEL YON — GO MEL — CHA SO DIM TO VIM

U' KONEH HA KOL VASHE CHAS DE O VOB — U ME VI GO EL LIV NE V'NE NEM LMAN SHMO — B'AM — VO.

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a recitative titled 'BORUCH (OVOS)'. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a box labeled 'MUSICAL EX. 9' and 'LBHQ' (likely indicating a specific tempo or style). The melody is written in a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined. The lyrics are in Hebrew and Yiddish, including 'BO — RUCH A-TO — A DO-NOI E LO HE NU VE LO HEI — A VO SE-NU E LO', 'HE AV RO HOM — E LO HE YITZ CHOK VE LO HE — YA KOV HO EL — HA', 'GO — DOL — VHA NU — RO EVEL YON — GO MEL — CHA SO DIM TO VIM', and 'U' KONEH HA KOL VASHE CHAS DE O VOB — U ME VI GO EL LIV NE V'NE NEM LMAN SHMO — B'AM — VO.' The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs.

In addition, what we would call *davening* is set down in this book in such a way that it gives the impression of not having been set down at all, that in performance it is merely a spontaneous improvisation.<sup>5</sup> This was one of Weisser’s fortes, and in the *Sochreinu B’sikoron Tov* we see an example of this:

MUSICAL EX. 10

LBHQ

SOCHREINU B'SIKORON TOV

SOCH REI — YU B'SI KO BON TOV L'FO NE — CHO U FOX DE NU B'EKU DAS YE SHU O VE

RA CHA MIM U FOX DE NU B'EKU DAS YE SHU O VS RA — CHA — MIM — MISH

MEI — SH' ME KE — DEM

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a recitative titled 'SOCHREINU B'SIKORON TOV'. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a box labeled 'MUSICAL EX. 10' and 'LBHQ'. The melody is written in a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined. The lyrics are in Hebrew and Yiddish, including 'SOCH REI — YU B'SI KO BON TOV L'FO NE — CHO U FOX DE NU B'EKU DAS YE SHU O VE', 'RA CHA MIM U FOX DE NU B'EKU DAS YE SHU O VS RA — CHA — MIM — MISH', and 'MEI — SH' ME KE — DEM'. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs.

<sup>5</sup>Israel Rabinowitch, Canadian journalist and musicologist, in a letter addressed to Weisser and published in Rabinowitch’s book “Musik Bei Yiden,” Montreal; Eagle Publishing Co., 1940, writes:

“The greatest value of your recitatives lie in the fact that although they appear in “fixed form,” they nevertheless give the impression of pure improvisation. With one of your recitatives a Hazzan can give the impression he is improvising, because you utilize nusach with a noteworthy naturalness, inter-

*MINCHATH JOSHUA* (Weekday Mincha and Naariv Service published in 1903), like the earlier “Kinoth L’Tishoh Beov” fulfilled the need for a work of its kind in the field, since music for these particular services was quite scarce. Written in traditional style, with a good deal of coloratura, it gives the Hazzan many opportunities for displaying a mastery of Hazzanut.

In several of his works, Weisser utilized an onomatopoeic device, providing a musical setting that vividly illustrated the text. In this volume it is the *T’ka B’schofor*:

MUSICAL EX. 11

*Andante*

T’KA B’SCHOFOR

T' KA T' KA B' SCHO- FOR GO OOL T' KA T' KA T' KA TI KA B'

SCHO FOR GO- DOL L' CHE RU SE — NU L' CHE RU SE — NU

These opening measures to the *V’hu Rachum*, introducing the Maariv Service, illustrate the style employed by Weisser throughout the work:

MUSICAL EX. 12

*Andante*

V’HU RACHUM

V' HU RA — EHUM YECHA FOR O — VOM V' LO — V'

LO — V' LO — V' LO YASH — CHIS

*SHIREI JOSHUA*, published in 1935, is a compilation of recitatives dealing with material found outside the realm of the prayer book, and intended primarily for concert performance. For the first and only time in his liturgical works, Weisser prefaces each composition with a two and, in most cases, four measure piano introduction that 1) utilizes some of the thematic material found in the recitative proper and 2) strongly establishes the key and mode of the particular selection. Each composition contains clearer phrase markings than in any previous work, as well as many more written indications regarding the style and dynamics intended by the composer.



The best known selection from this collection is the recitative from the *Pirkei Ovoth; Akavyo Ben Mahalalel Omer*. This piece was recorded for Victor by the late Hazzan Mordecai Herschman, and is held by at least one critic to have been Weisser's "crowning work."<sup>6</sup> It is in the Talmudic style, a style in which Weisser, as stated previously, had few peers:

MUSICAL EX. 101

AKAVYO (BEN MAHALEL OMER)

Talmudic

PIANO

Recit. Misterioso

A - KAV-YO A KAV-YO BEN MAHA LALELO MER A - KAV-YO A KAV-YO BEN MAHA LALELO-MER

HIS TA KEL BISH LO SHO D VO RIM V EIN A TO YO LI DEI A VE-RO A KAV YO BEN MA LAL EL BEN MAHA LALELO MGA A

KAV YO BEN MA HA LALEL DEN MA HA LAL EL O MER HIS TA KEL BISH LO SHO DE VO RIM VE

EIN A TO VO LI DEI - A - VEI RO V EIN A TO YO LI DEI A VEI-RO.

Also among the best in this collection is the *Eilu Devorim* (in the same style as the previously mentioned *Akavyo*); the *Ad Shelo Notsarti* and the *Shir Shehalviyim Omrim (Elohai)*.

With *BAAL T'FZLOH, VOLUME I, (130 Recitatives for Sabbath and Festivals issued in 1936)*, Weisser starts a period of greater creativity and productivity than any liturgical writing he had attempted previously. His largest volume up to this time (143 pages), it is again filled with traditional *nusach*. However, the notation is cleaner and clearer with less of the usual grace notes found in a Weisser work. Although many sequences appear they are invariably well integrated into the setting and are appropriate to the text.

This volume also shows Weisser's further technical development. *Atzabehem Kesef V'zohov* is a good representative selection from this

<sup>6</sup>M. Yardeini "Hazzan Joshua Weisser; Shafer fun Hazonische Kompozitzies," in *Der Tog*, August 29, 1943.

work to illustrate that development. It is interesting to note the more varied intervals employed (rarely used previously by the composer) : the octave skips and the intervals greater than a fifth. Also note the chromaticisms and how tastefully they are used:

**MUSICAL EX. 1A**

**ATZABEHEN KESEF V'LO NOV**  
*rall. solo* *rit...* *f. moderato*

A TZA BE NEMKE SEF V' ZO — NOV MA A — SE NA A — SE — YDEI O — DAM A TZA BE NEM KESEF V' ZO — NOV — MA A SE NA A — SE Y DEI O — DAM PE LO HEM V'LO Y' DA BE — RU GI NA YIM LO HEM V'LO — YIK U — OL NA YIM LO HEM V'LO — YISH MO U V'LO — YISH MO — U AF LO HEM V'LO — V RI — CMAN Y' DEI — HEM V'LO — Y' MI — SHUN RAG LEI — HEM V'LO Y' HA LE — CHU. LU YEH GU LO YEH — GU BIG RO — NOM K' MOHEMYI YU O SEI HEM KAL ASHER BO TE ACH BO HEM

In addition to the *Atzabehem*, the best from this collection are: *Tov L'Hodos*, *Mogen Ovos*, *Kulom Ahuvim*, *B'rich Sh'mai* (in the *Mishna* mode), *Ki Lekach Tov* and the *Ovos*. In addition, a fair amount of congregational singing appears for the first time. All written very much in *hasidic* style, these congregational tunes may be found in *Ahavas Olom*, *Kaddish*, *Oleinu*, the *K'dushas*, the *Hodo* and *Ono* of *Hallel*.

As Max Wohlberg points out (in his introduction to a later Weisser work) regarding *BAAL T'FZLOH, VOLUME ZZ, (140 Recitatives for Selichoth and the High Holy Days, published in 1940)* :

... In Vol. II (1940) the graceful, sequential line is continued. The phrases are clean and straight-forward. The numberless grace notes which characterized the composer's early works gradually disappear and assume their rightful place in the meter. The rhythm is exact and the bar, correct."

7 From Max Wohlberg's preface to Weisser's last publication "Shirei Beth Hakneseth, Volume II," Shulsinger Publishing Company, New York, 1952. (332 pages)

The best selections in this volume are the *Kiddush* (with its very distinctive shofor or trumpet-like call used very appropriately as the predominating motif) and the *Uvchein's* and *Ve'al Y'dei's* (in both of which the traditional *nusach* is so beautifully integrated).

The hasidic-styled *Hayom* and *K' Ohel Hanimtach* have become popular in many congregations.

Included in this volume is Weisser's *K'dusha for Musaf*, a composition that won first prize in a world-wide contest conducted by the publication "Die Shul and Die Hazzonim Welt," the organ of the Agudas Hahazzanim of Poland and published in Warsaw, Poland.\*

MUSICAL Ex. 15

NA'ARITZ CHO

NA A RITZ CHO V'NAK DISH CHO - K' SHOD BI ACHSAR PEI. KO-DOSH HA MAK DI SHIM SHU CHO BA KO DOSH KA KO SUV AL YAD N'VI E CHO V'KU RO - ZE ZE EL ZE V'O' MAR - KO DOSH - K' VO - DO HO LE - O LOM - M SHOR BOV - SHO A LIM ZE LO ZE A YG M'KOM K'HO DO - A YG M'KOM K'HO DO - L' U-MO SOM BO RUCH - YO ME - RU MIM KO MO - HU YI FOU BARA CHANIN V'YO CHANU AN HAN YACHA DIM SAMD - E - REV VO VO - KER E REV VO VO KER B'CHAL YAM TO MID B'ZEMAL YAM TO MID PA-A-MA - YIM BANA - VO - SH' MA - SH' MA OM RIM - SH' MA YGRO EIL - A DO NOI E LO HEI - NU A DO NOI E CHOD - HU E LO HEI - NU HU O VI - NU HU MAL KE NU HU - HU NO SHI E - NU V' HU YASHAI ENU B'RA CHA MOV - V' HU YASH AI E NU B' RA CHA MOV - SHE NIS - L' EI NE KOL CHOY - L' EI NEI - KOL CHO - L' NI YOS LU CHEN LE LO HIM - A - NI A DO NOI E LO HEI - CHANU.

8 "Die Resultaten fun Undzer Ketshitativn-Konkurs," Music Supplement in Die Shul und Die Hazzonim Welt, Warsaw, Poland, January 1938.

This composition may be found in its entirety on the following page:

In 1943 appeared **AVODATH HAHAZAN, VOLUME I**, (Recitatives, Congregational Singing, **Zemirot**, Hebrew and Yiddish folk songs and hasidic melodies; all for the Sabbath) which Max Wohlberg terms “perhaps the most interesting volume in our entire Hazzanic literature.”<sup>9</sup>

Opening with musical settings of passages from **Shir Hashirim**, the volume continues with the Sabbath Service for Hazzan and Congregational Singing.<sup>10</sup> Then follows **Zemirot**, songs in Yiddish and English, **Mincha** for Sabbath afternoon and a large group of **Hassidic** songs, all in all an unusual collection.

Although the idea of a service for Hazzan and Congregation is an excellent one, this volume could only meet with partial success owing to a puzzling misconception on the part of the composer regarding the musical ability of his “congregation.” Some of the material which Weisser deems “congregational” is a misnomer since it is much too difficult for non-professionals to sing, and hardly falls into a “congregational singing” category. However, as a redeeming factor, there are some tunes that are excellent and fairly easy to sing.

The most valuable section of this collection is that marked “Oneg Shabbat,” containing the **Shabbat Zemirot** and showing the marked hasidic influence. **Yoh Ribon Olam** is a good representative piece from this particular group:

MUSICAL EX. 16

1. CANON, MODERATO CON MOSS

YOH RIBON OLAM

YOH RI BON D LAM V' OL — MA YO ANT HU MAL KO ME-LECH MAL CHA — YOH D VAD G' VUR TECH V' SIM — HA YOH

SHAFAR KU DO MACH L' HA CHAVA YOH SH' VO — CHIN A SA DER TAF RO V' RAM SHO LO CHE LO CH KADI SHO DI

V' KO CHOL NAF SHO I — RIN KAD SHIN VU NEI — ENO SHO CH' VAF BO RO — VO PEI SH MA YOH, ETC.

2. SONG  
YOH RIBON OLAM

In this volume Weisser also includes, for the first time, the work of another composer, a **Shabbos Hamalkah** of Pincus Minkowski. In

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 7

<sup>10</sup> A decade earlier Weisser had strongly opposed the use of congregational singing. See discussion of article “Choir Singing in the Synagogues. Part II.” *Die Hazzanim Welt*, Warsaw, Poland, October 1934 to be found on page 41 of this paper.

addition the collection contains Weisser's Yiddish song ***Shabbos Licht*** after words by Heinrich Heine. Also included is Weisser's English selection "I Love You America" later published separately (see section on secular songs).

Of particular interest is the large group of hasidic nigunim, some with words, that comes at the close of this volume. They are separated into "***Nigunei Habad,***" (Weisser later notated many of the Habad melodies in a collection called ***SEFER HANZGUNZM,*** Nichoach Publishing Company, New York, 1948); "***Nigunei Mod-&z,***" "***Nigunei Hassidei Ukraine,***" and "***Nigunei Hassidei Galicia***" (Wohlberg points out that a ***Hodu*** attributed to Galicia is really from the Sadigora Dynasty).

Weisser's work in the area of hasidic melodies will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this paper. (See section marked "Notation of Hasidic Melodies.") It will suffice to remark here that the examples given in this work point up the tremendous amount of rhythmic variety and tunefulness to be found in ***Hassidic*** song. Each is a little musical vignette that captures some of the flavor and emotional impetus of the hasidic movement.

In 1948 Weisser issued his ***AVODATH HAHAZZAN, VOLUME ZZ,*** (Recitatives for the High Holy Days; congregational singing, some in two parts; 10 Recitatives for concert performance; and ***Hassidic*** melodies). This work, in its entirety, is perhaps the finest and most practical and useful of any of Weisser's compilations. In addition, it is perhaps the most complete of its kind, for almost every ***Piyut*** is notated. Modulations are varied and well-integrated, and despite the fact that we still have considerable repetition of words, the correct Hebrew accentuation, for the first time, gets some attention. The two-part "congregational singing" is simply harmonized, as Israel Rabinowitch notes, "according to that style which was called by cantors of the old school "tertzele" that is to say, a duet in which the second voice follows the first, by thirds." 12

This fragment, S'u ***Sheorim,*** found in the ***L'dovid Mizmor of Slichos,*** is a good example of how Weisser handles the two voice arrangement. Note the very short, almost canon-like figure, followed by the harmonization in thirds:

"See footnote 7

"Israel Rabinowitch, "Of Jewish Music, Ancient and Modern." Eagle Publishing Company. Montreal, Canada, 1952. 321 pages.

MUSICAL EX. 17

ש' U SHE O RIM ROSHEI CHEM V' HI NAS U PIS CHEI O - LOM  
 ש' U SHE O RIM ROSHEI CHEM V' HI NAS U PIS CHEI O - LOM  
 V' YO VO ME LECH HA KO VOD - ME LECH HA KO - VOD

As was true of all the Weisser liturgical works, this volume is also abundant in traditional *nusach*. *Hamaavir Bonov* shows us a combination of *nusach* and the flow and variety of the Weisser Hazzanic line. Note also the careful treatment of the Hebrew:

MUSICAL EX. 18

Lento

HAMAAVIR BONOV

חַמְדָּהּ חַמְדָּהּ אֵלֶיךָ דּוֹנוֹ בְּעֵינֵי רַעִי יָאֵם שׁוֹפֵר — עַל רוֹדֵי הַמָּוֶה וְעַל זִנְיֵי הַמָּוֶה בִּישׁ הוֹ  
 מוֹס — תִּיבָּא — וְיִרְאֶה וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט  
 וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט  
 חַדָּשׁוֹת — מִן שָׁמַיִם — בְּיָמֵינוּ — רַחֲמֵינוּ — וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִשְׁפָּט

Occasionally, the Hazzan may have an obligato-type counter melody against the originally stated melody. This feature is found in a section from *Ki K'shimcho*:

MUSICAL EX. 147  
Solo, Andantino, Religioso

K' CHO TIR YO VESH - UCH TIRU NO - VEL UCH TIRU O VOR - UCH O NON KO LO - UCH

RU - ACH NO SHO - VES UCH O VOK PO RE - ACH V'CHA - CHA LOM - V'CHA CHA LOM YO - UF

CAUTION:

K' CHO TIR YO VESH UCH TIRU NO - VEL UCH - TIRU O - VOR - UCH O NON KO - LOM UCH

RU - ACH NO SHO VES UCH O VOK PO RE - ACH V'CHA CHA LOM YO UF - V'CHA CHA LOM YO - UF

The highlights of this volume are: The *V'al Handinos*, the *Uvchein's* and all the *Piyuttim*. These are all almost pure *nusach*, and again give the impression of impromptu “davening.” The *Haim K'onu Lo* of the *Asoroh Harugei Malchus* is another fine example of Weisser's handling of the *Mishna Mode*, completely capturing the narrative quality of the selection. Excellent and very singable congregational melodies may be found in *Ki Vi Yirbu*, *Kaddish ShaLem*, *L'Shonoh Haboh B'yirushalavim* (all Hassidically influenced) and in *Eil Dar Bamorom*, *B'rosh Hashonoh*, the *V'al Kulom's*, *Ki Hine Kachomer* and *K'ohel Hanimtach*.

A major section of this work contains ten selected recitatives for concert use, not unlike Weisser's earlier *SHIREI JOSHUA*. The texts here employed are from the *Siddur*, the *Psalms* and the *Talmud*. An additional, and highly desirable feature, is the stating of the text alone, prior to its utilization in the musical setting proper. Several of the recitatives are written in the *Mishna Mode* or *Learning Mode*, and Weisser's consummate craftsmanship in this style is in great evidence. As Wohlberg points out “in these numbers the composer reached the zenith of his mastery in the field of the recitative.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup>See footnote 7

The volume concludes with the notation of another group of hasidic melodies, some with words. Among this group are the highly popular *Yivorech Es Bes Yisroel*, *Vayhi Bishurun Melech* and *Simon Tov*.

With *SHIREI BETH HAKNESETH, VOLUME I*, (published in 1951 and containing compositions from Hazzan and choir for Sabbath and Festivals, plus an added section of new recitatives), Weisser finally turned to the publication of his choral compositions. The harmonization and style of presentation is typical of many old, Eastern-European Ashkenazic choir works. Immersed in a predominantly hasidic idiom, each composition has its short but characteristic *nigun* that is repeated again and again, each time treated differently. For example, the composer might present his material in the following manner:

- 1) The melody is stated by the Hazzan alone, or by one "voice" of the choir, or in unison by the entire choir.
- 2) The melody is then taken over by the choir and sung in its harmonization.
- 3) The Cantor adds an obligato section when the harmonization is repeated for the second time.

The above procedure is very apparent in the Golel Or *Mipnei Choshech* section of one of Weisser's best numbers in this collection *Asher Bidvoro* or the *Maariv* Service. It is also evident in the *Yism'chu*, an exciting hasidic composition that moves along brightly and rhythmically and best exemplifies the idiom employed by the composer. Weisser has also set both *K'dushas* very appropriately to the mood of the prayers, with a really fine baritone solo in the *Boruch K'vod*. In the *Yismach Moshe*, after the unison beginning, we have duets in 3rds with soprano and alto antiphonally against tenor and bass.

All of the choral compositions in this volume are SATB, with the exception of *Birchas Kohanim*, arranged for male voices by Albert Weisser 14 based on music by Joshua Weisser.

The volume closes with a number of Hazzanic recitatives for Sabbath and Festivals.

The writer of this article (a member of the Weisser choir during the years 1934-37) had the pleasure of participating in the performance of many of the selections contained in both *SIREI BETH HAKNESETH, VOLUMES I and II*. The compositions always drew much favorable response whenever they were performed, and were frequently requested on Weisser's many concert performances.



*SHIREI BETH HAKNESETH, VOLUME II*, published in 1952 (posthumously) is a continuation of the choral work of Volume I, with this volume being devoted to the High Holy Days. As noted previously, also appearing in this volume (in addition to previously unpublished material) are the following selections that originally appeared under Weisser's name in the much earlier *SHIROH CHAD-OSHO* (published in 1919 and containing the work of both Weisser and Hazzan Samuel Kavetsky):

Zadik Adonoi	Emes	Vayomer Adonoi
Mi Chomocho	Oleinu	S'lach No
Tiku	the V'al Y'dei's	Ki Hineh
Av Horachamin	Hayom Haras Olom	Vahakohanim
M'chalkeil Chayim	Zochreinu B'zikoron Tov	N'ilah Kaddish
El Dar Bamorom	Halleluyoh Eil B'kodsho	
B'rosh Hashono	Kol Nidre	

However, though the harmony remained basically the same, Weisser edited the above listed compositions so that the accentuation throughout would be Hebraically correct. For example, let us compare the Oleinu as it originally appeared in *SHZROH CHADOSHO* and as it appears in *SHIREI BETH HAKNESETH, VOLUME II*:

Since the Slichos Service was considered, in many orthodox congregations, to be a “preview” of the High Holy Days as well as an “audition” of the Hazzan and choir by the entire congregation (admittance to Slichos was usually without charge, and if the congregants liked what they heard, they purchased seats for the Holidays), I believe that Weisser put some of his greatest effort into the Slichos Service, and in this volume we have one good composition after another for the Slichos: *L'chu N'ranneno*, *Eil Melech*, *R'tzei Asirosom*, and the *T'vienu* of *Himotze Lonu* are all fine pieces either for the Service proper or as material for concerts.

The ***Maariv for Rosh Hashannah*** is very traditional and we find here some well arranged and harmonized selections for this service.

The best of the ***Musaf*** is the entire ***Un'sane Tokef*** including the ***Uvashofor Godol***. The text is beautifully set, and the composition is a virtual showpiece for Hazzan and choir. The concluding ***Halleluyoh Eil B'kodsho*** and ***Hayom T'am'tzeinu*** of the ***Musaf*** are bright and spirited compositions, apropos at this point in the service.

In this volume is also found the ***Emes Ki Ato Hu Yotzrom*** adapted by Gerowitsch. (See pages ***1-2*** of this paper.)

For the entire ***Kol Nidre*** and ***Maariv L'Yom Kippur*** Services, Weisser utilizes traditional ***nusach*** and many traditional tunes. The composer also gives several different ***Slach No's*** and ***Ki Hineh's*** to lend variety to those prayers that call for a continual return to a refrain.

Included in this volume is a complete Memorial Service for ***Yom Kippur*** Day with the addition of two selections by Gerowitsch, ***Adonoy Mo Odom*** and ***Baboker*** (both for Hazzan and Choir).

We then have a number of excerpts from the ***N'ila*** Service, all in traditional style, concluding with a lively ***L'shonoh Habo B'Yrusholoyim*** arranged for choir. (Much of the material of this section appeared in solo form in the earlier ***AVODA TH HAAZZA N, VOLUME II.*** )

The volume ends with ***15*** new recitatives for the High Holy Days, among them a ***Hashir She Halviyim Omrim*** printed in the facsimile of the composer's handwriting.

To briefly sum up Joshua Weisser's liturgical works would be to say that Weisser, throughout his many and voluminous creations for the synagogue, always adhered to traditional ***nuschaot***. If at times the quantity was greater than the quality, no matter, for the study of his liturgical compositions reveals that Weisser always successfully fulfilled his goal of creating "liturgical works based on genuinely Jewish traditional prayer chants".<sup>15</sup> Much of his material, carefully edited, could be utilized with excellent results in conservative, orthodox or reform services, for the ring of authenticity sounds throughout every volume. Weisser's compositions and recitatives, reduced to their most basic elements, are examples of pure ***nusach, nusach*** that has its roots in the deepest soil of Eastern-European Ashkenazic synagogal life and history.

<sup>15</sup>See footnote 1

## LAZAR WEINER: A TRIBUTE

ALBERT WEISSER

By far the most significant composer that the Yiddish milieu in America has so far produced is Lazar Weiner. Born in Russia in 1897, he came to the United States when he was seventeen. Thus it was here that his real artistic maturation took place and where his most important works were written and performed. I have little doubt, too, that had Weiner's songs — which I consider his most characteristic and personal works — been written to texts other than Yiddish, say, French or German, he would today surely have been reckoned among our finest contemporary art-song writers — easily the equal of Poulenc and far more deserving of esteem and approbation than most of our well advertised native talents.

This devotion to Yiddish on Weiner's part is indeed most touching, and one suspects that he has made it a banner and a *raison d'être* for his musical life. In most other composers of this outlook the results have too often been a stifling provincialism, a dreary didacticism, and a sentimentality that knows no bounds. Happily, Weiner has escaped these characteristics, perhaps because of his prodigious musicality, a subtle and severe sense of purely musical values and a most fortunate temperament that looked outwardly towards the world and was receptive to new and invigorating musical and intellectual currents.

This it was that from almost the very beginning of his career Weiner sought out and was associated with those movements which were in the vanguard of modern Yiddish poetry. His finest songs are settings of those path-breaking poets in twentieth-century Yiddish literature who belonged to *Di Yunge* (The Young Ones) and *Di Inzikhisten* (The Introspectivists) groups. And what remarkable settings he has provided these poets! His sensitivity to the sound and structure of Yiddish is unmatched among all modern composers. Weiner's method is never to be totally literal, making it possible for him to always play with the inner life and color of the language; so, for instance, musical rhythms never seem superimposed but flow directly from what Weiner finds in the poetry.

To best illustrate what I have been saying here, I would point to Weiner's brilliant settings of that extraordinary modern Yiddish

**ALBERT WEISSER is a well known Jewish musicologist. He is the author of a definitive work on the folk and art songs of Russian Jewry. Currently on the music faculty of Queens College in New York, he is a nephew of the late hazzan-composer, Joshua Weisser.**

poet, Jacob Glatstein. Two songs especially stand out — **Melalei** and **Tzela-Tzeldi**, both from a collection of twelve published in 1948. Glatstein's verbal virtuosity and powerful imagery are matched line for line by Weiner's musical equivalents. And for its Biblical breadth, passion and loftiness of utterance I think Weiner has done nothing better than his song to a text by the poet Magister, **Di Reid Funem Novi** (The Words of the Prophet). His freedom of range is further exhibited in a kind of song that is quite uncommon, for some reason, in the realm of Yiddish art music — the truly convincing love song. **Zch Hob Far Dir a Sod** (I have a Secret for You) with text by N. B. Minkoff has just the right amount of mystery, wonder and tenderness to make its ardor credible to the uninvolved bystander.

In a sense, therefore, it can be said that Weiner has done for these poets and the others he has so devotedly set what their literary confreres should have, but perhaps could not, do. He has really translated them, albeit metaphorically and into a different but kindred sensory structure. Yet he has remained true to their vision and has given them an added dimension. This must be said because I have found previous few verbal translations of Yiddish poetry that I could call, even vaguely, satisfying. So unfortunate have most of these been that one shudders for the spoiled and possibly irreparable reputations they have incurred. And, of course, the translations I have seen of Yiddish folk songs have been preposterous. I would, therefore, caution those adventurous singers who take up Weiner's songs to make every effort to sing them in Yiddish.

Of course, Weiner must be also viewed within the larger context of modern Jewish music. There is little doubt that he derives stylistically and perhaps aesthetically from such composers of the Eastern European Jewish movement as Moses Milner and Alexander Krein. He has their almost occult passion for the efficacy and abiding importance of the Yiddish folk song. He has, too, their ease and expertness in building his melodic phrases and lines out of a combination of this song type and Ashkenazi synagogue cantillation. But as far as sophistication, diversity of subject matter and in a purely aural sense, he has gone quite beyond them. From another composer of this group, Joseph Achron, Weiner has learned not to be fearful of harmonic and contrapuntal experimentation. And, given his expansive outlook, I feel quite certain his American experience has had a profound influence on his work as have, no doubt, most of the general music currents of this century.

In one area it would seem that Weiner has indeed been most fortunate. Perhaps because of his devotion to Yiddish as a kind of

mystique, the problems contingent on self-identification and Jewish alienation have never crept into his work or crippled his artistic powers as has happened so frequently to composers of his generation, those going before and, alas, as we know too well, those following. This is not to say that there are no tensions in his work as is befitting a contemporary artist.

There is a public side to Weiner by which one supposes he is perhaps best known. This is the dynamic conductor for many years of the Workmen's Circle Choir and the ILGWU Chorus and here, though his tasks were of utmost difficulty, the results in the end proved invaluable and truly memorable. Conducting amateur singers from a struggling immigrant community who worked long and hard during the day, he fashioned remarkable singing groups of such enthusiasm and facility that they were a delight to hear. These singers remember Weiner with deep affection and gratefulness for the beauty and joy of music-making he brought into their lives. And, because of his association with groups such as these, he was stimulated to write his works in the larger choral forms. Of these, the cantatas *Legend of Toil* (1933) and *Man In the World* (1939) leave powerful impressions.

Weiner has also been a most valuable composer for the synagogue. Using to the full his delightful lyrical gifts and his brilliant choral sense, services such as *Likras Shabos* (1954) and *Shir L'Shabat* (1963) bring to the Jewish ritual works of warmth and compassion.

But the authentic voice is still to be found in the songs and there, I think, the real dramas are enacted.

## WEINER'S CANTATA ON BONTCHE SCHWEIG

ISRAEL EMIOT

A large crowd recently filled the beautiful sanctuary of Rochester's Temple Beth El on the occasion of the premier performance of a new cantata, "The Last Judgment" with music by Lazar Weiner on a text by Samuel Rosenbaum, which was based upon the story of Y. L. Peretz, "Bontche Schweig." Temple Beth El is a Conservative congregation whose spiritual leader is the distinguished rabbi and noted American Jewish historian, Abraham J. Karp.

The event was the culmination of an admirably courageous project undertaken by Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum, the author of the text and Lazar Weiner, the composer. "The Last Judgment" is not the first of such undertakings on the part of the justly renowned musical and literary innovator, Hazzan Rosenbaum, the cantor of the congregation, to bring to musical and dramatic expression the works of Yiddish classicists.

He has, in similar fashion, written a libretto to Peretz's "If Not Higher" for which Sholom Secunda composed the score. The latter work was recently shown over the television network of the Columbia Broadcasting system. This performance, too, was marked by the presence of CBS television cameras which filmed the event for future presentation on CBS' "Lamp Unto My Feet."

It should be said, at the outset, that "Bontche Schweig" like "If Not Higher" are not easily transposed into musical terms.

"Bontche Schweig" is basically a satire, as S. Nizer, the literary critic points out. Peretz takes pity on his protagonist, Bontche, who remains silent and uncomplaining in the face of a lifetime of pain and rejection. In spite of his compassion, Peretz nevertheless underscores his opinion of Bontche in terms of the man's ironically simple strivings: When Bontche finally comes to heaven after a harrowing lifetime of silence and receives the unanimous and favorable judgment of the Court on High, he is told that he may have whatever his heart desires. Poor, downtrodden Bontche can think of nothing greater to wish for than a "hot roll with fresh butter."

Peretz alludes to the potential power which lay untapped in Bontche. "Had he only raised his voice in protest his cries could have shattered the walls of Jericho." Bontche is, for Peretz, a symbol of

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the inert power of the individual and the mass. Even the usually dullwitted Russian Czarist censor caught the unorthodox quasi-revolutionary flavor of the implications and for a long time forbade the publication of the story.

Peretz does not speak of a "Last Judgment." As Rosenbaum expands the story, it is not so much Bontche that is on trial but ultimately all of humanity is to answer for the degradation it permitted to be perpetuated on Bontche. In the original Peretz goes to great lengths to point up Bontche's culpability in his own misery. Peretz cynically castigates Bontche for not having cried out. He lists a long and purposely exaggerated list of unhappy events of which Bontche is the silent victim who fails to cry out even in the hospital "where such cries are permitted."

Rosenbaum, in retelling the story, pictures Bontche only as the innocent and uncomplaining victim of life's trials. His Bontche quickly earns the sympathy and the pity of the audience. Some day, his text implies, those responsible for Bontche's pain and those who permit it to exist will yet stand before the Great Court for a "Last Judgment."

The libretto, up to the finale, shows great respect for Peretz's language and ideas. The extension and manipulation of the text in the finale were undertaken by the librettist only because of the musical demands. It is not necessary, however, to agree with Rosenbaum's interpretation of the story, especially since in this writer's opinion Peretz had already made his points very well in his description of Bontche's first judgment.

But, perhaps it is unfair to criticize this deviation from Peretz. It is understandable that a musical work cannot easily conclude in mid-air, as does Peretz, with Bontche's pathetic request for a roll with butter. It would seem that the musical forces cannot be quite so abruptly and finally silenced.

The cantata was performed by the extremely talented forty voice Rochester Chorale under the direction of Milford Fargo of the faculty of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. Richard Volpe was the authoritative accompanist. The chorus and, particularly, its conductor substantiated in this performance the group's extraordinarily fine reputation.

The soloists were the well known cantor, Arthur Koret of Emanuel Synagogue in Hartford, Connecticut (tenor), Ardis Obermeyer (soprano), and Earl Obermeyer (baritone). The latter are well known oratorio and solo singers in Rochester and Buffalo.

It must be pointed out that the distinguished and moving score by Lazar Weiner, the extraordinarily sensitive contributions of all the forces, including the spoken narration by the author all combined to produce a superbly harmonious performance. The chorus proved itself a top flight professional group that knew what the conductor wanted and was always prepared to satisfy his requirements. The soloists were in fine voice and sang their parts with artistry and musicianship.

It is for me a foregone conclusion that the work will be successful and particularly meaningful to those who are not acquainted with Peretz's Bontche Schweig and will, therefore, have no reservations about additions to the text. They will not miss Peretz's gentle, ironic treatment of Bontche.

But "Fiddler On The Roof" which has enjoyed such fantastic success is a great deal further from Sholom Aleichem's authentic Tevya than is Hazzan Rosenbaum's rendering of Peretz's Bontche Schweig.

Hazzan Rosenbaum has proven himself to be a valuable experimenter. He dares to accomplish much that others in the field have never even thought about and every innovator deserves to be commended. Even the great Edison needed uncouthed experiments to bring him to his final and successful experiment: the creation of light.



## PIRKEI HAZZANUT

MAX WOHLBERG

By the year 1926 I had decided to become a Hazzan. My mother, sister and brothers preceded me in emigrating to the United States and had settled on the East Side.

Upon arrival here I found everyone busily occupied "earning a living." Compared to our fairly prosperous way of life in Europe our financial situation here was quite modest.

My knowledge of music was in a similar state. Since I could not afford to pay for music lessons I managed to buy a piano. It was so enormous that it filled one entire room of our not too spacious apartment. I learned the rudiments of musical theory on my own.

The arrival of the piano was a major event in our block. Because of its size it could not be maneuvered around the stairs. It thus had to be hoisted with pulleys from the roof. When it was parallel with our floor it was found to be too wide to go in the window. Then the window-frames were removed, and, accompanied by unholy oaths, it was eased into the apartment. As its shape was oblong and its top was flat, it served as an extra bed in emergencies. I clearly recall that the piano with its moving cost me twenty-five dollars. My mother insisted that I give the movers a two dollar tip. She, God bless her soul, was always extravagant. When, years later, we moved, we left the piano for the next tenants.

I had an irrepressible urge to study. I tried to read every book, pamphlet and article that had the remotest relation to the subjects of Jewish music and liturgy. Every free moment was spent in one of four libraries: the 42nd Street, the 5th Avenue, the Music Library on 58th Street or at the Jewish Theological Seminary. I believe I went through every item in their catalogues with relevance to my subjects. English, German, Hebrew and Yiddish offered no problems. Articles in French I had translated into English for better comprehension. Alas, there was very little of this literature in my mother-tongue, Hungarian.

I continued with my secular studies in evening sessions and worked at different trades during the daytime. I tried to sew neckties and ended up pressing them. For a short while I also pressed coat linings. I worked for a matzo bakery. I clerked in a dry goods store. I sold spark plugs. Whatever I was doing was accompanied by the humming of some liturgical music. I recall an occasion when I was making picture-frames while singing some slow-moving High Holiday music. The owner watched me for a while then said: "Max sing a march!"

I received invitations from a few small synagogues to chant the Sabbath Service, mostly without remuneration. One of these, Eitz Hayim on Ave. C, actually had tickets printed for my davening on Shavuot (1926). As my idealistic brother-in-law assured the congregation that I would not accept money from his shul I was presented with a fine letter and a large woolen tallis.

There was another synagogue on Lewis Avenue where I frequently led the service. Before the holidays, at a stormy congregational meeting, a close decision was reached. In spite of my fine davening they thought it would be unseemly for a congregation including numerous venerable gentlemen to be led in High Holiday prayers by a young boy.

Desirous of participation in the conduct of holy day services, I approached my uncle who then served as Cantor in the large synagogue on Tompkins and Willoughby Avenues and asked him if he knew of a choir position for me. He referred me to a Cantor Jacob Schraeter in Brooklyn.

My visit to the Schraeter home was as delightful as it was successful. But a word must be said about the Schraeter family. Jacob Schraeter was a good, matter-of-fact, practical-no-nonsense Cantor and Mohel. He and his dear wife were warm and friendly; qualities often found in Jewish homes. What was unusual about the family was the extent of the role of music in its life. The two youngsters I saw there at play grew up to be our colleagues Alvin and Arnold. A brother of Jacob was Henry Schraeter, a well known cantor and vocal teacher. He was the first teacher of Leonard Warren. Henry's wife was the renowned dramatic soprano Viola Philo who appeared at the Metropolitan Opera and became the perennial star at Roxy's and at Radio City.

A sister of Jacob and Henry was Mrs. Rose Rappaport, the mother of the excellent pianist and teacher Jerome Rappaport now on the faculty of the University of Arizona in Tuscon teaching piano, composition, etc. A brother of Jerome was Edward who became a dentist but for the holidays conducted a synagogue choir.

For eight hours a day Jerome sat at the piano practicing. I once engaged him in a discussion of Jewish music and wound up collaborating with him in composing *V'lirushalayim Ircha*, a pencil sketch of which I still have.

Cantor Schraeter asked me to sing for him. If my recollection is correct, I sang a passage from the weekday Amidah. His comment, I recall clearly, was concise. There were too many "ideas" I tried

to put across. My singing should not be too involved and cluttered with too many elements. I should rather strive for **simplicity and clarity**. This was, I know, excellent advice which, alas, I did not always heed.

He also informed me that his nephew Eddy conducted the holiday choir at the Glenmore Avenue Synagogue in Brooklyn and was in need of a tenor. Eddy Rappaport promptly engaged me, since I was a fairly good sight-reader.

As only a few compositions involved the cantor and **since the members of the choir knew their music**, rehearsals were few and pleasant.

The hazzan was competent, although not exciting.

The fair-sized choir stood surrounding the pulpit, facing the conductor and behind him the cantor.

The first day of Rosh Hashanah passed uneventfully. On the second day, as soon as the Hazzan began the Hineni, it became evident that he was not well. After a few words, he slumped to the floor and pandemonium broke loose. After some confusion, it became clear that he had suffered a heart attack. He was placed in a taxi and was driven home.

The rabbi of the Congregation was Goodblatt, a revered, elderly gentleman. He was the father of Rabbi Goodblatt of Beth Am in Philadelphia. As soon as the accident occurred, he approached the pulpit asking the congregation to remain calm. He was joined by the president of the congregation, a tall, stocky individual, and a number of other officers and "machers."

Eddy turned to me and asked me if I could do the service. I, of course, said, yes, whereupon Eddy turned to the rabbi and officers saying that this youngster seems to know what it is all about and is willing to jump into the breach.

Hearing this, the rabbi and president approached me and interrogated me thoroughly. When they were satisfied with my answers, I was asked to walk around to the Cantor's place, in front of the pulpit, and start again with Hineni. As an extra precaution, the rabbi stood alongside of me to ascertain my acquaintance with the liturgy.

With the confidence of youth, I launched into the service, sang the solos, improvised and acted as if I did this every other week. With a sigh of relief, the rabbi soon returned to his place and I, encouraged by the evident satisfaction of Eddy and the congregation, concluded the Musaf. No sooner did I sing the last Omen, when

the president embraced me — my face against his diaphragm — and exclaimed: “Oy, far vos hot yener noch nechten nit gechaesht!”

As the hazzan was not well enough for Yom Kippur, I again replaced him. Thus did I make my debut in East New York.

Encouraged in my decision to pursue a career in the cantorate, I continued with my Hebrew studies at the Herzliah. To gain choral experience, I applied for a job in the chorus at the Metropolitan Opera. I was rejected. A year later I reapplied, accepted and sang there for two years. Among the permanent choristers were our colleagues, the Steinberg brothers, sons of the renowned Yoshe Der Bass.

My voice teachers were the aggressive, hard-drinking Russian, Boris Starling (Skvartzoff) and later the gentle, soft-spoken Walter Mattern.

As I felt the need for more knowledge of music, I began the study of harmony and counterpoint with Arnold Powell, a first-rate musician. Some of his compositions were performed by the New York Philharmonic under Stokowsky. Powell, the son of Hazzan Zemachsohn, was a highly eccentric and outspoken individual. After a few sessions with me, he candidly announced that in his opinion I’d never amount to much.

In 1927 I accepted the high holiday position in Agudas Achim on Gates Avenue, Brooklyn. The synagogue was in a renovated movie theatre. My fee was either \$900 or \$950. However, for this magnificent sum, I was also to furnish a choir. Since my octet included my younger brother and two of my nephews, I managed to clear approximately \$700.

I had accepted the offer with alacrity, without realizing that I did not have an appropriate choral repertoire. I turned to Jacob Schraeter. Without a moment’s hesitation, he provided me with a complete repertoire in simple arrangement.

The performance of my choir was less than modest. However, the congregation retained my services for all the festivals and special Sabbaths of the year. I thus completed my apprenticeship. In this period I began to build my music library and continued my study of hazzanic literature.

In 1928 I accepted my first full-time position, the first of six I have filled to this date.

## REVIEW OF NEW MUSIC

THE LAST JUDGEMENT: A Cantata for Narrator, Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Mixed Chorus and Orchestra. Text by **Samuel Rosenbaum**, Music by **Lazar Weiner**. Mills Music Inc., N.Y.

The past several years have dealt heavily with the cause of Jewish Music in America. Men whose lives have been dedicated to the service of the community in terms of effort and sincerity coupled with inspiration, no longer serve with us. They are sorely missed. They are missed even more by those in a position to be acquainted with the continued publication of new works. There are **fine** and promising talents among the younger composers and the future may bear witness to the maturation of their promise. Among the older and established creators of Jewish music are the small handful of really exceptional and craftsmanlike composers who continue to write in their accustomed manner. Unfortunately, there is also an increasing flow of banal and mediocre attempts at writing that we foster in lieu of the genuine article.

Where are the giants? And who will take their places?

To say that Lazar Weiner has now become one of the giants would be unfair to the man himself. He has always been the master-composer. He has been blessed with a loving and understanding family and a large circle of friends who have recognized his great creative abilities for many years. Weiner sets his own heights and having reached them proceeds further and upward.

Compared with many of lesser ability, his available output as a composer is relatively small. His own critical view is responsible and one is sure that his over-cautious attitude

toward his own works has robbed us of many beautiful and worthwhile pieces. But it is this attitude of self-criticism (that too many others lack, even in small degree) that is probably accountable for the **sui generis** quality of his gem-like "THE LAST JUDGEMENT."

Samuel Rosenbaum's exquisite text compliments exactly the completely natural and idiomatic flow of the music.

One wonders if the term cantata is not misused in this instance. The work is operatic in concept and one can imagine the texts which are spoken by the Narrator easily set to a musical line. The chorus parts are each individually beautiful and much to be admired. What a field-day for those who would wish to pick out "Jewish" thematic material from the marvelously "right" orchestral part. The change of emotion and mood which permeates the work is **instantly** reflected in the music. Thematic ideas are voiced in the text as well as picked up and developed in the music. Patterns of intervals, harmonies, rhythms and other figures are suggested, continued, inverted, reversed and tied together with Weiner's own particular piquant harmonic style. Indeed, Rosenbaum has somehow managed to reflect the coloristic approach of this post-Impressionist in his own text which abounds in colorful and warm sounds.

Those who know Weiner's "GOLEM" will recognize this work as the next major effort in the composer's continued growth in his exceptional life as a giant in Jewish music. One hopes that the collaboration of these two potent forces in Jewish creative life will extend well into the future, and that the great gifts of musical expression which are Weiner's will continue unabated.

**THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH (SATB):** by Bennet Penn, Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

A short anthem, clean and unpretentious, written ostensibly for professional chorus. One laments the fact that Mr. Penn felt it necessary to state themes and then to abruptly use new ideas without any development other than the moving figurations that ended with Lazare Saminsky. However, it exudes strength and will sound well.

**ELEGY FOR ORGAN:** by *Herman Berlinski*. Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

A short and lovely Elegy which seems to be based upon the chordal implications and relationship of C# Minor and G Minor. A brief thematic introduction is followed by a chordal extension which is broadened into a repeated slurred figuration. The main middle portion, with its Chopinesque overtones of descending chromatics, is very beautiful.

**CAUSE US O LORD OUR GOD, For Voice and Organ (or Piano):** by *Albert Rozin*, Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

Although it holds the promise of an interesting and different approach to the English translation of "Hashkivenu", Mr. Rozin might have utilized his obvious ability in fashioning a more musical setting.

**WE STRODE THROUGH THE WAVES, WHEN YISRAEL LEFT MITZRAYIM (SATB).** From the Opera "Out of the Desert": by *Julius Chajes*, Lyrics by *Michael A tzmoni Keen*, Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

These two choral pieces, much in Mr. Chajes' well-known open-fifth style, suffer badly from an awkward and very dated English prose-style.

Musically sound, if familiar, one wonders what choral group would use this material and on what occasion.

**ARIA OF LAPIDOTH, AND THE WAVES STOOD STILL, For Solo Voice and Piano, From the Opera "Out of the Desert":** by *Julius Chajes*. Lyrics by *Michael A tzmoni Keen*. Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

Commissioned by Temple Israel of Detroit on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary. "Out of the Desert" is represented on these pages again by two of the solo aria from the work. They fare slightly better than the choral pieces already seen, but only slightly. Of the two. "And the Waves Stood Still" is the most practical. Mr. Chajes knows how to construct a good melody and underpins it with a percussive and florid moving accompaniment.

C. D.

#### OTHER NEWLY PUBLISHED MUSIC

**HOB ICH MIR A MANTL: Yiddish Folksong,** Arr. by *Richard Neumann*. Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

**ESHET CHAYIL: Voice and Piano,** by *Charles Davidson*. Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD: Voice and Piano,** by *Charles Davidson*. Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

**NINE SONGS FOR THREE PART CHORUS (SAB):** From "Dialogue With Destiny" by *Charles Davidson*. Transcontinental Music Publications, N.Y.

**SONGS FOR THE RECORDER WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT:** Compiled and arranged by *Leona Molotsky*. Anshe Emet Day School, Chicago, Ill.

## FROM THE READERS

A lady said something to me last Friday evening after Services that disturbed me very much. She undoubtedly meant it as a compliment but I think that it was a perceptive criticism. She said: "I like your Services. I find them so restful."

The two phrases that hurt in that compliment are "Your Services" and "restful." The truth is that they aren't supposed to be my Services, nor the Cantor's, nor the Choir's. They are supposed to be the outpourings of the hearts of all the people who are present. The essential differences between a concert and a Service, between a lecture and a sermon, is precisely in this: to a concert or a lecture we go to listen and to watch, to a Service or a sermon we go to participate and to respond. When this lady said "your Services" she changed the entire focus. She made it seem as if we were the actors, as if the prayerbook was a prompter, and as if the congregation was an audience. The truth is that in a religious service the congregation are the actors, the pulpit officials are the prompters — and God is the audience.

What disturbed me even more was her comment that she finds our Services "restful." They aren't supposed to be, and if they are then something is wrong. Do you know the old story about the woman who came to her rabbi and said: "Because of your sermon, I couldn't sleep all night." The rabbi felt flattered that his words had affected her so much until she explained: "Whenever I sleep during the day I can't get to sleep at night." My sermons, I would hope, are not restful in that sense. I try my best to do two things in them: to comfort the afflicted, and, what is equally important, to afflict the comfortable. If people respond by telling me that they are angry at what I have said, or that they disagree, or that they want to debate the point, then I feel rewarded for my efforts, but if someone says to me that they feel rested, then surely I have failed.

What is true of the sermon is even more true of the Service. The Jewish prayerbook has many moods in it. It has pages of triumphant celebration of the glory of creation. It has pages of agonizing remorse and contrition. It has pages of infinite yearning and pages of noble vision. But it does not contain a single page that I can think of, that is intended to be restful. The words of the psalmists and the poets pound on the hearts of the callous and call upon us to awake and live. Men in many ages sang these words instead of saying them. Men in certain generations danced to them, expressing what they felt with every bone in their bodies as well as with their lips and their tongues. Men in many communities came out of the prayer-experiences exhausted and yet exhilarated, sweating and yet strengthened, worn out from the confrontation and yet with new insight-

And we come out rested? If this is so, then there must be something wrong, with our Services, or with ourselves.

Dayton, Ohio

RABBI JACK RIEMER