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THE NEED FOR A NEW HISTORY OF JEWISH MUSIC: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

ALBERT WEISSER

As I sat here waiting to be introduced to you, I was reminded, for perhaps some diabolical reason, of a story recently told to me by an academic friend.

It seems a professor was dreaming that he was lecturing before a large audience- when suddenly he awoke with a start-and sure enough, there he was lecturing before that very same audience.

I suppose what reminded me of this story was really that the subject I have chosen for this afternoon — *The Need For A New History of Jewish Music*-has, I think, something built into it that will certainly not allow any sort of somnambulance, real or imagined, on the part of the speaker or his audience.

I trust the subject itself will not sound outrageous to any of you for I suspect that even as late as five years ago, were this subject to be proposed to an audience of Jewish musicologists, hazzanim, and even those generally knowledgeable persons concerned with Jewish music, there would have been much more resistance and rancor than I suspect-or rather hope-we will have today.

Let me say at the outset that I really intend no derisiveness or pillory of any individual scholar or work. I am primarily concerned today with bringing to your attention certain inadequacies, omissions, improper historical perspectives and balances, faulty methodology, and the sheer outdatedness to be found in our general histories of Jewish music. You noticed I said *general histories* of Jewish music for I am, today, not concerned with articles, monographs or large works, however extended, which deal only with a particular period or area of Jewish music, but I stress rather only those works which

ALBERT WEISSER, composer and musicologist, teaches presently at the Cantors Institute-Seminary College of Jewish Music, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Brooklyn College. and is the musical editor of the Congress Bi-Weekly. His musicological works include *The Modern Renaissance of Jewish Music* (1954), the forthcoming *Bibliography of Publications and Other Resources on Jewish Music* (1969), and entries on Bela Bartok, Charles E. Ives, Giuseppe Verdi, Manuel de Falla, George Bizet, "Musical Expressionism," among others, in the "*Encyclopedia International*" (1963). His musical works have been played in London, Paris, Brussels, and throughout the United States. The present essay was adapted from a paper read by Mr. Weisser in December, 1968, before the Cantors Assembly of America.

attempt some sort of wide panorama of our long musical history. I assume that you know well which works I am talking about. If not, let me mention them here so that it will not be necessary for me to keep referring to them.

By far the last really creative general history of Jewish music was no doubt A. Z. Idelsohn's volume *Jewish Music In Its Historical Development.*'

It was, for its time, a fine synthesis of much valuable individual investigation on Idelsohn's part, and the work of many splendid scholars who were his predecessors. Though its inadequacies are quite glaring, it has not yet been entirely superceded. Since history, we are continuously reminded, repeats itself, so many Jewish musical scholars are quite content to merely repeat each other. Therefore, those coming after Idelsohn — for instance, Peter Gradenwitz's *The Music of Israel, Its Growth Through 5,000 Years*' and Aron Marko Rothmuller's *The Music of the Jews* 3 are both quite valuable and capable pieces of work and are, perhaps, stylistically more readable and even better organized than Idelsohn. Yet both seem to me to take Idelsohn as their starting and focal point using his basic materials and methodology, filling in minutae here and there and stressing their own interests and predilictions. With Gradenwitz it is the music and composers of modern Israel; Rothmuller gives special weight to what he calls "The New Jewish Music: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," and though Idelsohn's work continues to be immeasurably the best of the lot, I suspect principally because of his work and research in primary resources and his considerable musicological capabilities, all now strike me as being in some particular area, either obsolete or even irrelevant to our present situation and outlook.

Let me assure you that I am not arguing for an overthrow or a total abandonment of the entire so-called canon of Jewish music

1. Idelsohn, A. Z. *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York, 1929) 535 p. Paperback reprint, Schocken Books (New York, 1967).

2. Gradenwitz, Peter. *The Music of Israel. It's Growth Through 5.000 Years* (New York. 1949) 334 p. There have been subsequent revisions of this work, the last being *Die Musikgeschichte Israels* (Kassel, 1961), 4th Ed.

3. Rothmuller, Aron Marko. *The Music of the Jews* (New York. 1954) 254 p. New and revised edition 1967.

history as we have now come to know it. I know of no serious Jewish musical scholar who would posit such a view. But somehow I feel it is quite imperative for us to recognize that every age must somehow interpret history to itself in a kind of juxtaposition of its own light and the light of its forebears. It is easy enough to say with a cocksure shrug, "Ha, ha—each age always thinks of itself as totally unique and will always attempt to justify and predicate what it thinks is its very own singularity." But the truth of the matter is that we, as Jews, are living in a very special age and Jewish musical scholarship has today arrived at a point of such sophistication, depth and technical assurance that it makes a good deal of our general histories, in comparison, laughably simplistic and lacking in weight and density. We *are* seeing a burst of new currents that have lighted up areas in our musical history which for long had been given up as almost totally imponderable. Let me give you a few examples here of some scholars and their work which, I suggest, makes an overhaul of our general histories absolutely necessary.

First, I would say Eric Werner's *The Sacred Bridge*,⁴ which, as its subtitle states, attempts to demonstrate "the interdependence of liturgy and music in the synagogue and the church during the first millenium." Second, Israel Adler's *The Praxis of Art Music in Various European Jewish Communities During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*,⁵ and Joseph Yasser's monographs *The Magrepha of the Herodian Temple*,⁶ and his *References to Hebrew Music in Russian Medieval Ballads*.⁷ I shall mention others later.

The time is now far past when one can write a history of Jewish music by merely stringing together a series of loosely related articles—no matter how well packed with information and held afloat by means of the external strictures of chronology. We are no longer satisfied, say, with a quick dash through the *Tanach* and merely devising a kind of long laundry list showing where music, musical practices and instruments are mentioned, and to this add a glib or

4. Werner, E. *The Sacred Bridge* (London — New York 1959) 618 p.

5. Adler, Israel. *La Pratique Musical Savante dans Quelques Communautés Juives en Europe aux XVIIIe et XVIIIe Siecles* (Paris-Hagues, 1966) 2 vols.

6. Yasser, Joseph. "The Magrepha of the Herodian Temple," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, (Philadelphia) 13 (1960) 24-42.

7. Yasser, Joseph. "References to Hebrew Music in Medieval Russian Ballads," *Jewish Social Studies*, (New York), 11 (1949) 21-48.

thrice times ten repeated comment that was already old, old news fifty years ago. This will no longer do. Some key words for the Jewish musical historians are now “search,” “compare,” “take nothing for granted,” “elaborate,” “make complex,” “make these dry bones to live.” I put it to you that one must now clearly exhibit some sort of overall plan, vision, philosophy or compelling attitude that can bind our musical history together into some sort of unity and make meaningful those areas that have remained so troublesome to the historian. And I must say that I do miss in the histories I have mentioned, some capacity for relish and radiance and sense of adventure which the history of Jewish music certainly has to an enormous degree. Instead, one is constantly struck in these works by their pomposity and ponderousness.

May I list for you now some rather general principals that I think our new Jewish music history might use as guide-posts.

(1) It must be assumed at the outset that there is a discernable continuum in the history of Jewish music as Dr. Eric Werner has pointed out.⁸ This involves both fixed and evolving substances despite and perhaps because of numerous migrations, wanderings and inner developments on the part of the Jewish people. It is, therefore, possible to construct three large concentric historical cycles: The Biblical Epoch, the period starting with the destruction of the Second Temple (70 B.C.E.), and the period involving the encounter of the Jewish people with the culture of Europe. This does not preclude, of course, certain adjacent contacts such as the Moslem and Byzantine cultures, nor further divisions within these cycles. It will also be useful for purposes of polarization, emphasis, and particularization to use such concepts as “The Music of the Ghetto and the Bible” as the composer Lazare Saminsky has done.⁹

(2) Wherever at all feasible, a history of Jewish music must relate that music to the social and political conditions of its time, and to philosophy, literature, and the other arts. (3) Aside from giving accurate historical data and documentation and a thorough analysis of styles and techniques, it must demonstrate the temper and scope of the general music age and show an interaction between it and Jewish music. It is inconceivable, say, when writing of

8. “The Music of Post-Biblical Judaism” in *The New Oxford History of Music: Ancient and Oriental Music*. Vol. I (London, 1957) pp. 314-315.

9. Saminsky, Lazare. *The Music of the Ghetto and the Bible* (New York, 1934) 320 p. A singular and brave work whose enthusiasms are still contagious.

Salamone Rossi not to write also of Monteverdi, “stile rappresentativo,” Northern Italy, Gastoldi, the Ferrara school of composers and all the devices, forms and dances of the early Italian baroque. It is inconceivable in writing of Salomon Sulzer not to write also of the nature of early German romanticism, the Lutheran chorale, musical Vienna, the Schubert circle, and the example of Mendelssohn. And Bloch, how can one intelligently write about his so-called “Jewish Cycle” without making some contact with the school of musical impressionism, the orchestra of Richard Strauss and the influence of “The Society for Jewish Folk Music” in St. Petersburg? Of course, not to do so is to write highly insular musical history.

(4) Jewish music must not be viewed as having existed in a self-contained, self-perpetuating vacuum. We must recognize that it arose, functioned and developed because of some very vital needs of the historical Jewish community itself — religious, social, esthetic, communicative, sportive, intensified speech, ritualistic, etc. — and, as such, is thus a notable reflection of that community.

(5) In the study of the music of the Bible, it is now first of all, imperative to decide on a viable chronology which can be readily agreed upon by musicologists and the Biblical scholars; and, for goodness sake, let’s take a pledge not to think of and analyze music of the Bible as though it were related to western art forms and practices. It is now also imperative to intensify our readings of Midrashic and Rabbinic sources and once and for all shed our continuous fear of such disciplines as used in the study of primitive rituals, comparative Biblical studies, comparative mythology, anthropology and archaeology. I might even suggest that psychoanalytical techniques might very well be pursued and the entire question of the magical and curative powers of music be applied to certain areas.¹⁰

(6) It must be fully recognized that oral transmission has played a decisive and pivotal role in the history of Jewish music. So here the wide variety of Jewish folk music traditions including their flowering and deterioration must be examined, compared, given equal weight, and ethnomusicological methods be applied with imagination and precision. Of course, I need not stress here that the Yiddish folk song is not the only one in the Jewish musical community. And yet, by the same token I must say that I detect in some scholars outside the Yiddish orbit a certain snobbery and condescension towards the accomplishments of eastern-European Jewish music (folk and art) and scholarship.

10. i.e. the *Sh’ma*, the *Shofar*. *David playing before Saul*, etc.

(7) It might be useful also in the analyses of changing styles and trends to use Curt Sachs' brilliant conception of the twin ideals that "have alternately acted as magnetic poles" -ethos and *pathos*." The first indicating serene calmness of the soul, beauty, symmetry, coolness, permanence, limitation, perfection, impersonality, essence, etc. *Pathos*, on the contrary, relating to passion, character, appearance, excitement, personality, boundlessness, imperfection and change. You might even find useful to think of the history of hazzanut in these terms.

(8) The once difficult problem of the identity of Jewish music, or as it was posed mainly during the thirties or forties within intellectual circles in the U. S. and other western Jewish communities with that two-in-one question, "What is Jewish music; does it exist?"; is it seems to me today not nearly as crucial as it was once made out to be. In the main, this concern was posed seriously principally by individuals within a particular generation voicing their own real problems, confusions and doubts of inner identity and alienation. The question, as I remember, seemed to have been consistently raised and answered with a flippant negative, mostly by people who had done very little or at most superficial reading in Jewish music history, or had had meager contact with genuine Jewish musical elements and resources. How laughable it was to hear them turn to examples of their experiences with Jewish music and recall memories of that which many of us immediately recognized was spurious and in a state of deterioration. Easy, quick and shrill answers were expected where to be really penetrating meant the use of infinite musical subtleties and webs of constant influences and correlations. It is somewhat indicative of the irrelevance of the formulation of the question that the solutions which were offered proved almost always frustrating and seemed constantly land-locked within the temper and the attitudes of the times and never really seemed to satisfy anybody. At present I don't think there is a dire need for the contemporary Jewish music historian to agonize and worry himself sick over this question. He knows quite a great deal about genuine Jewish musical substances — cantillation, plain and ornate psalmody, prayer modes, antiphonies, melodicles, hymns, chants, and those characteristic tunes for each liturgical season. He must now cast his net wide to include such a principle as Dr. Hugo Weisgall has proposed in his study of the synagogue music of Salamone Rossi¹² — that is, that the function or the goal of a piece

11. Sachs, Curt. *The Commonwealth of Art*. (New York, 1946). pp. 199 f.

of music must now be taken into account to determine whether it can have any relationship to Jewish music.)

I would include also in our new history all those Jewish composers who had lost contact with or strayed from the Jewish community, or functioned primarily within the non-Jewish musical milieu. Their works and personalities must be searched for explicit or even indirect Jewish characteristics. These so-called "bastard sons" must now be legitimized and investigated in relation to the Jewish experience and music. Of course, I am speaking of such figures as Mendelssohn,¹⁴ Meyerbeer, Anton Rubinstein, Offenbach, Mahler, among others. We must be sure to include also those gentile composers who have been especially close to the Jewish musical community. Their contributions must be recognized, documented and fully analyzed in depth. I am thinking of Marcello, Handel, Moussorgsky, Rimski-Korsakoff¹⁵, Elgar, Maurice Ravel, Vaughan Williams, and others. If your mind is so attuned that you need a guiding principle for all this, let me suggest that in music, thank heaven, you don't have to be a Jew to be Jewish.

Let me speak now to some specific areas and problems that I would like to see incorporated and unriddled in the new history of Jewish music- a sort of ingathering of different strands.

A. The problem of the origin of music has always been a fascinating one and has been pursued from the time of primitive peoples to contemporary sophisticated philosophers. The myths of the Luiseno Indians teach that such animals as the lion, eagle, frog, deer were the first musicians.¹⁶ Notice that the personalities of these

12. Weisgall, Hugo. "The Synagogue Music of Solomon de Rossi," *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference — Conoention of the Cantor's Assembly of America* (New York, 1953) pp. 31-37.

13. First applied in a different context by Stephen S. Kayser, "Defining Jewish Art" in *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume*. (New York, 1953). English section pp. 457-467.

14. A fine example is Eric Werner's *Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and His Age*. (New York, 1963) 545 p.

15. See my *The Modern Renaissance of Jewish Music*. (New York, 1954) pp. 43-44. See also Rimski's autobiography *My Musical Life*. (New York, 1942) p. 6.

16. Du Bois, Constance Goddard. "The Religion of the Luiseno Indians", *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*. Vol. 8 (1908) p. 166.

animals chosen can be easily translated into anthromorphic terms so as to suit a variety of musical dispositions. In ancient high civilizations a divinity was associated with music's origins — Thot in Egypt, Narada in India and **Apollo** in Greece. The Old Testament makes **Jubal** (of course not a divinity) the son of **Lamech** and **Adah** “the father of all such as handle the lyre (kinnor) and the pipe (‘ugahh)” (Gen. 4:21); and by inference this is taken by Jewish tradition to mean that he is to be designated as the inventor of music. Nothing else is said about **Jubal** and so this passage is often viewed as one of the most difficult and even enigmatic in the Bible. Now if you were to look into any of our histories of Jewish music, as one should expect, for light on this subject one will be sorely disappointed to find precious little. I think it is possible to fill out the picture somewhat if we allow ourselves the use of disciplines sometimes not always taken advantage of by Jewish musical historians. Since this paper is somewhat in the nature of a preliminary study I will not take this into any depth, but will restrict myself merely to some suggestions.

First, by looking into the Pentateuch commentary by that always stimulating Jewish-French exegete, Rashi (1040-1105), we find this extraordinary gloss on **Jubal**- “he took up the lyre and pipe to sing to idols.” One deduces that Rashi comes to this conclusion because **Midrashic** sources say about **Jabal**, the brother of **Jubal**, that “he built houses for idol worship” and that **Naamah**, the half-sister of **Jubal**, was “the leader of the female players and singers,”¹⁸ and “she played sweet music on the timbre¹ in honor of idols.” Further, she is described as the mother of demons, the proof being that **Naamah** is the name of the mother of **Ashmedai**, king of the demons.²⁰ Is Rashi's gloss and its Midrashic parallels trying to convey the notion that there has long been a counter tradition among certain Jews that views music as a dualism -both as one of the highest of human activities and one that even at its origin was capable of misuse and debasement? Or is it a mirror of the Platonic attitude which sees ethical and moral values inherent in musical art?

17. **Gen. R. 21.**

18. *Targum. Pseudo-Jonathan. 22.*

19. **Gen. R. 23.**

Scrupulous comparisons with other mythologies concerning the origin of music are needed here. Since *Jabal* is described in the Old Testament as “the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle” (Gen. 4: 20), and *Naamah* is often translated as “pleasant,” “gracious” or “beauty,” it becomes quite obvious that there is some parallel here with the Greek myth of Dyonysos, Aphrodite and Hephaestos, the divine goat of Greek mythology. It is even possible to compare Apollo or some wind or nature deity, such as Hermes or Pan, to *Jubal*.

I would suggest other sources that will yield parallels — the fifth century C.E. Ethiopion document *The Book of Adam 21* where the figure *Genun* seems to be a combination of *Jubal* and his brothers *Jabal* and *Tubal-Cain*. There is also forceful conjecture that *Jabal* might very well have been the name of a Canaanite god of music.**

Yet another parallel is to be found in Arabic tradition. There, according to Ibn Khurdadhbih (d.c. 300/912) Tubal b. Lamak is said to have invented the tambourine and drum, his sister Dilal originated the lyre and Lamak, Tubal’s father, invented the lute.²³

I would go further also in the philological contention that the words *Jubal*, *Jabal* and *Tubal-Cain*, aside from being related to the Hebrew word for “Ram’s horn,” is possible to be interpreted through the verb “yabal” which means “to bring into procession.” From here it is possible to trace the Lamech family perhaps to cultic and processional origins. In W. F. Albright’s words,²⁴ “the travelling smiths or tinkers of modern Arab Asia, whether Sleib or Nawar [Gypsies] follow more or less regular trade routes with their donkeys and their tools. These groups depend for their livelihood on their craftsmanship, supplemented by music and divination in which women excel. It is probable that the Kenites of the Bible with a name derived from *Cain* meaning “smith” resembled these groups somewhat in their mode of living.”²⁵

20. Midrash Haneelam, Zohar Hadish 19.

21. *The Book of Adam. Das Christliche Adambuch des Morganlandes. Aus dem Athiopischen mit Bemerkungen. Ubersetz von A. Dillman. (Gottingen, 1853) pp. 92-94.*

22. See U. Cassuto’s article in *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society. X (1943) p. 51; also Graves, Robert and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths. (New York. 1963) p. 110.**

23. Farmer, H. G. *Sources of Arabian Music. (Bearsden, 1940) p. 18.*

24. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel. (Baltimore, Md. 1956) p. 98.*

25. For further insights along this line see North, Robert “The Cain Music”, *Journal of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia (Dec. 1964) pp. 373-389. An Archaeological Inventory (Tel-Aviv, 1963) 61 p.*

Some of these techniques might be used in other parts of the *Tanach*. *Quite* recently I came upon a splendid piece by the Israeli musicologist, Hanoch Avenary,²⁶ in which he attempts to throw light on the expression “umtsiltayim mashmiim” (I Chronicles 15: 16). Of course, we have always known that the first word meant a pair of cymbals used only by men, perhaps even priests, the second meaning “sounding aloud.” Avenary now makes out a very good case that suggests that the entire expression might refer to cymbals having apotropaic significance.

B. The entire question of instruments in the Bible is not quite settled and finished as was once thought. Idelsohn's work depends a great deal on Ambros, Rabbinic sources and on the early pioneering work of Curt Sachs.²⁷ It is too bad that he could not use Sachs' later work with its extraordinarily brilliant chapters on the instruments of antiquity and the Bible.²⁸ But quite recent work by the musicologist, Bathja Bayer,²⁹ is of the very first importance and must be taken into account from here on in any future Jewish music history.

C. Coming now to the European experience we must have a place in our history for the recently discovered musical notations of *Obadiah the Proselyte*. These are eleventh-twelfth century fragments which open yet another door that heretofore was supposed to be thoroughly locked to our view.

D. I would say that the entire Italian period in Jewish music, because of Israel Adler's splendid work, must now be thoroughly restudied. In fact, the entire question of Salamone Rossi as a Jewish composer must now be gone into without any of the hinderances of prior suppositions which pontificated that there were no Jewish substances in Rossi. Again let me suggest that a valuable start has been made by Dr. Hugo Weisgall's article. And I do not doubt that when the hymns and canticles of the Italian Jews are systematically collected and the old hymnals researched in the Italian libraries, some startling parallels will be found in Rossi's religious and instrumental music. I would add, too, that something of a fresh start must be made with the Spanish Jewish period. Although here we do not know nearly as much. Medina Azara's notion that there is a strong analogy between Andalusian *cante jondo* and the Sephardi

²⁶ *Tatzlil*. Haifa 6 (Jan. 1966) pp. 24-25.

²⁷ See especially, Curt Sachs *Reallexikon der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1914).

²⁸ Curt Sachs *The History of Musical Instruments* (New York, 1940) pp. 67-114.

²⁹ *The Material Relics of Music in Ancient Palestine and its Environs:*

synagogical chant should be thoroughly researched, as should also H. G. Farmer's notice of "Jews as Juglares and Juglaresas in Christian Spain from the eleventh century onward." 30 But, of course, basic documents and manuscripts should come first.

E. I would like to see also something of a thorough systemization of Nusachot, its musical basis and content, its changing development and its function in our ritual life. And here I would say that the three principal traditions must be treated with equal weight: Ashkenazi, Sephardic and the near East. And even within these groupings we must record national characteristics and their variants. Questions of terminology, folkloristic influence and non-Jewish penetration await clarification I must say here that fine work has been done in the areas of the new Israel, Berbers and the Atlas Mountains by Dr. Edith Gerson-Kiwi, Eastern-European Nusachot by Professor Max Wohlberg, and invaluable work among the Samaritans and Yemenites by Dr. Johanna Spector. Would that we had as much from the other traditions.

F. I would like to see the entire system of harmony as formulated by Idelsohn in his final chapter chucked out of the window. For really creative composers today, it is practically useless, irrelevant and merely an authoritarian noose around their necks. I am convinced that this classically based system of harmony is not at all germane to the principles of monody, modality, and pentatonism. It should be restricted to such uses as parody, analyses of nineteenth century harmonic practices, and as a discipline for beginning students in harmony. In fact, the entire nineteenth century must not be viewed by the new history as the crowning period of Jewish music — a kind of Teutonic apotheosis. It is one era, albeit an important one, in a long process in which consolidations and advances were made in Jewish music. But Sulzer and Lewandowski, whatever their particular importance to us, are not to be confused in our fervor with Beethoven and Schubert, or even Mendelssohn and Schumann. They are decidedly very minor masters and will become even more so as time goes on — even in their relationship to future Jewish composers. There needs to be a much more balanced stress on nineteenth century eastern European cantor composers, such as Gerovitch, Schorr and Belzer. The last, especially, deserves a completely refreshed look."

30. *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence.* (London c. 1929) pp. 157-158.

31. See some extraordinary examples of his art in Lazare Saminsky's collection *A Song Treasury of Old Israel* (New York, 1951) pp. 8-10.

G. I would like to see an investigation in depth of all those European countries where Jewish music and musicians have played important roles: Italy, Germany, France (especially pre-Naumbourg and the so-called "Semitic school" as formulated by that virulent anti-Semite, the composer Vincent D'Indy) , England, Russia, Poland, Hungary, The Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, United States, and Latin America. We must remember, also, as has too often not been done, to investigate and record the history and frequently dominance of Jewish composers and musicians in the area of popular music in so many of the countries enumerated above. The United States is especially fertile ground with such composers as Gershwin, Kern, Berlin, and Rodgers. In fact, the entire Broadway musical stage has become the resting place of the Yiddish musical theater and, as such, deserves correlation and notice. I suspect that such a figure as Gershwin will, on closer inspection, yield up surprising Jewish substances — liturgical and folkloristic. It has often been pointed out that the clarinet opening of his *Rhapsody in Blue* is very reminiscent of Yiddish-Roumanian "Doynelach" and wedding tunes. And his almost lifelong attachment to the Negro blues which is based in its melodic structure on a major scale with the seventh degree flatted, is quite remarkable when we remember that it is so similar to our *Adonoy-Moloch* mode. And further, the Jewish popular instrumentalist's encounter with Jazz (which, of course, we must differentiate from strictly popular music, and in its most authentic form, is almost totally a Negro musical art), from its early ragtime period to the big band swing style of the thirties must be an episode of extraordinary interest to the Jewish musical historian; for here we can plainly see the Klesmer tradition carried on from the European continent and the processes of cross-cultivation and acculturation working at opposite ends. There was a style of Jewish Jazz, whatever its ultimate worth, and it sorely needs documentation. And in so many areas we must do it, for no one else will.

So — what then am I really urging for in our new history of Jewish music? Perhaps that always touching passage in the *Haggadah* will say it precisely and cogently: "Though we were all of us wise men, all of us men of understanding, men of experience, all of us learned in the *Torah*, it is still incumbent upon us to retell the tale of the outgoing from Egypt. And whoever enlarges upon the tale of the departure, that one merits praise."

What I am for is a retelling and an enlarging upon the remarkable and fascinating tale of Jewish music.

ADVENTURES OF A BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALFRED SENDRY

Marco Polo had his adventures, and so did Don Quixote, Gulliver, Huckleberry Finn, and other heroes of literature. But a book, a bibliography of all things? Can it have adventures? Or should they not more aptly be termed "MISadventures"?

Such seems to have been the fate of the "Bibliography of Jewish Music," which encountered a thousand obstacles from its inception to its completion.

A bibliography is a living, breathing thing. Once the genie emerges from the bottle, uncorked by an author or compiler, it invades the libraries of both learned and laymen alike, to stay as long as the subject matter retains its universal interest.

This story may lack suspense, since the work, finally published in 1951, appears to have been a task "successfully" completed. But the truth is that the Bibliography was the starting point to a whole series of misadventures. It must be considered a lighthouse whose beacon might provide a warning for other hardy and courageous musicologists who may have the desire to set forth on this sometimes stormy sea of scholarship.

It all began when I lived in Germany during the birth of the Nazi movement. This nefarious and evil cult, as Winston Churchill once called it, threatened to destroy in its entirety not only the Jewish people, but all evidence of their centuries old culture. I was one of the fortunate to escape the holocaust. I felt that it was the duty of every educated Jew to participate in the intellectual struggle against Nazism, by utilizing his skills and experiences to the fullest extent. My field had to be, of course, the domain of music. But at that time I had not the vaguest idea to what phase of music I could best apply my abilities, in order to help keep alive the Jewish heritage.

After much consideration, I decided to devote my research to the history of Jewish music. From the very start, however, I discovered that there was a woefully inadequate documentation of reference material. The library of the Alliance Israelite in Paris, where I started my research and expected to get the most help, was thread-bare in this area of musical literature. It was only when I

DR. ALFRED SENDREY is Professor of Jewish music at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles and the author of the "Bibliography of Jewish Music."

came to the United States in 1941, and saw the wealth of documentation available in New York, that I could proceed effectively to put my plan for making a thorough study of Jewish music into effect. As to its final form, I had as yet no idea. At first I considered writing small or extended articles, but this gave way to plans for treating the history of the music of the Jews as a whole. It was only when I started to assemble material for the project that I fully realized the need for creating a reference book listing the sources of Jewish music. I finally arrived at the decision to provide musicology with a major tool in the form of a comprehensive Bibliography, which would also serve to stimulate general scholarship in this somewhat neglected area of Jewish learning.

At that time, I lived in New York, and could not afford clerical help. I was obliged to write my cards and notes (about 20,000 in number), in longhand. The entire undertaking, from beginning to the end, turned out to be a *one-man-job*. I devoted every waking hour to scouring public and private libraries with no end in sight, for each item discovered led to numerous other items which had to be hunted down.

It was at this crucial point in the midst of ever-mounting difficulties, that three people came to my aid, making it possible for me to continue and complete my efforts in this field. One was the great musicologist, Prof. Curt Sachs, the other Salo W. Baron, Professor at Columbia University, and the third Mrs. Ethel Silbermann-Cohen, whose ESCO-FUND eventually enabled me to find a publisher.

The "American Academy for Jewish Research," which "morally" sponsored the work and was supposed to publish it, was of no help to me, until Curt Sachs took over the presidency of its music committee. Upon his recommendation, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati invited me to pursue my research there and catalogue and describe the treasures of their recently acquired "Birnbaum Collection." I remained in Cincinnati a full month, and was able to catalogue the entire extensive collection, containing material available nowhere else in the world. However, many of the most important items, especially music manuscripts, were still unpacked on the top shelves, just as they had arrived from Germany. They were inaccessible at that time, and a listing of this valuable material is, unfortunately, missing from the Bibliography.

The libraries of New York accorded me all the generous help a bibliographer could ask for; the 42nd Street New York Public Library extended me stack privileges; its Jewish Division was most

co-operative, as was the Library of the (Protestant) Union Theological Seminary, helped me unstintingly. In addition, numerous private libraries, publishers, composers, and cantors opened their collections to me and gave me access to many a rare item.

It grieves me to say that one library, with the greatest unconcern, put obstacles in the way of my research. This library was that of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

True, one of its librarians, Mr. Isaac Rivkind, did all he could in a valiant attempt to be of assistance to me. Aside from this one man, my work there met with indifference.

The chief librarian, Prof. Alexander Marx, was favorable to my project and tried to help where he could, but was hindered by a lack of personnel.

I was limited to taking out not more than three books in any one week. In most instances, one of the three books I asked for was out on loan and the other could not be found or traced. Thus my weekly allowance was that of a single book.

In spite of these problems, the Bibliography was ready in 1943 to be submitted to a publisher. Since the "American Academy for Jewish Research" was unwilling to publish a work of such proportions, other publishers were contacted. Two of them wanted to cut and curtail it in such a drastic manner that I was forced to withdraw the manuscript.

Eventually, thanks to the recommendation of Prof. Salo Baron, the Columbia University Press became interested in the work, chiefly because Mrs. Cohen's ESCO-FUND had promised to defray a sizeable part of the costs of the publication. I can still see in my mental eye the startled face of the editor when I brought him the "manuscript": it came in two huge suitcases of foot-locker dimensions. This took place in 1943, as did the reading of the "manuscript" by several members of the Columbia University Faculty, who gave me their unanimous approval. The publication, however, took place only in 1951. What then happened between the cup and the lip?

First, I was asked, nay, ordered, by the publisher to add no more items to the manuscript, lest publication costs assume astronomical proportions. Second, a lady editor was assigned to me who, it must be said, was most meticulous in matters of editing and style, but who had not the foggiest notion of music, its terminology and its meaning. When, in 1944 I moved to California, it required a mountainous and time-consuming correspondence between us both to explain, time and time again, the most basic and elementary musical terms.

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, there was an almost instantaneous proliferation of musical matters. New names, new musical works, and new literature appeared in abundance. According to Rule No. 1, I had to omit from my Bibliography this valuable body of new material. All I could do was to smuggle in, during the galley-proofing, a few essential items, with the hope my "cheating" would not be discovered.

When the printing was under way, the printer of Columbia University Press went bankrupt. It took a long time to replace him. Another printer continued the work, but soon he moved to a new location with all his equipment. During this time, the printing of the Bibliography was again suspended, resulting in another long regrettably, been forgotten.

Since almost eight years had now gone by, I felt justified in asking the Columbia University Press, to insert a short notice explaining the discrepancy between the acceptance of the work (1943) and the date of publication (1951). To this they consented. I submitted the text of this notice to the publisher, but to my utter consternation, the promised statement was omitted in the finished volume. When I remonstrated, I was told that the explanation had, regrettably, been "forgotten."

Ever since the appearance of the Bibliography, I have been repeatedly blamed for having left out this or that important item from my collection, items which had been published *before* my book had appeared.

No one can be more conscious than I am about the shortcomings of my "comprehensive" Bibliography. In it I tried to assemble and describe every book, pamphlet, article, musical work, published or in manuscript, that I could locate. My alibi will always be the above mentioned "ukase" of the publisher: Nothing To Be Added During Publication. No Matter What!

This serious shortcoming of the Bibliography, which I readily admit to, has even resulted in a dubious compliment conferred upon me by some of my colleagues, who in their own bibliographical ventures, have coined the sigil: NIS (Not in Sendrey), appending it to all items not found in my book. I am both honored and chagrined by this distinction, but then: a pioneer work as this one, can claim to have earned the right of its existence even though it may have a few major or minor deficiencies.

Perhaps these deficiencies could have been avoided, had it not been for the war years (1941-43), during which written inquiries to

foreign countries were made difficult if not impossible through normal postal channels.

The “misadventures” of the Bibliography did not end with the omission of the “forgotten” explanatory notice. When, in 1960, I joined the faculty of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles (the West Coast Branch of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America), I taught the history of Jewish music and related subjects. My students all wanted to obtain a copy of the Bibliography, and since the yearly report of Columbia University Press showed the existence of 290 unbound copies, I asked them to order some for binding. The order was issued for 100 copies, and back came the stunning information: the unbound copies could not be found. All search remained fruitless. I was told that the printer had to move again, with the result that those unbound copies, lying around, apparently had been thrown out as trash.

A small consolation was provided by the University Microfilm, Inc., in Ann Arbor, Mich., who had included my work among its publications, and therefore is now able to furnish copies of it, though for a much higher price than the original book, as every copy must be hand-made.

The University of Judaism had every good intention of continuing and bringing up to date the Bibliography. In 1964 I went to Israel to solicit the collaboration of my Israeli colleagues, as I realized that the definitive work could not be brought to a conclusion without their co-operation. Everywhere I went, I met with the expression of good will and promises of assistance, and thus looked forward with expectation to expanding the work. The University of Judaism, however, could not provide the necessary funds for the continuation of the project. And thus, this is where things stand at the present time.

Meanwhile, the first result, for myself, of my bibliographical research, the extensive monograph, *MUSIC IN ANCIENT ISRAEL*, is in the process of being published and will appear shortly. Its sequel, *THE MUSIC OF THE JEWS IN THE DIASPORA* (up to 1800), will follow in 1969.

Born of my urge to provide fundamental research material in this neglected field, and with little hope of material gain, I trust that my efforts may serve future scholarship, *ad majorem gloriam musicae Judaeorum*.

ABBA YOSEF WEISGAL AT EIGHTY-AN APPRECIATION

JOSEPH LEVINE

They say you can tell a Hazzan by who his teachers were. If we use this yardstick to measure the style of Abba Yosef Weisgal, we must rank him among the luminaries of the age, for his teachers were among the most respected names in Central Europe at the turn of the century. The first of these was Alexander Ersler of Wloclawek who, together with Boruch Leib Rosowsky, had studied under Hirsch Weintraub.

Weisgal's main purpose in coming to Wloclawek was to study the art of hazzanut with Ersler; a purpose which he carried out with characteristic zeal.

Ersler began his instruction of the young Weisgal with a detailed study of his own compositions: **Ki K'shimcho - Sh'chulo Achulo - Ato Nigleiso - Min Hameitsar**, in that order. Abba Yosef approached these compositions as a thirsty man approaches water. He devoured and digested every word, every note, every shade and nuance of phrasing. When he had gone through and learned every recitative, Ersler presented him with the first copy of his High Holiday book. He said, "I am convinced that I cannot put this book in more worthy hands, for you will make use of it." That was recompense for a year's intensive work!

At the beginning of his second year, Abba Yosef was asked by Ersler to assume leadership of the choir. The first composition he conducted was **Vesiftach Es Seifer Hazichronos**. One day at the end of his second year, while practising a recitative, Weisgal stopped and resumed from the beginning. Ersler asked him why he had done so. Weisgal explained that "The production and interpretation were not correct." Whereupon Ersler replied, "You don't need me anymore. The Master, whose last pupil had been Gershon Sirota, was satisfied that Weisgal, at the tender age of 17, had absorbed his style to perfection. He now allowed Weisgal to copy selected recitatives of the great Kashtan. Weisgal was initiated into this rarefied atmosphere via one of the **31 Av Horachamims** and the classic **Ato Nosein Yod L'fosh'im**. Vocally, Weisgal had not as yet settled into a typical baritone or tenor pattern. His voice had been given no opportunity to rest and recoup its strength at puberty, nor had it experienced any lessening of the constant demands upon it during its change-period. It therefore exhibited symptoms of strain.

The five years Weisgal later spent as a soldier, during World War I, away from his cantorial duties, finally allowed the vocal organs to recuperate and to settle into their optimal mode of output. At any rate, his natural equipment has carried him, at the time of his writing, through a unique career that has spanned over 60 years in the cantorate.

As a reward for his diligence, Ersler made available to Weisgal his entire apartment for the summer, while he vacationed in the country. He found it necessary, however, to return hurriedly after receiving a letter from his city neighbors. It seems that Weisgal had transferred his normal boundless energy and sustained practice schedule to the Ersler apartments and the good neighbors politely but firmly objected to the loud and repeated realization, on the Ersler keyboard, of figured bass exercises, by one apprentice at 3 o'clock in the morning. At the end of the second year with Ersler, Weisgal returned to his home.

The tuning fork which Abba Yosef carries with him at all times is a further reminder of the great Central European hazzanic tradition which Weisgal represents. It was given by Solomon Sulzer to Jacob Bauer who, along with Josef Singer and Alois Kaiser, enjoyed the distinction of having been one of Sulzer's last pupils. Years later, when Bauer was Oberkantor of the Turkish Synagogue in Vienna, and the founder of his own Cantorial School, he presented that same tuning fork to young Weisgal, his pupil. That tuning fork still vibrates sympathetically in the impressive Responsorial Tradition of Vienna.

Abba's German must have been halting indeed. Upon carrying out the instructions given him on the train, he found himself registered at 25¢ the night in a hotel on the Novaregasse, the heart of Vienna's red-light district. Needless to add, the sights and sounds he experienced that night proved hard to relate to anything in his parochial background as the son of the Hazzan-Shocheit of Kikoll! In the morning there was a knock on his door, "Herr Weisgal, in the name of the Law, you are under arrest." The police inspected his one satchel and requested his passport. As it was only a limited one, for passage from Dubjinsky to Golun, he was taken to the station house in custody. On the way, one of the policemen who had noticed Abba's tallit and tefillin among his belongings, informed Abba that he, too, was a Polish Jew. He explained that all recent arrivals from the Eastern districts were suspect at that time, since the Kultusgemeinde of the Jewish Viennese community had been

burglarized a short while previously. He then let our hero go, after advising him where he might rent a room at more reasonable weekly rates and in a more desirable neighborhood.

The next day, Abba found such a room in the Neubaugasse, for which he paid one gulden per week for the remainder of his stay in Vienna. He then followed up his letters of recommendation and embarked upon a long succession of calls for the purpose of securing a position as chorister in one of Vienna's many synagogues.

Weisgal's first acquaintance in Vienna was a childhood friend from Kikol who now sang in the choir of a local synagogue. The hazzan of that synagogue was Zavel Kwartin, and Abba went to see him. Unfortunately, the season Abba picked to arrive in Vienna was just before Shavuot, the end of the yearly cycle. It was too late to join a choir for the imminent festival and too early to gain employment for the next High Holydays. Kwartin, therefore, as well as Israel Schnorr and a host of other cantorial luminaries could not offer Abba a position — his superlative recommendation from Alexander Ersler notwithstanding.

That Shavuot Abba heard Hazzan Dinman, whose vocal timbre suited his name. He had a beautiful, lyric tenor. For Abba, it was the first service he had ever attended at which an organ was used. The rendition which left the most lasting impression upon him was Sulzer's Adonoi, Adonoi, sung with choral and organ accompaniment. Years later, when Abba had occasion to sing this same composition for his father, Shlomo Chayim, the latter said: "All the rest is uninformed ignorance; THIS is song!" Dinman, then, was Abba's unknowing initiator into the impressive style of Solomon Sulzer.

The Jewish Kultusgemeinde subsidized many charitable institutions, among them the Wolkskiche, for the poor of the Viennese community. This community-kitchen provided inexpensive meals to the itinerants from Eastern Europe. One Sabbath, Abba met a man at the Wolkskiche who knew of a soda-water factory that was looking for able-bodied workers. He followed that chance lead and earned his keep, at seven gulden a week for filling and delivering soda-water for the rest of the summer.

Rabbi Kahn urged Abba to become a hazzan, as his father had done. He offered to arrange for him to eat "teg" in Znojno for the duration of his apprenticeship, after which he would personally confer upon him the "Kabbolo", or Shechita license. Abba heeded this advice and though he completed his season at the Staatstheatre, he

studied Shechita with Rabbi Kahn, travelled each week to Vienna for his lessons with Professor Lubetski and ate in regular rotation at countless homes in Znojno, a different home each day of every week. Further, the Rabbi sent Abba to his father-in-law Jacob Bauer, then Oberkantor of the Turkish synagogue. Znojno was several hours ride on each trip in from the Moravian city, and so Abba studied with both Lubetski and Bauer on each trip in. He continued this demanding regimen for almost three years with Cantor Bauer and for slightly less with Professor Lubetski, until the latter's death. From Jacob Bauer, a proud Hungarian of moderate vocal endowment, he acquired the full-blown Responsive style in which the choir reiterates the cantorial line with slight variations. He elaborated upon the first impression he had received from Dinman's Shavuot services, of the modern style of cantorial declamation, with choral or instrumental accompaniment.

In addition to Dinman and Bauer, one must mention the highly individual delivery of one other Viennese cantor of this period, Bela Gutmann, as an important influence on Abba's development. As exhibited in his Kiddush, for example, Abba's full-throated treatment of each tone derives from Gutman's overpowering, dramatic style of singing. Gutman's voice, according to Abba, was so huge and full that each note he produced could be felt. A baritone, he retained this uniform quality through E top space. The "*Vaani Sefilos*" which Abba still sings, a short recitative of Gutman's, is the perfect vehicle for this type of voice. Abba's vocal range, while wider than Gutman's, could cope with such intensification in its middle octave and still retain its flexibility and beauty! Abba says, "Every simple Jew who could carry a tune was my teacher". Some of those simple Jews during his Viennese period happened to rank among the leading cantors of the age.

The summer of 1908 witnessed the end of Abba's chorus days. He had done well as an operetta bit-player and as soloist at nuptial ceremonies conducted by Hazzan Handgriffe and Rabbi Kahn in Znojano. He had also furthered his musical and religious studies and had received Kabbolo in the practice of Shechita. He was clearly ready for a position of his own. Abba applied to the Moravian towns of Kamenice and Iveciz, in answer to advertisements for hazzanim, that were placed in the weekly, "*Die Kantoran Vochenschrift*". He received answers from both during the same week; his candidacy would be considered after an audition service on the Sabbath preceeding the Fast of Tisha B'Av. After consulting with Rabbi Kahn,

who quoted the Talmudic dictum, “Expedite the prior matter first and the subsequent matter afterwards”, Abba accepted the offer of Kamenice, which had arrived first and wrote to Iveciz requesting an audition the Sabbath after Tisha B’Av. He arrived in Kamenice on Thursday and was received by the president of the congregation, a musical individual who asked him to sing several lieder as a sample of his formal training. Abba complied with several.

Weisgal’s formal style of hazzanut, then, is easily identified. The set pieces for cantor and choir which appeared a decade ago in “*Shirei Chayim Ve-emunah*” and those in his recent series for Mercury, all fall under the long shadow of Sulzer’s “*Adonoy, Adonoy.*” They are available to all and therefore may be subjected to the closest technical scrutiny at leisure. But there are six days of Chol to each one of *Kodesh* and it is in the Daily Chapel rather than the Main Sanctuary that Weisgal makes his most enduring contribution. For he is one of the Old School, three-times-a-day hazzanim to whom *Pitum Haktorez* is as familiar as *Ein Keloheinu* and who were nurtured on *Abbeyei V’ravo* rather than Lerner & Loewe.

His father Shlomo Chayim was hazzan-and-shocheit in the town of Kikol in North Central Poland. In Abba’s early childhood, an incident occurred which throws some light on his father’s character. What appeared to be a more desirable position was advertised as vacant in the town of Rypin. When Shlomo Chayim travelled there to apply for the position, he was stopped by an old man who said, “If you accept this position, my family and I will starve”. The incumbent was apparently no longer able to perform his duties satisfactorily, as Shlomo Chayim realized when they met thus unannounced. Yet, his own need was not as great as the old man’s, so he returned home without another word to anyone in Rypin. His explanation to Abba, years later, was, “Our hands have not shed this blood.”

It is a long way from Rypin, Poland to Cleveland, U.S.A., but almost the identical circumstances unfolded before Shlomo Chayim’s first-born, shortly after his arrival in America, a generation later. a generation later. Predictably, Abba reacted exactly as his father before him had.

As if to vindicate his decision, Shlomo Chayim was soon given the chance to broaden his musical knowledge, even in the narrow environment of Kikol. A young Russian Jew, Wolf Benzen, came to the town and married one of the local girls. He had been a *meshorer* prior to his tour of duty with the Czar’s army at the Baltic

seaport of Revel. Now he sought a position as hazzan-shochet in the vicinity of his bride's home town.

Wolf Benzen offered to teach Shlomo Chayim the discipline of solfeggio, in exchange for training in Shechita. This arrangement worked out satisfactorily, for it equipped Benzen for the post of hazzan-shochet in the town of Kavoul, nearby, and it enabled Shlomo Chayim to perfect his musical gifts. Wolf Benzen remained in Kavoul, while Shlomo Chayim built a solid reputation in Kikol and attracted many young men to himself for the purpose of learning Shechita and Hazzanut. He composed elaborate liturgical settings, which he performed in the tiny town of Kikol, with the assistance of meshorerim, as a rule.

Abba was born in 1887, the first of Shlomo Chayim's eleven children. Mother Leah also bore Leibish Bunim, Yechiel Yehoshua, Meyer Wolff, Chaya Soro and Shmuel Yisroeil, in the order given. Leah died at age 30. Her only daughter, Chaya Soro, who was Meyer Wolff's twin, died at the age of 18, just before her wedding. After Leah's death, Shlomo Chayim remarried another Leah-Lodja, his first wife's niece. She bore him 5 children: Raizel, Mordechai, Mendel, Yaakov, Esther and Yitzchok. Abba Yosef, the first of Shlomo Chayim Weisgal's eleven children was born in Kikol, during his father's Kostage. When Shlomo Chayim entered the haberdashery business, the family moved to Sheps. It was during this period in Sheps that Abba was brought to Cheder; he must have been around 3 years old. His "Rebbe" was short and hunchbacked and taught in a cellar. Abba experienced 2 years of Cheder training in reading and writing, then the family returned to Kikol, where Shlomo Chayim assumed his duties as hazzan-socheit of the community.

By the age of five, Abba had sung as alto soloist with his father, who also instructed him in prayer and in independent part-singing of choral music. Abba's religious education continued in Cheder with the study of Talmud, particularly the Sedra Nezikin. As time went on, Abba attended a regular school where Polish and Russian were taught. He advanced in his Talmud studies and concentrated on the tractates which set forth the laws for such necessary and practical matters as marriage and slaughter. The latter subject he pursued further under the guidance of Casriel Shocheit. In his tenth year, on the last evening of Passover, Abba Yosef was allowed to appear before the ark as a Sheliah Tsibbur for the first time. That same year his mother Leah died. Abba was sent to Reb Wolff Benzen in

Kavoul to serve as a *meshorer* and to learn *solfeggio* as his father had done before him. Reb Wolff taught him to read and to count musical notation among the stalls of the stable where the slaughtering was done. Reb Wolff's singing was as stiff and formal as his Russian military background. He learned and taught every recitative painstakingly. Abba spent almost 2 years with Reb Wolff. Besides his musical duties and studies, he reported faithfully every day to the synagogue where he continued his Talmudic education in the Beis Hamedrosh. Nor was Abba permitted to relax his young mind back home in Kikol. His grandfather, using a system of competitive incentive, induced Abba and brothers to memorize whole pages of the Talmud at a stretch. This was the regimen he followed through his Bar Mitzvah and early teen years.

One summer Abba hitch-hiked to the town of Melave. There he hoped to obtain a position as *meshorer* with the Hazzan Cheikel Melaver. Unfortunately there was no opening and so Abba travelled on to the town of Puzinitz where Cheikel's brother served as hazzan. Upon inquiry, he was given the same negative answer. The town of Zaramin where yet a third brother functioned as hazzan lay on the route back to Kikol, so Abba having nothing to lose, decided to try his luck there as well. The story turned out to be the same, but with a slightly different ending this time. The day happened to be the 17th of Tammuz, a fast day. But Abba had been given a crust of black bread and water earlier in the day by a farmer with whom he had ridden. By the time he arrived at the Zaramin brother's home, it was late in the day and he gave the appearance of having really fasted straight through. The hazzan, at any rate, assumed as much and while he had no position to offer Abba, he did feed him and sent him to the Shtibl of the Alexander Chassidim in town. It was a dark night outside and pitch black in the Shtibl, one could almost feel the darkness. Abba groped around for a bench on which to sleep, finally stumbled onto one and propped his satchel up as a makeshift pillow. Suddenly, from the recesses of the dark room, a familiar voice boomed out, "Abba, is it you?" The voice thus projected without warning nearly frightened young Abba out of his tired wits. He recognized it though as belonging to the "Batim-Yid", the travelling tefillin salesman who knew him from his father's house in Kikol. That night Abba's pillow consisted of a soft bundle of prayer-shawls. Despite the fact that his trip to the towns of the three brothers proved fruitless, Abba followed what was to become his life-long pattern; he repaid every friend and relative the coins

they had pressed upon him at the journey's outset.

It is to this long-ago world of his childhood with its haunting images of his revered father that Weisgal reverts whenever he **stands** at the Amud. Like a true son of the shtetl he choreographs his prayers and resembles in mid-thought, nothing so much as Chagall chassid floating wistfully across a gaily colored canvas. This unconscious use of body and especially hand movement is typical of the chassidic approach to prayer. There is something about piety which creates its own recognizable rhythmic pattern; an uneven one. The intellectual Talmudist will sway back and forth in a regular motion; not so the chassid. His prayer is spontaneous, emotional and unpredictable.

In fact, Weisgal's style of unaccomplished chant, at first hearing most frequently evokes the description: chassidic. For, that caption alone carries with it the aura of pious devotion coupled with exuberent artistry that is immediately felt whenever this venerable Jew leads a congregation in prayer. Moreover, it would be unnatural for him to sound like anything but a Polish chassid when he stands, as precentor, before the holy ark. Not for him the mantle of modernity — but the ageless woolen tallit — as he sings, above the inspired drone of the worshippers, the basic prayer texts of his faith.

And sing he does! Each phrase, each word, each syllable is sculpted out of an underlying musical mode so omnipresent that it can almost be felt. Texts that he has sung several times daily for over half a century will not be treated in exactly the same way twice. Such is his creative capacity that each time he recites even a set piece, phrases here and there will vary, not haphazardly — but with the purpose of achieving a specific all-over effect. As with any accomplished artist — and a cantor earns that title whenever he succeeds in transporting a congregation from the world of reality to the world of emotion — the skills of a lifetime contrive, in Weisgal's chanting, to fashion an ultimate whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts.

Chassidic chant, at its most exalted, is such an art, and Abba Yosef Weisgal is the enlightened son of a hassid, Shlomo Chayim of Kikol. From his father, Abba acquired that peculiarly hassidic approach to God of a servant to his master. There is familiarity in the manner of address, balanced by an awareness of one's own insignificance in the presence of the Creator. Absent is any aloofness, any intrusion of self; all majesty and praise is to the Almighty. There

is comfort and security in such a relationship; one's future is assured — be it ever so humble. The hassid, in his approach to God, mirrors the attitude of his less pious co-religionists **in their dealings with** earthly rulers; — he would rather be a Jew of the King than King of the Jews!

Psalm 33, verse I provides the inspiration for the cantor's opening prayer on Sabbath morning, *Shochein Ad*: "He **inhabiteth eternity**, exalted and holy is His Name; and it is written, Exult in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is seemly for the upright. By the mouth of the upright Thou shalt be praised, by the words of the righteous Thou shalt be blessed, by the tongue of the pious Thou shalt be extolled, and in the midst of the holy Thou shalt be hallowed."

Weisgal sings this text more differently than anyone. Most cantors chant it in the *Magen Avot* mode; he does it in *Ahavah Rabbah*, as did his teacher Alexander Ersler. Illustration I(a) is the currently accepted version as given by A. Z. Idelsohn; I(b) is an approximation of Ersler's style and I(c) is Weisgal's improvisation, all for the same text. The most noticeable difference between Weisgal's setting and his own master's is the sheer number of notes that he manages to fit to the text without repeating words. Idelsohn's melody is essentially that used by most traditional American cantors today. It states its case simply and directly and uses 75 notes. Ersler's setting is even more sparing, and uses only 67 notes. Weisgal, though, takes 158 notes to make his point, without repeating a syllable. He strengthens 14 syllables melismatically, as compared with 5 by Idelsohn and 1 by Ersler. An even more striking example of Weisgal's musical largesse is offered by a comparison of his "*Yom L'yabasha*, a poetic treatment of the ancient crossing of the Bed Sea, with the source of his inspiration, the tune "*Aley Giva*", a shepherd's song composed by Nachum Nardi. The original contains 115 notes. Weisgal, to cover the same musical ground, uses 183, besides those he adds for a repeated textual refrain; "*Shira Hadasha Shib'hu G'ulim*". See illustration II(a) and (b) .

The uniqueness of Weisgal's style, though, lies not so much in the density of his printed page as in his own clear and rapid declamation of same. If we could but hear Idelsohn and Ersler chant their respective settings for "*Shochein Ad*" as I have heard Weisgal chant his, we would probably mark no great difference if any, in the length of performance time required by all three. This is because Weisgal's notes, though many in number, are short in duration. His phrases exhibit a restless tension that does not abate until their

very conclusion. To achieve a contrast between these ornamental endings and that which came before — Weisgal makes extensive use of chant-tones in the antecedent part of a phrase. In the *Hatzi-Kaddish* of the Weekday Evening Service, (Illustration III), he repeats the note “E” 46 times consecutively before moving up to another note. In the paragraph, “*R’faenu*,” “O heal us,” from the Amidah of the Weekday Afternoon Service, he moves emphatically from the chant-tone “A” to its upper neighbor “B” 12 times; (Illustration IV). Of the 83 notes in this paragraph, 65 are either the chant-tone or its upper neighbor.

Weisgal, especially in his actual performance, is relentless in his pursuit of a chant-tone. In a recorded excerpt from the Rabbinical section of the Mourner’s Kaddish, which he recites publicly every morning, he settles on the chant-tone “B” for 24 out of 36 notes; a percentage of 67%. Yet, when I asked him, sometime later at home, to chant the same phrases for me, he became more adventurous, and touched the chant-tone only 15 times or 42%; (Illustration V,(a) and (b).

The basic motive force in his phrases, then, is generated by the following combination: A long, repetitive line of single-syllable notes which build to a melismatic final syllable. In fact, the overwhelming majority of all his melismata occur on the last syllables of words. This is definitely not the case with Idelsohn for example. In “*Shochein Ad*” — 4 out of his 5 melisma fall on the penultimate syllable. Weisgal’s long lines of repeated notes and graceful arches of diatonic coloratura exist not so much for themselves as for where they lead. They build inexorably to a series of climaxes, often in the white heat of on-the-spot inspiration, these curving roulades of syllabic sound, rising and falling in logical sequence, infinitely varied within themselves and yet they still hew to the broad sweep of the phrase. *sempre sostenuto*.

In Example VI, Kol Adonoi, Weisgal uses twice as many notes as his own teacher, Ersler, and far more than even the avowedly Eastern European composer, Chemjo Vinaver. Moreover, he chants this passage not in the traditional *Magen Avot* mode or even in the stark Major of his teacher, but in the mode which he has made uniquely his own over a lifetime, *Ahavah Rabbah*. In actual practise, he will introduce this passage in the spot normally associated with the relative minor of that which precedes it. If he has been chanting the Kabbalat Shabbat in Eb Major, *Kol Adonoy* will begin on “C,” where we normally expect a minor mode. Consequently, the whole

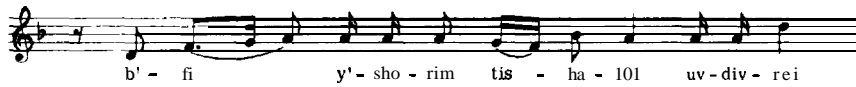
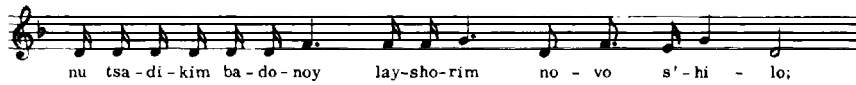
passage will assume a tonality that is neither major nor minor. It is, in fact, the most authentic tonality that synagogue chant has to offer, the modality of our ancestors, microtones and all.

Abba Joseph Weisgal has proven over his four-score years that East is East and West is West and that the twain SHALL meet. Born a Polish chosid and trained in Vienna, he brought to the elegance of the metropolis the warmth of the shtetl. In his person and in his life-style he has combined East and West and has been remarkably faithful to both traditions. With Choir on Sabbaths, particularly in the Torah Service, he is a twentieth-century Sulzer, while in the long unaccompanied passages of the High Holiday *Musaf* he is a throwback to our Polish grandfathers. He has remembered not only the spot where the Temple stood but he still brings the Daily Sacrifice. And he has accomplished this worthy feat not by imitation but by being himself. The only phonograph recording of another Hazzan that he has even owned was the *Ovinu Malkein* of Yechial Alter Kamiol, whose style he never cared to emulate. His secret has been an awareness of his work in relation to the past and a gyroscopic sense of musical balance which has led him to buy only those folk-goodies which were compatible with HIS style and to walk away from those which were not.

May God grant that the impeccable taste and refinement that have characterized Abba Yosef Weisgal's every endeavor, including his ministry as Hazzan of the Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore for half a century, continue to guide this exemplary hazzan and human being as he enters his ninth decade in good health.

SHOCHEIN AD

A. Z. IDELSOHN



(Transposed down a 5th)

A. S. ERSLER



b' - fi y'-sho-rim tis - ha - lol uv-div - rei tsa-di-kim

tis - bo - rach u - vil - shon cha - si - dim tis - ro -

mom u - v' - ke - rev k' - do - shim tis - ka - dosh.

(Transcribed by J. L.)

A. Y. WEISCAL

Sho-chein a d mo-rom v' - ko - dosh sh' - mo v' - cho-

suv ra - n' - nu tsa-di - kim ba - do - noy

la - y' - sho - rim no - vo s' - hi - lo;

b' - fi y'-sho - rim tis-ha - lol

u - v' - div - rei tsa-di - kim tis - bo - rach u - vil -

shon cha-si - dim tis-ro - mom u - v' - ke -

rev k' - do - shim tis - ka - dosh.

ALEY GIVA

NACHUM NARDI

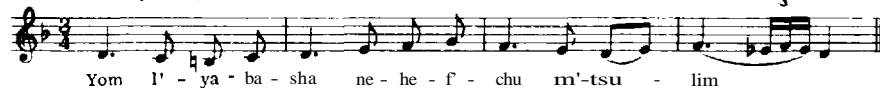


YOM L'YABASHA

(Transcribed by J. L.)

A. Y. WEISGAL

3



rim ut - la - keit nif - za -

rim kim - la - keit shi-bo - lim

shi - ra cha - da - sha shib - chu g' - u - lim

MA-ARIV L'CHOL

(Transcribed by J. L.)

A. Y. WEISGAL

B' - yod' - cho af-kid ru-chi po- di - so o - si a - do-noy eil e - mea

e - lo - hei - nu she - ba - she - ma - yim ya - cheid shi - m' - cho v' - ka -

yeim mal - chu - s' - cho to - mid um - loch o - lei - nu l' - o - lom vo - ed

yir - u ei - dei - nu v' - yis - mach li - bei - nu v' - so - geil naf - shei - nu bis - hu -

os - cho be - e - mes be - mor l' - tsi - yon mo - lach e - lo - ho -

yich a - do - noy me - lech a - do - noy mo - loch a - do - noy yim -

loch l' - o - lom ve - ed ki ha - mal - chus chel - cho
 hi u - l' - ol - mei ad tim - loch b' - cho - vod ki ein lo - nu
 me - lech e - lo o - to ho - ruch a - to a - do -
 noy ha - me - lech bich - vo - do to - mud yim - loch o -
 lei - nu l' - o - lom vo - ed v' - al kol ma - a - sov
 yis - ga - dal v' - yis - ka - dash sh' - mei ra - bo b' - o - l' -
 mo di v' - ro chi - ru - sei v' - yam - lich mal - chu - sei b' - cha - yei -
 chon uv yom - eich - on uv cha - yei d' - chol beis yis - ro - eil ba - a - go -
 lo u - vis - man ko - riv v' - i - n' - ru o - mein y' - hei shmei
 ra - bo m' - vo - rach l' - o - lam ul - ol - mei ol - ma - yo yis -

bo - rach v' - yish - ta - bach v' - yis - po - ar v' - yis - ro - man v' - yis -

na - sei v' - yis - ha - dar v' - yis - a - leh v' - yis - ha - lal sh mei o' - kad - sho

b' - rich hu l' - ei la mi - kol bir - cho - so v' - shi - ro - so tshuv b' - cho -

so v' - ne - cho mo - so da - a - mi - ron b' - o - l' - mo v' - i - m' -

tu o - mein. Yis - ga - dal v' - yis - ka - dash sh' - mei ra - bo b' - o - l' - mo div -

ro chir - u - sei v' - yam - lich mal - chu - sei b' - cha - yei - chon u - v' - yom ei - chon

u - v' - cha - yei d' - chol beis yis - ro - eil ba - a - go - lo u - viz - man ko -

riv v' - i - m' - ru o - mein y' - hei shmei ra - bo m' - vo - rach l' -

o - lam ul' - ol - mei ol - ma - yo yis - bo - rach v' - yish - ta - bach v' - yis - po -

ar v' - yis - ro - mam v' - yis - na - sei v' - yis - ha - dar v' - yis - a - leh v' - yis - ha -

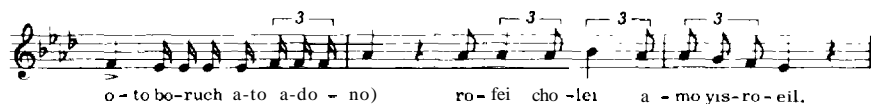
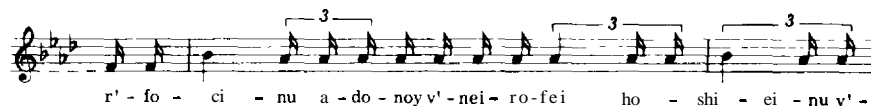
lal shmei d' - ku - d' - sho b' - rich hu l' - ei - lo mi-kol bir-cho-so v' - shi - ro -
 so tush b' - cho - so v' - ne-che-mo-so da - a - mi-rom b' - ol - mo v' - im - ru
 o - mein tis - ka - beil ts' - los - hon u - vo - us - hon d' - chol yis - ro - el
 ko-dom a - vuhon di vish - ma - yo v' - ar - o v' - im - ru o - mein

MINCHA L'CHOL

(Transcribed by J. L.)

A. Y W EISGAL

S'lach lo - nu o - vi - nu ki cho - to - nu m' - chal lo - nu mal -
 kei - nu ki fo-sho - nu ki mo - cheil v' - so-lei-ach o - to bo-ruch a -
 to a - do - noy cha - nun ha-mar - beh lis - lo - ach
 r' - ei v' - on - yei - nu v' - ri - vo re - vei - nu ug' - o -
 lei - nu m' - hei - ro l' - ma - an sh' - me - cho ki go - eil cho-zok



A. BAER



MOURNERS' KADDISH

(INCLUDING RABONON SECTION)

(Transcribed by J. L.)

A. Y. WEISGAL

Yis - ga - dal v'-yis-ka - dash sh'mei ra-bo, b' - o - l' - mo di - v' -

ro chir-u-sei v'-yam-lich mal-chu-sei, b' - cha-yei-chon uv-yo-mei -

chon uv'-cha-yei d'-chol beis yis-ro - eil ba - a - go - lo u - viz - man - ko -

riv v' - i - m' - ru o - mein. Y' - hei sh' - mei ra - bo m' - vo -

rach I' - o - lam ul - ol - mei ol - ma - yo, yis - bo - rach v' - yish - ta - bach

v' - yis - po - ar v' - yis - ro - mam v' - yis - na - sei v' - yis - ha - dar v' - yis - a - le

v' - yis - ha - lal sh' - mei di kud' - sho b' - rich - hu, I' - ei - lo min -

kol bir - cho - so v' - shi - ro - so tush - h' - cho - so u' - ne - che - mo - so

da - a - mi - ran b' - o - l' - mo v' - i - m' - ru; o - mein a l yis - ro

eil v' - al ra-bo-man V' - al tal-mi-dei-hon v' - al kol tal-mi-
 dei sal-mi-dei-hon. v' - al kol mon di o-s-kin b' - o - rai - so di v' -
 as-ro ho-dein u' - di b' - chol a - sar va - a - sar, y' - hei l' - hon u - l' -
 chon sh' - lo - mo ra - bo, chi - no v' - chis - do v' - ra - cha - min u' - cha - yim a - ri -
 chin, u - m' - zo - no r' - vi - cho u - for - ko - no min ko - dom a -
 vu - hon di vish - ma - yo v' - ar - o v' - im' - ru: o - mein; y' - hei sh' - lo -
 mo ra - bo min sh' - ma - yo v' - cha - yim, To - vim! o - lei -
 nu v' - al kol yis - ro - eil v' - i - m' - ru: o - mein; o - se - sho -
 lom bim - ro - mov, hu b' - ra - cha - mov ya - a - se sho -
 lom o - lei - mu v' - al kol yis - ro - eil v' - i - m' - ru: o - mein.

al yis - re-eil' v' - al ra-bo-non v'-al tal-mi-dei-hon v'-al
kol tal-mi-dei sal-mi-dei-hon v'-al kol mon di os-kin b'-o - rai - so

KOL ADONAY

A. S. ERSLER

Kol a-do-noy y'cho - leil a-yo - los va - ye - che - sof y'-o -
ros u - v' - hei - cho - lo ku - lo o - meir ko -
vod a - do - noy la - ma - bul yo - shov va - yei - shev a - do - noy
me-lech l'-o-lom a-do - noy oz l' - a - mo yi - tein a-do -
noy y' - vo - reich es a - m o va - sho - lom.

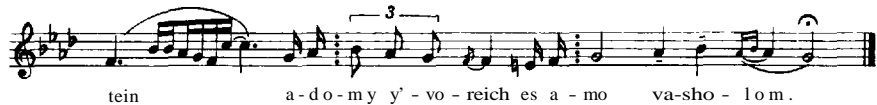
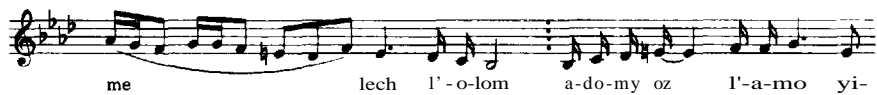
C. VINAVER

Kol a - do - noy y'cho-leil a - yo - los y'cho - leil a - yo -
los va - ye-the-sof y' - o - ros uv'-hei-cho-lo ku - lo



(Transcribed by J. L.)

A. Y. WEISGAL



MUSIC SECTION

“Alte Salomonische Gesänge” is, insofar as we know, the first Jewish liturgical music published in Central Europe after World War II. The four short high holiday pieces were arranged by a non-Jew, Alois Melichar, who composed the music for the Pabst film of Hafka’s “The Trial.”

Melichar credits the then Chief Cantor of Vienna, Ladislaus Morgenstern with inspiring him and supplying him with the traditional melodies on which the pieces are based. He writes:

“Blissful were the hours in which my dear friend Ladislaus Morgenstern, Chief Cantor of Vienna, sang to me from the precious treasure of his ancient traditional melodies, many of which I wrote down, setting them into a metrical and harmonic system.

“I feel convinced that these songs, show a noble naturally flowing melos and an indescribable feeling for musical form; that they represent, beyond their liturgical significance, a marvelous enrichment of house and concert music.”

ALTE SALOMONISCHE GESANGE

Textliche Bearbeitung:

Dr. Relly Hermann-Morgenstern

Musikalische Bearbeitung:

ALOIS MELICHAR

ALTE SALOMONISCHE GESANGE

Gesungen von Ladislaus Morgenstern

Oberkantor der Wiener Stadtkirche

Textliche Bearbeitung: Dr. Rely Hermann-Morgenstern

Musikalische Bearbeitung: Alois Melichar

Berocho | Segen | Bless

E-lo-he nu ve-lo
 Segne uns, Gott, Gott un ser
 Bless us or God, God our

*Klavier
oder
Orgel*

he a-vo se-nu. Bor che nu bab ro cho bor che nu bab ro cho
 Herr, Gott unsrer Ä-tar Denn dres-la-chen Se-gen, denn drei la-chen Se-gen
 Lord, God of our fa-thers With three-fold blessing, with three-fold blessing

harm schu le schetimschule sches. Ba to ro hak-su vo al te de Mosche av de-
 ver-hei-set-uns der Tho-ra hei-li-ge Schrift, dei-ner Pro-pheten hei-lig
 promised by your law, ho by law, heralded by your pro-phets. ho by

cho hu a mu ro hu a mu ro mi - pi Ahron u vo nov. ka ha nim am ke du - sche cho
 Wort Hö - re uns, Herr, hör unser Flahn, das wir be - frie - d'ct " on dir gehn. Wir bau - en auf dich,
 word. Ride not oh God, thy face from me, have mercy on us, we have trusted in thee. To thee we yield,

am ke dus che cho ed o mur. ie vo re he ho a do noi ve isch me re ho lo - er a do noi -
 ver - trau - en auf dich, un - ser Hort Gnadig nei - ge uns, Gott, dein Ant - litz uns zu, leuchten lasse uns dein
 be thou our shield, gra - cious Lord Mer - ci - ful unto us thy ear do de - cline and thy holy light u -

po - nave le - ho vi lu - ne - ko i sso a - do - noi ponove le ho ve io
 strah - lend Licht - Still' unsrer See le Durst, schenke ihr su - ße Ruh und schon hie - den sank in
 pon us let shine, hea - venly peace be - stow, u - pon us who dwell be low, grant us

sem ve io sem ve io sem le ho scholom scho lom.
 sie. senk in sie dei - nen Frie den, heil - gen Frie den!
 peace, gra - cious Lord, grant us peace, thy - ho - ly peace!

Unsane tokef

Wir verkunden

Let us express

Textliche Bearbeitung: Dr. Relly Hermann-Morgenstern

Musikalische Bearbeitung: Alois Melichar

Un - e - sa - ne to - - - kef ke
Wir ver - kün - den Wür - de und Wei - he des
Let us ex - press, — let us ex - press: The

mf

du — schas ke du — schas ha
Ta — ges, des Ta — ges, der so
migh - ty ho - li ness of this day, which is so

jom ki hu no - ro we - io jom
surcht - - - bar und schau er - lich ist.
tre - - - men - dous and aw - - - ful, —

u - wo - Si - no - se mal - chu se cho mal - chu
 Da er he - bet sich dein Reich, dein Reich,
 on which thy king - dom is e - sta - blished, thy king - dom is e -

se - cho wji - kon be - che - sed ki - is a - cho w - se
 Reich, da fe - sti - get sich dein Thron, den w - se
 sta - blished, thy throne ex - al - ted, ex - al - ted thy

schew o low be mes w - se schew -
 Lie - be du ge - grun det, auf Lie -
 throne in grace u - pon which thou

o - loi be mes be art sealed in thron, und du sit - zest da - rauf zu Ge - mes
 u - pon is to pass judge - ment so aw - ful.

Udom j'sodo meofor | Man's origin is butdust

Der Mensch, geboren aus Staub

Textliche Bearbeitung: Dr. Relly Hermann-Morgenstern

Musikalische Bearbeitung: Alois Melichar

mf

U - dom j'so - do me - o - for ve so - fo - le
 Der Mensch, ge - bo - ren aus Staub, zu 'Staub bald er wie - der ver -
 Man's o - ri - gin is but dust, to dust - he re - turns one

mf

for. U - dom j'so - do me - u - for ve so - fo - le u -
 geht. Der Blu - me gleich die da - her und wel - ket dia -
 sah. A flow - er is he, bloom - ing at down, at noon he must

mf

for. bna' scho ju - vi lach - ma mo schil ke che res ha nisch
 ihn, den fluchtigen Wol - ken gleich, die ei - lend vor - u - ber -
 die A - like the drift - ing clouds that trail their sil - ver flee - ces

hor ke chu ciz ju vesch u che ciz no
 ziehm, dem Win de gleich und dem Sand korn, vom Win de spur. Is ver -
 by. Like the waiv ing wind and the sand, that is blown and car - ried a -

vel u - che - u - non ku - lu uch ru no schu
 weht, so ist dem Le - ben, oh - Mensch! Du ja - gest und raf - fest, und ja - ah - nest
 way Such is thy life, oh - man! Thou hurriest and graspest and thou - layest thy

ves u che u vok po - re achi ve
 kaum, daß es nicht mehr als ein Traum, ein
 scheme, though it is not more than a dream, a

cha - cho - lom ve cha - cho - lom ju uf.
 kur - zer Traum dein Le - ben, oh Mensch!
 tran - sient dream, thy life, or man!

E z ez'minoz orero
Halt üLer uns **Hold over us**

Textliche Bearbeitung: **Dr. Relly Hermann-Morgenstern**

Musikalische Bearbeitung: **Alois Melichar**

mf

Ez ez-j-min-oz or-e-ro
 Halt u-ber uns die rech-te Hand,
 Hold o-ver us thy right-hand,

Es ez-j-min-oz or-e-ro Or-o-re-ro Or-o-re-ro
 halt u-ber uns die rech-te Hand, bind uns an dich, bind uns an dich
 hold o-ver us thy right hand, bind us to thee, bind us to thee

O-re-ro la-sos cho-jil
 mit hei-li-ger Band.
 bind us with ho-li-ty band

Bze-dek ne kad we nisch chat Te-mu o-ro o-jil Bze-
 Kom-me, uns zu er-lo-sen und star-ke un-se-re See-len,
Save us from sa-tan's might, — save us from sa- tan's might,

e-dek ne kad we nisch chat te mu o-ro o-jil Bze-dek ne
 kom-me, uns zu er-lo-sen und star-ke uns-re See-len, daß Ste-
guide us on our way, — guide us on our way, lest

kad we nisch chat te-mi ro o-jil te
 sich nicht ver-mah-le der
we may go a stray,

mi-i-ro o-jil
 dank-len Macht des o Bo-jil
 grant us thy ho-ly son.
grant us thy ho-ly son.

REVIEW OF NEW MUSIC

HALLEL V'ZIMRAH, *Sabbath Morning Service, According to the Union Prayer Book for Cantor (Baritone or Tenor) Mixed Chorus and Organ, by Gershon Ephros*, Bloch Publishing Co., New York.

Orchestration:

2 flutes
 1 oboe
 2 clarinets in Bb (B. C.)
 1 bassoon
 1 horn in F
 1 trumpet
 1 trombone
 1 timpani
 cymbal
 triangle
 wood block
 strings

When asked to review HALLEL V'ZIMRAH, I accepted most readily. First, because of my great respect and admiration for Gershon Ephros as a wonderful human being, a dedicated hazzan and an outstanding musician. Secondly, because most of Ephros' creativity has been directed towards the traditional prayerbook and *machzor*. Ephros, creating for the Reform Service, was something new to me and I was rather curious as to how this very traditional hazzan and composer would write for it. One should bear in mind that the prayers in the traditional prayerbook are longer and consequently can be written for with more floridity than the short prayers of the Reform Service. It presents a greater challenge in that the composer must create in an interesting and effective manner for comparatively short prayers. Hazzan Ephros acquits himself nobly. I found the Service vibrant and extremely well written. There is a splendid contemporary sound of all musical modes—some old and some new—and many passages

are treated in a scholarly contrapuntal style.

In Part I — the Prelude — one is immediately aware of the Israeli musical flavor delicately combined with traditional Nusach. There is no doubt that the composer was inspired by the great personality of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver to whose sacred memory the Service is dedicated. Rabbi Silver was the great Zionist and champion of Israel, and undoubtedly that tribute is paid to him musically with the insertion of an Israeli motif which becomes part of the entire Service. The *Ma Tov* begins in the traditional major, but not a Lewandowski major. It is rather one of a *Tefilla* motif, perhaps of P'sukey *D'zimra*. The Cantor's solo definitely suggests this and the entire composition, including the accompaniment, is musically well constructed. The *Anim Z'mirot* is again an intertwining of *Nusach* and the Israeli mood. In addition, there is the reminiscence of the melodic line of *Shir Hashirim*, which adds to the beauty of the entire composition. The *Shachar Avakescha* has a wonderful cohesiveness of ideas put together in what I would call true "Ephrosian" style — clearly written, rhythmically bright and the melody set to the theme of the opening prelude. The *Bar'chu* is the true Shabbat *Nusach*. but, once again, the Ephros touch of originality makes it all the more interesting. The choral response treated in the spirit of traditional *Nusach* is most effective. In the *Sh'ma Yisrael* one can readily discern the *Tekia* blast. In its arrangement, one can almost sense the echoes of the Temple orchestra. The composer gives the *Mi Chamocha* a fascinating treatment. There is, of course, the "fregish" *mode* in keeping with the Shabbat morning *Nusach*. With this, the fugue treatment that is employed makes

this selection quite different. The monotony of all “fregish” is removed in the composer’s use of the major one-fourth up, which again is characteristic of the Shabbat Nusach. The **Tzur Yisrael**, somewhat suggestive of Ernest Bloch, still remains Ephros in style as he approaches the **Nusach** much more hazzanically than Bloch.

In Part II, the beginning of the K’dushah came as a surprise. It is a definite departure from **Nusach** and it is quite possible that the melody is based on an Israeli pastoral tune. However, there is a return to **Nusach** in this composition. One notable exception — the **Adir Adirenu** — takes on a minor flavor and is strongly reminiscent of **Rosh Hashana**. My feeling is that since the traditional prayerbook has this particular chant only on holidays, Ephros was undoubtedly influenced by the holiday spirit and consequently wrote it as he did. In the **Echad Hu Eloheinu** there is again a return to tradition and the Cantor’s obligato to the choir movement is lovely, and completely in the Sabbath mood. The music for Silent Devotion is music which gives one the true spirit of devotion. Here is Ephros at his best. This devotional spirit continues with “May the Words.” To me, this is symbolic of one of the characteristics of Ephros himself — that of a spiritual person.

We come to a marked change of pace in an exciting setting of the S’u **Sh’arim**. Once again, it is reminiscent of the Temple orchestra. **L’cha Adonai** is a very fine development of a theme inspired by and based upon the chant of the Torah blessings. It is treated rhythmically and then elaborated upon quite cleverly. When we think in terms of **Torat Adonai**, we subconsciously refer to the Lewandowski setting of **this** excerpt from

Psalms. Ephros takes an entirely different approach, and, in his version, which is most contemporary, he draws upon motifs suggestive of Yemenite or Babylonian sources. This, too, proves to be an effective composition. **Etz Chayim** is also based on the **Shir Hashirim** mode and is handled very beautifully. I found the setting of the 23rd Psalm deeply moving. Perhaps the image of David, the sweet singer in Israel, soothing Saul’s troubled spirit, was the motivating factor in this particular setting. It is a quiet, tranquil and contemporary setting with a musically sound accompaniment and, again, is Ephros at his best. The **En Kelohenu**, set to an ancient Babylonian melody, is a most welcome innovation in its charm. Finally, the **Haleluyah** (Psalm 150) is a grand fusion and development of themes previously used throughout the Service (Prelude, **Shacher Avakeshcha, Hodu Al Eretz**) but differently and uniquely treated in the **Haleluyah style**. This brings an excellent and exciting close to the entire Service.

If I speculated as to whether **Hazan** Ephros could create as well for the Reform Service as he has for the Traditional Service, I must admit that this speculation was totally unwarranted. He proves to be eminently successful in writing a splendid Sabbath morning Service for The Temple of Cleveland, Ohio, that will take its place among the best of musical liturgy created for the Reform movement. There is no doubt that this Service dedicated to the memory of Abba Hillel Silver, who loved hazzanut, will help to keep his unforgettable personality ever present in the hearts of Jews everywhere.

Moses J. SILVERMAN

L'CHU N'РАН'НОH: **A Sabbath Bve** Service in **Hassidic style** by Benjamin Siegel. Transcontinental Music Publications, New York, N.Y. \$3.

● "L'Chu N'ran'noh" is a Sabbath evening service for Hazzan, S A T B, and organ. The arrangement is by Emil **Greenberg**.

The service contains eight selections employing melodies which reflect the Hassidic tradition and spirit. These prayers may be done on an individual basis, or as a complete Hassidic evening.

As a whole, the service is simple and not very imaginative or creative. It is unfortunate, because the opening piece, "L'chu **N'ran'noh**"-(Psalm 95) shows much potential and promise. It captures the Hassidic moods of meditation, contemplation, and rhythmic excitement. The rest of the service is more or less repetitious and uninteresting. The accompaniment **is** unimaginative. The **Ahavas Olom** reminds one of the Zilberts composition. The **V'shomru** shows signs of a composing talent.

Hazzan Siegel does have the Hassidic spirit within him and a flair for simple **melody. There is a sincerity** that does shine through from this service. All beginnings are painstaking and difficult, and perhaps in the future, we may look forward to more and better creations.

HAZZAN MORTON KULA

FROM OUR READERS

Dear Cantor Davidson:

It is with no little interest that I read the Journal of the Cantors Assembly. I offer my congratulations to you for the excellence of your work as editor. I am also moved, however, to point out an apparent omission in your article, appearing in the current issue of the Journal. The Temple has been actively engaged in commissioning liturgical compositions for the past six years. During this period, the following works were produced:

Sacred Service (Sabbath Morning), Howard Boatwright (soli, choir, organ) ms.

Boker Tish'ma Koli (Sabbath Morning) Lazar Weiner (soli, choir, organ) ms.

Chemdat Yamin (Sabbath Morning w/ Torah Serv) Herbert Fromm (soli, choir, organ) pub. — Transcontinental

Hadrat Kodesh (Sabbath Morning) Heinrich Schalit (soli, choir, organ) pub.-H. Schalit

Hallel V'Zimrah (Sabbath Morning w/ Torah Ser.) Gershon Ephros (Soli, choir, organ or orch.) pub.-Bloch

Sacred Service (Sabbath Morning) Daniel Pinkham (soli, choir, organ) to be pub.-E. C. Schirmer

Awaiting completion is a service by Yehudi Wyner for soli, choir, brass quartet, and string baas. Negotiations are under way for two more commissions. In light of the foregoing, mightn't we rate a mention for an already substantial contribution to Jewish liturgical composition?

No further complaint . . . **just** my good wishes to you.

Sincerely,

DAVID GOODING
Director of Music
The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio