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## HASHIRIM ASHER LISH'LOMO OF SALAMONE ROSSI

HERBERT FROMM

***Hashirim asher lish'lomo***, this is the title of three volumes issued by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, in co-operation with the Cantors Assembly, New York, 1973. The excellent project of a new and complete edition of Rossi's works for the synagogue, initiated by Hugo Weisgall, chairman of the faculty of the Cantors Institute at the Seminary, was carried out by Fritz Rikko, assisted by Joel Newman and other musicologists, as well as Hebrew scholars, such as Milton Feist. The source was the original publication of 1623 which, according to the custom of the time, was not printed in score but only in parts, and is preserved at the ***Liceo Musicale*** in Bologna. It took twelve years (1953 to 1965) to complete this modern and definitive edition.

The three books, lavishly printed, offer essentially the following material :

Volume I (261 pages): Preface by Hugo Weisgall, Acknowledgments and explanation of procedures, by the editor, Fritz Rikko,  
Facsimile of the original title page in Hebrew,  
Facsimile of a tenor part (***Eyn keyloheyenu***),  
and twenty four out of Rossi's thirty three Hebrew compositions.

Volume II (239 pages) : nine double choruses, one for seven voices, the rest for eight voices.

Volume III (113 pages) does not contain any music. It presents the Hebrew prefaces in English translation, then on one page an "Outline of Events in Rossi's Life" giving hardly more than the years of publication of Rossi's music during his lifetime, and the generally assumed dates of his birth

**Herbert Fromm is probably the best known and also the most individualistic composer creating music for the American Jewish community today. Born in Kitzingen, Germany, he has been in the United States since 1937. He holds a master's degree from the State Academy of Music in Munich and is an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Lesley College in Massachusetts. After 33 years of devoted service he has retired as music director and organist of Temple Israel in Boston. He is the composer of a wide variety of works, for orchestra, organ, the synagogue, art songs, chamber music, cantatas, choral cycles, etc. He is a member of the American Guild of Organists and was a recipient in 1945 of the Ernest Bloch Award. His music is performed extensively, he lectures and writes and continues to compose.**

and death (ca. 1570 - ca. 1630). A more detailed account of Rossi's life and time would have been desirable. This may be found in Peter Gradenwitz' "The Music of Israel", chapter 6, p. 130 to 157, also, though less informative, in Naumbourg's edition of 1877, under the heading "La vie et les oeuvres de Salomon Rossi." The "Outline" is followed by Joel Newman's substantial essay on the style of Rossi's Hebrew music.

The next chapter first explains the transliteration of the text, acknowledging Raphael Edgar's assistance, then goes on to what is called in this book "Text Underlay", seemingly a literal translation of the German "Textunterlage". The problem of fitting Hebrew script, which runs from right to left, to music going in the opposite direction, was solved by the Venetian printers of 1623 in a tentative way. As the facsimile of the tenor part of *Eyn Keyloheyenu* shows, the word *Eyn* is placed under the first note of the music, which must go from left to right, while the word *Keyloheyenu* stands under the last notes of a complete musical phrase. The proper distribution of the syllables was given over to the singers or their leader who obviously knew how to deal with such situations.

In modern Israel, Hebrew texts are put, syllable by syllable, under their notes so that the complete Hebrew word cannot be seen as easily as in the old Rossi edition. The clarity of textual distribution more than makes up for this deficiency.

Page 65 - 67 points out the liturgical usage of the texts. Then comes the facsimile of a page from a prayer book, printed 1557 in Mantua. The refrain of this prayer, recurring ten times, is *Hoshana* "save now", a truly subtle cover for p. 71 - 77, which is a list of mistakes and additions (Corrigenda and Addenda). This list is not always clear and by no means complete. If a new printing should ever come about, one could think of other prayers preceding these pages, such as: *S'lach lanu*, *m'chal lanu*, *kaper lanu* — bear with us, pardon us, forgive us.

The English part of volume III ends with a selected bibliography and a page called "Rossi's Sacred Music in Modern Editions." To my amazement, Isadore Freed's transcription of Rossi's Music (Transcontinental Music Publications, 1954) is not mentioned at all, although it is, as far as I can determine, the most widely used edition of Rossi's music. Freed set himself the task of adapting Rossi's music, in many instances, to different texts, as used on Shabbat Eve in the American Reform Synagogue. He did so with varying success and scored admirably with a charming *L'cha Dodi* drawn from Rossi's eight part setting of *Adon Olam*.

Warning: The *Sh'ma* in Freed's book is not a work by Rossi. Samuel Naumbourg's late 19th century edition of Rossi's Hebrew works states frankly that the *Sh'ma* is not found in Rossi's *K'dusha* which, in Naumbourg's opinion, conforms to the text of the Sephardic version. Naumbourg's footnote reads: "Le Schema Israel ne figure pas dans le Kedouscha de Rossi. Je l'ai compose et ajouté pour compléter l'oeuvre." Going through the new Rikko edition, one finds that other parts of the *K'dusha* are also missing in Rossi's setting. These sections, in Rikko's surmise, were probably chanted by the cantor. We cannot be sure and I am not equipped to decide if Naumbourg's or Rikko's explanations are correct. Comparing Naumbourg with Rikko, it turns out that not only the *Sh'ma* but also other sections were supplied by Naumbourg who was bent on making Rossi's piece fit the Ashkenazic text. Naumbourg's additions (the threefold *Kadosh, baruch k'vod, ani Adonai*, etc.) are easily recognized as the work of another hand.

It is surprising that Freed accepted the Naumbourg *Sh'ma* and did not apply his general procedure of adapting Rossi's music to the text on hand. When I performed the Freed edition, I reconstructed a satisfactory *Sh'ma* by searching through Rossi's works and putting the *Sh'ma* under a strong musical phrase Rossi had composed for another text.

After this necessary digression, back to volume III. Following page 92 one must turn to page 113 and read from right to left until one reaches p. 93. These pages offer the original Hebrew texts, beginning with a facsimile of the title page, then the composer's dedication to his sponsor, Moses Sullam; after that, a lengthy foreword by Leone da Modena, two dedicatory poems, presumably also by Leone, and finally da Modena's Responsum of 1605 (written eighteen years before the appearance of Rossi's music) defending the use of art music in the synagogue. Leone strengthened his defense by short statements of four other rabbis. The very last Hebrew text is a curious copyright notice, providing that nobody could print or purchase this music, in whole or in part, without permission of the author or his heirs, for a period of fifteen years.

The Hebrew of all this prefatory material is kept in an exalted, biblical style, full of direct allusions or quotations from the Scriptures. One example, taken from the copyright notice, may suffice. What today is phrased in the dry legal terms of "All rights reserved", appears like this: "We, the undersigned, decree by the authority of the angels and the words of the holy ones, invoking the curse of the serpent's bite ... etc."

There can be no doubt that Rossi's approach to synagogue music was revolutionary for his time. The Hebrew title page states in forthright language. "Chadashah ba-arets", a novelty in the land, and the extensive foreword by Rabbi Leone da Modena may well be interpreted as an apologia for so daring a step.

Leone da Modena (1571 - 1648), though an unstable character, was a gifted and colorful personality: Hebrew scholar, poet in Hebrew, Italian and Latin, musician, alchemist and gambler, and in spite of his diverse interests, a recognized rabbinic authority. Enough of a musician, he was an ardent admirer of Rossi who, as director of music at the ducal court of the Gonzagas in Mantua, enjoyed European fame.

Rossi, unswerving in his faith, signed himself as Salamone Rossi Ebreo, and was twice exempt from wearing the yellow badge. Urged by da Modena, he published his synagogue music in 1623 but historical events prevented his reform from taking effect. The last of the Gonzagas died 1630, and Mantua, after a siege of seven months, was stormed and ravaged by Austrian troops. Most Jews fled and all traces of Rossi's life are lost in the upheaval of the time.

Rossi's work lay forgotten for two hundred and fifty years, until another synagogue composer rediscovered it. I am speaking of Salamon Naumbourg who was born 1815 in Bavaria and died in Paris 1880, as cantor of the Temple Consistorial. Under the sponsorship of Baron Edmond de Rothshild he issued the Hebrew works of Rossi in 1877. Naumbourg's edition was out of print for a long time, until the Sacred Music Press of New York made it available again in a facsimile re-print, in 1954, with a preface by Isadore Freed.

Naumbourg's enthusiasm and zeal to restore Rossi's music to the synagogue, after a lapse of more than two centuries, was unusual for a man of the 19th century and deserves our full admiration. He had to overcome countless difficulties in his research, and without the sponsorship of Edmond de Rothschild, to whom the volume is dedicated, the project could hardly have been undertaken.

Naumbourg, a contemporary of Hal&y and Meyerbeer, was very much a child of his time. Thus, his volume abounds in editorial liberties, clearly showing an attempt to smooth over what he considered harsh in Rossi's original. Here is one example to illustrate the point:




which is an insipid recasting of Rossi's

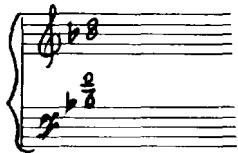


In many instances Naumbourg eradicated the freshness of the so-called "false relation", meaning the chromatic changing of a note not occurring in the same voice. I quote from the famous setting of Psalm 80. Rossi ends a phrase with a G major chord in

this spacing :



and begins the next phrase, a B flat major chord, in this position:



In Naumbourg's transcription, the chord progression appears like

this:



He obviously wanted to avoid the uncomfortable step of a diminished Fifth in the tenor.

But, reversely, there are cases where my ear responds more readily to Naumbourg's version, although the Rikko notation is more likely to be correct. I am thinking of this phrase, also taken from Psalm 80:

Rikko :



Naumbourg:



A unanimous vote of gratitude must go to Naumbourg for transforming Rossi's five part setting of the **Kaddish** into **Adon Olam**, although Rossi's work contains an original **Adon Olam** for eight part double chorus. Naumbourg recognized that this melody (probably based on a traditional Sephardic tune?) with its constant repetition would be ideal for a hymn and that a choral setting of the **Kaddish** would have little practical value. Saminsky, in his Sabbath Service of 1926, took it over, with the unfortunate insertion of an unrelated tenor solo of his own, and a grandiloquent ending which destroys Rossi's noble simplicity. Freed's version is generally better but he also could not resist the urge for an "effective" conclusion. **Adon Olam**, thanks to Naumbourg's keen eye, is today the best-loved and most performed of Rossi's works. Rikko's new edition made us aware of the astounding fact that Rossi did not write this music to the words of a hymn that occupies such an important place in our liturgy.

Taking a general view of Rossi's music, one may safely say that he had absorbed and mastered the best his time could offer, in his words, "the science of music". In professional terms: we are dealing with pure triads, both major and minor, and the diminished triad in its best sounding first inversion, all fitted into modal scales. These basic elements are imaginatively enhanced by passing notes, suspensions, anticipations, imitative entrances, etc. In matters of form, it is apparent that even long pieces are built by- adding up short phrases, which in themselves come to complete cadences, and by repetition of whole sections. The range of the soprano (**canto**) is often low. Transposition is not always the answer since it may take other voices into an unwanted **tessitura**. It may be better to strengthen low soprano parts by adding mezzos and altos.

Rossi's craft is impeccable and it is fascinating to see how he avoids parallel Fifths by a sly crossing of voices. He can write an exquisite three part texture for **Bar'chu**, but is equally at ease with an eight part double chorus. His works for double chorus are harmonically simpler than those for three to six voices, relying on a monumental, homophonic style. We think of large spaces although the synagogue in Mantua was probably a modest place compared with the cathedrals of the time. Rossi uses superb judgment, knowing exactly when to alternate the two choruses and when to bring them together in a full tutti.

Of particular interest is No. 33, a wedding ode, whose text may well have been supplied by Leone da Modena. The secularity of the words, religious connotations notwithstanding, is reflected in the music by playful echo effects of the second chorus which takes



up, note by note, the ending phrase of the first chorus. It is a sort of dialogue where the wife (Chorus II) agrees with her husband (Chorus I), but the two also sing together (measures 115 - 131) and join for a radiant ending (measures 164 - 183). I cannot think of a more festive piece for a wedding ceremony. The text also has some striking turns. Our rabbis, speaking to bride and groom under the **chuppah**, always emphasize the strength derived from the sharing of grief. The old poem phrases it this way: "Protected as his own ewe lamb, she is silent though shearers come. He will come to honor her more than himself. Sheltered under his wing, she shall be lifted up high over his house."

A particular care for words or mood, as in this piece is rare in Rossi's Hebrew works. There are, of course, some notable exceptions :

Psalm 137 — the extraordinary, moving chord progression on the words **gam bachinu**, "there we wept,"

Psalm 118 — the jubilant imitation, cascading through several voices on the words **nagila v'nism'cha vo**, "we will rejoice and be glad in it,"

Psalm 29 — a violent insistence on a short motif, welling up in all six voices, on the words **vaishaveyr Adonai et arzey halevanon**, "the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon."

But such details are exceptional. In **Hashkiveynu**, for instance, he makes nothing of the words **V'haseyr mey-aleynu oyeyv, dever, v'cherev, v' ra-av**, "remove from us every enemy, pestilence, sword and famine." Examples of disregard for specific words are so numerous that one may well call it a trait of Rossi's music. I suspect that this lack, in spite of Rossi's mastery, accounts for his modest place in the general history of music, as Weisgall puts it. Summing up my impression of Rossi's Hebrew works, I see them as a Grand Laudation, lofty and pure. There is no trace of self-pity or even petition.

Most writers on Rossi speak of a "pun" when discussing the title **Hashirim asher Lish'lomo** which is taken from the biblical **Shir hashirim asher lish'lomo**, the "Song of Songs, which is Solomon's". Rossi's title is the deliberate choice of a proud man, in full possession of his gifts, who had no reason to feel inferior when linking himself to a king. He was a king in music, and recognized as such. I prefer to read the title in this sense, and my interpretation is borne out by certain phrases in the composer's foreword and dedication :

“... the Lord, God ... opened my ears and granted me the power to understand and to teach the science of music ... to take the choicest of all as an offering ... I did not restrain my lips but ever increased my striving to enhance the psalms of David, King of Israel ... for discriminating ears ... not for my own glory but for the glory of my Father in heaven who created the soul within me. For this I will give thanks to Him for evermore.”

For further elaboration, I am calling on Leone da Modena's remarks which instruct us in three important points.

1. Rising above the ghetto.

“A rainbow has appeared in our days in this man of knowledge who has written and engraved these songs of praise ... after the splendor of the people of Israel had been dimmed by the passage of days and years, he restored their crown to its ancient estate as in the days of the Levites ...”

2. Pride in the achievement of a Jewish musician whose work measures up in quality to that of the Gentile composers.

“No longer will arrogant opponents heap scorn on the Hebrews, they will see that they too possess understanding, the equal of the best endowed.”

3. Hope in a return to Zion where Rossi's songs would find their rightful place.

“Life, prosperity and every joy to the author, until the Rock (God) returns His faithful ones to His restored sanctuary with songful lips.”

Rossi's works for the synagogue remained superior to all that was written within three hundred years after him. I am tempted to paraphrase a sentence of Deuteronomy 34 (*V'lo kam navi od b'yisrael k' moshe*) to read: “There did not arise in Israel a composer like Salamon” — until the appearance of Ernest Bloch and some chosen ones who prepared or followed his ways,

A last word remains to be said about Hugo Weisgall's preface, found at the beginning of volume I. I am not in sympathy with what Weisgall calls Rossi's “profound misapprehension of what the place of music is in a service as thoroughly individualistic and egalitarian as traditional Jewish worship.” It seems to me that “misapprehension is the wrong word. As pointed out before, Rossi's approach was revolutionary and, as such, aimed against the musical aspects of traditional Jewish worship. It was not misapprehension but a probably unattainable, idealistic goal that motivated Rossi. Rabbinical authorities, less enlightened than Leone

da Modena, more often than not, put up a fence to keep out new currents, fearing that assimilation and with it, loss of Jewish identity, would ensue. This might be true in other areas but our faith is hardly worth preserving, if artistic excellence is seen as endangering it.

A depressing example of what I mean is of our own day. Rabbi David Polish, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, informed his colleagues of the Reform Movement, in a Newsletter of December 1972, that professional singers in the synagogue are questionable, and that the role of the cantor should be *no* more than that of a song leader for the congregation. An attitude like this, if observed, would bring down the music in our synagogues to the level of trivial ditties and camp songs, burying, for who knows how long, an important literature created by Jewish composers who have devoted their talents to the enhancement of Jewish worship.

Weisgall says furthermore: "For the Jewish composer of the twentieth century, Rossi's example poses many significant problems still to be solved." I fail to see a problem in free composition for the synagogue, if the composer draws on the best of his time, as Ernest Bloch did. I am not saying that *Nussach* and traditional modes should not be used. My decided preference goes to composers who in their works alternate free creativity, sparked by the text, with the use of traditional material which, in the hand of a true composer, acquires a new dimension. Only thus can our music match the literary quality of our prayers "for discriminating ears".

Stylistically, there can be no quarrel that Rossi's music is a product of the Italian Renaissance. How Jewish is it? The question of what constitutes Jewish music cannot be answered to everyone's satisfaction. Taking as the sole model what has come to us from the cantorial practice of Eastern and Central Europe is not enough. Without reservation, I say *Dayenu* when, as in the cases of Rossi or Bloch, a Jewish composer writes for a Jewish purpose.

Is there a synagogue musician who has not been exposed to the flea bite of a remark that music in the synagogue should not be a concert? At first blush, this sounds sensible but what is meant is in truth a demeaning of music. Nothing can be good enough to Praise God on High, which, in musical terms, affirms that music in a house of worship should not lag behind the quality of a concert -with one important difference: Sacred music serves another purpose and good composers know it. Listening to artful music in church or synagogue can be a religious experience, but only if a congregation has been educated to this level of hearing. That such

an education was in the minds of Rossi and Leone da Modena can be deduced from what they say in their prefaces and, most strikingly, from the music itself. As far as our present situation is concerned, I have every reason to despair of an improvement in the foreseeable future.

Weisgall's comparison of Rossi with Susskind of Trimberg is not well taken. Susskind, a *minnesinger* in the second half of the thirteenth century, was the only German poet of Jewish birth we know of in medieval times. Only six of his pieces are still in existence. They are completely in the style of his time, and the comparison with Rossi succeeds in this respect. But it breaks down in the matter of Jewish importance. Susskind left nothing of any use to the Jewish community. This is not the case with Rossi whose works for the synagogue are resurrected in our day with increasing frequency.

I think it quite appropriate to take this miraculous phenomenon as an occasion to refer to another miracle quoted on the seal of the Jewish Seminary, and stamped on the three volumes of the new Rossi edition: *V'hasneh eynenu uchal*, "and the bush was not consumed."

## FIRST MUSIC COPYRIGHT — 1623

In the publication of a setting by Salamon Rossi of “The Song of Songs” published in 1623 in Venice, 76 years before the Statute of Anne, the following notice appears:

## A WARNING: NOTICE OF COPYRIGHT

We have agreed to the reasonable and proper request of the worthy and honored Master Salamon Rossi of Mantua (may his Rock keep and save him) who has become by his painstaking labors the first man to print Hebrew music. He has laid out a large disbursement which has not been provided for, and it is not proper that anyone should harm him by reprinting similar copies or purchasing them from a source other than himself. Therefore, having seen the license granted by His Excellence, the CATTAVERO' (may his glory be exalted), we the undersigned decree by the authority of the angels and the word of the holy ones, invoking the curse of the serpent's bite, that no Israelite, wherever he may be, may print the music contained in this work in any manner, in whole or in part, without the permission of the above-mentioned author or his heirs for a period of fifteen years from this date. Nor is any Jew permitted under the terms of this decree to buy from any person, whether he be of our nation or not, any of these works without the permission of the above-mentioned author, who is to indicate by some special mark that he has consented to their sale by another party. Let every Israelite hearken and stand in fear of being entrapped by this ban and curse. And those who hearken will dwell in confidence and ease, abiding in blessing under the shelter of the Almighty. Amen

Venice, Heshvan, 5383  
 Isaac Gershon  
 Moses Cohen Port  
 Judah Arye da Modena  
 Simha Luzzato

**One of the CATTAVERI, a kind of Licensing Board that issued permits for publication**

Notices such as this had appeared for almost 100 years in other works of a religious nature by Jewish scholars with the penalty of excommunication for infringement. The Rossi work, using as it did a biblical text, was deemed to be a sacred work and, therefore, came within the scope of rabbinical authority.

While there is no clear indication that this publication was the only musical work in which this form of copyright protection was included, there probably were very few and those which may have been published have been lost.

There are several interesting conclusions that may be drawn from this fascinating ancient Copyright notice. The first is that it was Rossi's economic interests in his creative contribution which were being protected. It would have been well known that the work was by Rossi and, therefore, his renown as composer was protected. It was his investment in the work (his "painstaking labors" and his "large disbursement") which was the basic concern.

The rabbinical copyright protection on books continued for all sacred Jewish works for a varying period of time until its final disappearance in Eastern Europe just before the first World War.

## MUSIC FOR A CENTENNIAL

MILFORD FARGO

In honor of its Centennial Anniversary, 5733/1973, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has commissioned a collection of new synagogue music—some nine anthems, three solos, and five organ pieces. Most of the works are valuable contributions to music for the Jewish service. Styles and degree of difficulty vary with the splendid spectrum of the composers—from the more established and experienced like Lazar Weiner and Herbert Fromm through the “middle-agers” like Samuel Adler and Charles Davidson to some of their students and the “younger group” like Michael Isaacson and Stephen Richards.

Of the new anthems, three stand out: the two sets of contrasting pieces by Jack Gottlieb and Samuel Adler and the virile setting of Psalm 24 by Alvin Epstein.

***Verses from Psalm 188*** by Jack Gottlieb for SATB with Organ.  
English or Hebrew. Medium difficulty.

Bright and cheerful, “O Give Thanks” (Hodu Ladonai) uses alternating meters, dialogue between men’s and women’s voices (who clap their opening theme as they present and repeat it), interesting key changes, and rhythmic surprises. The andante “We Beseech You” comprises beautiful tunes set in a shimmering contrapuntal texture that is both tender and moving (reminiscent in general style of the Ravel final chorus from “L’enfant et les sortilèges.”) The organ is well integrated into the rhythmic movement, and there are refreshing shifts in tonality. On pages 9 and 10 it might have been



**Milford Fargo** has been a singer, organist, composer, and conductor of sacred music for thirty years.

For the past eighteen he has served as tenor soloist, organist, and director of music at Third Presbyterian, Brick Presbyterian, and Asbury First Methodist Churches and Temples B’rith Kodesh and Beth El in Rochester, New York.

He is presently Associate Professor of Music Education at the Eastman School of Music where he teaches voice, choral arranging, choral literature and conducts the Eastman Childrens Chorus, which he founded in 1966.

He also established the Rochester Chorale which presented the world premiere of “The Last Judgement” by Lazar Weiner and Samuel Rosenbaum. He also conducted a Cantors Assembly convention performance of Shalom Secunda and Samuel Rosenbaum’s oratorio “Yizkor.”

effective to vary the  rhythm in both voices (AB and ST)

by contrasting  against  (moving one on

the second beat), and a written out ritard (doubling the note values) in the last two measures may have stressed a broader ending; but these are minor points indeed in a fine pair of complementary pieces.

*Sh'ma, V'ahavta, Mi Chamocha* by Samuel Adler for Cantor and SATB with Organ. Hebrew. Easy.

Based on an ancient mode, this is a masterful setting combining comfortably the old and new. The lines flow sensibly but not always predictably giving the feeling of both logic and interest. The independent but supportive organ score is well provided. There are three contrasting sections — accompanied, unison a cappella, accompanied — and the “*Mi Chamocha*” is presented in a welcome variety of keys.

*L'Adonai ha-arets* (Psalm 24) by Alvin Epstein for SATB (some divisi) and 4 soli with Organ. Hebrew. Difficult.

“The Earth is the Lord’s” is a sinewy, bold, bright statement. After a short vigorous introduction the organ doubles the voice parts throughout and provides an energetic soaring ending. Rhythmically imitative and moving, the harmonic treatment is dissonant with minor seconds and major sevenths. It needs a capable choir (especially high sopranos and tenors) with a secure pitch sense and some background in holding its own. The texture thins to a solo quartet in the middle, and the creative use of initial themes in the ending makes a powerful and unified work. The final voicing would ensure a stronger fortissimo if all the altos sang the B, and the tenors moved to E. (This would also unclutter the A range for the organ solo line.) The anthem is so good the publisher should share it with Christians by providing an English text.

*Yom Zeh l' Yisrael* by Herbert Fromm for Cantor (tenor) and SATB with Organ. Hebrew. Easy.

This lovely modal tune is well set in the tender first statement and the final contrapuntal one. The strophic repetition of exact key, cantorial melodies, and choral cadences threatens a blandness in the central section; but for groups who dare few risks this is a nice gentle piece.

*Bar'chu, Ahavat Olam, Sh'ma* by Charles Davidson for Cantor and SATB with Organ. Hebrew. Easy.

The first two settings are charming and quiet in a folk-like, traditional feeling with “soft” seventh chords and just enough



tonal surprise to make them tastefully interesting; but the “*Sh'ma*” is less satisfying. Its different style makes it seem “tacked on” from another source, and its sudden new key seems to strain a rather awkward modulation. Would a more related mode help? At least the present ending could be strengthened by repeating the harmonic power of the “*T'olam vaed*” and the “*T'olamim*” used so effectively in those cadences (the flat tenth antepenultimate and minor seventh penultimate chords.)

**Evening Prayer** (Hashkivenu) by Michael Isaacson for SATB with Organ, English. Medium to difficult.

A short choral “wave” introduces the homophonic opening statement, which is followed by a very interesting treatment in the 8/8 section with rhythmic variety and vitality. A vigorous twelve-tone organ theme provides clever counterpoint to a natural setting of the speech patterns. There is an effective bridge between this and the text painting of the word, “evil” (as is any composer who demands the E vowel of sopranos on a sustained high Bb.) The use of the beginning “wave” idea for the Amen is a unifying force in this well-structured piece. (The last 14 measures could be used separately as a benediction response and final Amen.) The young composer has not yet settled on a consistent harmonic idiom, which is disappointing at certain points in the text (like “awaken” on p. 2 and “peace” on p. 3.), but he shows a stylistic promise somewhere between the warmth of Davidson and the vigor of Epstein. This anthem is the only one of the present series issues in 8 ½ by 11 inch format. It would be easier to handle in regular octavo size.

**Adonai Malach** (Psalm 97) by Frederick Piket for SATB with Organ. Hebrew. Easy.

A rushing “Lord reigns, earth rejoice” in which the keyboard writing is dominant. Except in the choral theme for “*Shamah*” and “Or *zarua*” which the accompaniment punctuates effectively, the melodic material is borne by the “organ” (it is really pianistic) while the choral and cantorial assignment is more chantlike. Would the ending seem less abrupt and perhaps stronger with tenutos on the rest and “*kod-*” with an a tempo on “*-sha*” (or written out in 6/4 )?

**Modim Anachnu Lach** by Gershon Kingsley for Cantor and SSAATTBB a cappella. Hebrew. Easy.

This lush texture of divided parts is pleasant in its harmonies of fourths and sevenths. Its simple contrapuntal techniques (two choral voices responding to each other) are effective. Through much of the work the choir (which needs good low basses) accompanies

the cantor-sometimes a rather risky style and not always successful. The anthem fans out from a quiet unison beginning and closes on a quiet octave “fade”. Presenting the tenor part in the F clef on a separate staff seems unnecessarily non-conformist in a modern publication.

*K'dusha* by Stephen Richards for Cantor and Treble Choir (SA) with Organ. Hebrew (Hebrew and English for the Choir). Easy.

The beginning is powerful with rich sevenths and ninths; but, though rhythmically moving, the middle section is weakened by more naive chords. The tonal progressions seem too predictable at the end, and for this reason the “Halaluyah” is less forceful than it might be. The organ writing is not always “handy”, but the vocal lines sing well. Although the compositional techniques are all right, the presence of conspicuously divergent styles gives the work an awkward, almost experimental feeling. It would appear more “of a piece” if a consistent harmonic vocabulary were used throughout.

Among the three solo songs of varying styles the strongest expression is: *Hal' lu et Adonai* (Psalm 117) by Karl Kohn for Cantor (d-e) and Organ. Hebrew. Medium to difficult.

This is an interesting and powerful setting using dissonant chromatic patterns and clusters presented in the rather long organ introduction which sets the mood. Such a well integrated show piece for heroic baritone should have English words for general use.

*Vay'chulu* by Ben Steinberg for Voice (high: d-a or medium: d-f) and Organ. Hebrew. Easy.

There is a traditional flavor to the vocal line which the accompaniment complements very sympathetically. It begins well with a single pedal note, moves through nice vocal lines with harmonious sevenths chords, and relaxes to a logical, pensive ending.

*Mimaanakim* (Out of the Depths) (Psalm 130) by Lazar Weiner for Voice (c-f) and Piano. English (except for the opening Hebrew phrase). Easy to medium.

A master song writer makes artistic use of the piano in an interesting key (Gb) with alternating modes (shofting from Cb to C and Ab to A). This is a natural, speech-like setting of the text rather than a beautifully melodic one. Perhaps the implied *ritard* at the end should be an indicated one to prevent its “just ending”.

With one exception the pieces for organ do not seem to be as impressive as those for the singers. By far the best is:

*Prelude* by David Diamond. Medium.

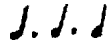
This is a marvelously constructed work based on two main

themes (short but potent), the germs of which are present in the toccatalike introduction. They are cleverly developed throughout the Adagio and superbly expanded for a brawny ending.

**Prelude Op. 57 for Organ** by Julius Chajes. Easy.

A gentle waltz theme is presented in parallel fourths on the upper manual and rhythmically punctuated by an octave and fifth pattern on the lower. The lullabylike melody is repeated on the lower manual in octaves and fifths accompanied on the upper in fourths. The final variation is energized with an eighth note pattern which builds to an active climax. Perhaps expanded rhythm in the final measures would bring the prelude to a grander close. A change from the same structural devices during the simple scale theme of the middle section would have been welcome since the identical sparse harmony in the same key for so long tends to monotony. However, it is obviously put together with deliberate design.

**Prelude of Postlude for a Pilgrimage Festival and Festive Postlude for a Pilgrimage Festival** by Ludwig Altman. Easy.

“Prelude” uses effectively an 8/8 feeling of  over a leisurely 4/4 tempo, but the constant changing of the third of each chord back and forth from major to minor gets rather tiresome as it does in the “Postlude”, which is active but gives the impression of being more busy than purposeful. It also seems to simply halt rather than build to a graceful climax.

**Organ Prelude for Shabbat** by Max Janowski. Easy

Some attractive themes are presented in the opening Moderato and the Allegretto, but the development is exasperating because the piece does not flow. It stops incessantly and emphasizes too many sections, giving a very disjointed feeling. If it could be logically connected, it would be a much better work.

In all, the Union has done service music a good turn by bringing these compositions into being. For quite some time now the artists creating for the synagogue have been those producing much of the strongest sacred music being written today. Many of these centennial pieces add significantly to that repertory. Churches would do well to investigate Jewish sources for their Old Testament settings, and publishers should seriously consider the wide market of Christian needs and provide good English versions of those texts that are now exclusively Hebrew. (A suggestion to Transcontinental would urge closer proof reading of masters to avoid the preventable

errors in their calligraphy. Initial printings of such good new music should be freer of obvious mistakes than those, for example, in Epstein, page 3. C# in the second measure of the bass; Davidson, page 2: metronome marking two measures early in the Cantor line; Isaacson, page 3: unnecessary flats in the last measure of the pedal; Richards, page 2: incorrect rhythm in the right hand of the organ, first measure, last score and, page 7: missing flat in the second measure, third score; Fromm, page 3: C instead of D in Cantor's run in the last measure of the second score; Picket, page 3: no pagination; etc.) Worship leaders should seriously consider these commissions for their services and congratulate the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for sharing its anniversary celebration in such a living and lasting way.

## KOL NIDRE: THE WORD IN ABSOLUTE MUSIC

RABBI ARIO S. HYAMS

Music may be divided into two types: program music and absolute music. Program music seeks to translate non-musical or literary ideas into musical tones. This may be done by imitating known sounds, such as the galloping of horses, the roll of thunder or a bird's call; or by inventing musical phrases to describe persons, places, things, events or ideas. Absolute music, on the other hand, is devoted exclusively to beautiful or effective sound pattern in melodic line, harmonic and contrapuntal combinations, structural forms and tonal quality. Absolute music inspires a vaguer mood in its listeners, and people usually differ more widely as to its significance than they would about the meaning of a successful piece of program music. The ideas in absolute music are tonal or "sound ideas" and may not be translated into words.

Naturally vocal music tends to develop away from absolute music and toward program music. A melody might be added to words simply to beautify them with pretty but irrelevant sounds. But soon this becomes unsatisfactory. We demand that the music enhance the meaning or emotional effect of the words. The words must have an added significance which they would not have had without the music. Thus when sounds are suited to words, they tend to become dependent on them and less absolute.

Synagogue music, therefore, which until recently was all vocal, was largely program music. The Cantor was praised for his ability to *teitch verter*, i.e. "translate the words into melody." It was considered cheap to introduce tunes merely to produce beautiful sounds. That was entertainment. The melody had to express the text.

Furthermore, the development of the musical *nuskhaot* which provided the leit-motifs for the various services, gave the improvising Cantor or composer traditional themes with which to enrich his service and which he used as the basis for showing his ingenuity in melodic development and inventiveness.

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One Synagogue melody, however, inextricably bound up with a specific occasion and definite words, must, I think, be called absolute music in a new sense. Though KOL NIDRE is the melody par excellence for the eve of Yom Kippur, it is impossible to restrict its significance to any particular program of ideas. It is absolute music though set to words. It is no wonder that musicians have been attracted to it for instrumental use. Its words add nothing to its effectiveness.

Therefore, KOL NIDRE, even when it is sung with its words, remains absolute music and is effective over and above the meaning of its words. For the music never did interpret, nor was it intended that it should interpret these words.

What do the words of KOL NIDRE mean?

Standing at the beginning of the Holy Day of Atonement, we are weighted down by the many sins for which we seek forgiveness. How do we intend to obtain this forgiveness? We are going to use words. By the words of prayer we hope to earn God's favor. But how good are these words? Who of us has not at one time or another misused words, spoken what he should not have spoken, or even failed if only in the slightest degree to keep his word? How then can we pray? How can we depend upon the power of words when we have contributed to the weakening of that power? And so, overwhelmed by the importance of words, we seek first to strengthen their power by saying KOL NIDRE ("All vows"). Vows and promises that affect our neighbors cannot be absolved except by the persons concerned. Vows and promises affecting ourselves and God cannot be absolved if they can be fulfilled. And Erev Yom Kippur should be spent, as our fathers spent it, clearing our accounts with our neighbors and discharging our obligations. But after doing all we can in these directions and after asking pardon of our neighbors for what we cannot do, we are still troubled lest somehow, somewhere, we have failed to show proper respect for the spoken word. Impressed by the sanctity of the word, dependent upon its effectiveness for the success of our mission on this Yom Kippur day, in awe and in trepidation, we seek the annulment of all vows which we can no longer fulfill.

The KOL NIDRE ceremony does not end with the paragraph which is sung to the melody we know. It continues with the following verse, the "**Vav**" of whose first word forms the connecting link. In Hebrew, the letter "**Vav**" introducing a word means "and". This verse is really the climax of the ceremony, perhaps not musically, but in its significance. It says, "**Venislakh** ... And the Congre-

gation of the children of Israel and the stranger that sojourneth among them shall be forgiven because all the people acted unwittingly.”

Thus the words of KOL NIDRE need careful thought and interpretation in order to make them meaningful as an introduction to Yom Kippur Eve. The words themselves are only a formula. They are a “dry as dust” legal text. They are so unemotional that any music that would faithfully translate them, would necessarily be uninteresting. But the melody of KOL NIDRE does not seek to translate the words. It is absolute music not only when played on an instrument but even when sung together with its words. It is music drawn by the Jewish spirit from the profoundest depths of infinity and from the loftiest heights of eternity.

Although the melody has nothing to do with the literal meaning of the words, it has served to preserve them against every threat. The KOL NIDRE has been attacked by rabbi and layman, Jew and Gentile, antisemite and philosemite. As a matter of fact, the earliest historical record of the existence of KOL NIDRE is a negative one. In the 9th century, R. Natronai Gaon stated that in Babylonia the KOL NIDRE is not said. At about the same time, R. Amram Gaon, editor of one of the first prayer-books, actually prohibited its recitation and called it a “silly custom.” Anti-Semites have attacked it through the ages as evidence that Jews cannot be trusted to keep their word; although we have already seen, the purpose of this annulment of vows demonstrates the great respect Jews have for the sanctity of the word. Many rabbis have considered the text uninspiring and unfit to introduce this Holy Day. In this spirit they have substituted other texts for use with the same melody, other texts like the 130th Psalm which are unquestionably more edifying. Other prayers both in Hebrew and in the vernacular were suggested. All to no avail. Even the retention of the same text but with some modification or clarification of it has thus far been rejected. The people wanted the melody; they wanted the melody to remain KOL NIDRE and they wanted KOL NIDRE to remain the same KOL NIDRE. So powerful did the appeal of the melody become that it protected the text against even the most reasonable and minor changes.

As already intimated, the text was known in the 9th century. It therefore antedates the Spanish Inquisition. Moreover some of the Sephardic communities, who are much closer to the Spanish Jewish tradition than are European Jews, did not have the KOL NIDRE in their service at all. Thus it is quite certain that the KOL NIDRE did not originate as an absolution of vows for Mar-

ranos who wanted their oaths, given under torture or threat, to be faithful Christians, suspended so that they might rejoin their brethren for this sacred occasion.

There is however another legend which involves the Marranos and concerns not the text but the music. It says that the KOL NIDRE tune originated as a series of phrases which were used as a code, sign and countersign. When a Marrano sought to enter the Yom Kippur service which was being held in secret, he had to pass from one watchman to another. He would chant a phrase and would receive the subsequent phrase in answer. He would then be directed to the next watchman. And so on, until he reached the hide-out of his fellow-Marranos who were risking their lives to be Jews again on this Day of Days.

Though this romantic story is most attractive, it can no more be supported than the Spanish origin of the text. In those Sephardic communities where the KOL NIDRES is said, and it is said in most of them today though with some variation in the text, our melody is not used. They have their own chants and the tunes are much less interesting than ours. The theory is finally refuted by the fact that to the student of comparative music, the European origin of our melody is quite evident.

The legend, however, is interesting for another reason. It assumes that the melody is built up out of separate musical phrases. That this is so has been conclusively proven by Professor A. Z. Idelsohn.

The most famous and best known phrase is the one sung to words: *haba alenu letova*. It is a phrase that occurs elsewhere in the High Holy Day services: e.g. in the opening paragraph of the Amidah on the words, *velohei avotenu* and *lemaan shemo behava*, and in the *Alenu* on the words, *laadon hakol*, etc.

This phrase has rich musical possibilities and it is certainly not sad and gloomy as most people interpret the KOL NIDRE melody to be. If Max Bruch has used this theme as the basis for a second melody in his instrumental arrangement of KOL NIDRE, he would have had a real KOL NIDRE composition instead of a musical hodge-podge. In an essay on "LORD BYRON AND ISAAC NATHAN" I have shown that Bruch's choice of counter-melody may have been due to his error in identifying the opening phrase of our KOL NIDRE melody which Nathan uses for one of the HEBREW MELODIES ("OH WEEP FOR THOSE"). He therefore used Nathan's counter-melody for his arrangement of KOL NIDRE.

The opening phrase of our KOL NIDRE tune was originally sung without words. It was an overture. Sung softly, it sounded



as though the cantor, awe-struck on the eve of Atonement, was timidly knocking at the Divine Gates of Mercy. Such melodic introductions are quite common at the beginning of a service or of part of it. The most famous example is the *Hamelekh*. Such an introduction occurs also at the beginning of the cantor's repetition of the Amidah and another may be used as prelude to *Barekhu*.

In England, many of the Congregational responses, such as *Zokhrenu* and *Mi Khamokha*, are sung to excerpts from KOL NIDRE. Some phrases are used by great composers in the *Unesaneh Tokof*. Probably the most widely used KOL NIDRE phrase in another part of the service (after the first one mentioned above) is found in the *Birkhat Yotser* immediately after the morning *Barekhu*.

Professor Idelsohn continues to analyze each phrase back to its oldest source, namely, the cantillation. Originally these phrases were pieced together in accordance with the taste and preference of the Hazzan. How far the melody had progressed in the 15th century, there is no way of telling. It could not have gone very far yet, because the MAHARIL (Rabbi Jacob Levy Segal of Molin; born in Mayence, c. 1356; died Worms, 1427), who was a musical authority as well as a great rabbi, did not yet know of a set tune for this text. There is a theory that this same MAHARIL did much to form our KOL NIDRE melody, thus working to supply the contribution he himself demanded. We know, however, that by the 16th century, the general style of the tune was already established. At that time, Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe, who was interested in improving the text's literary quality, complained that he was prevented from making any changes because the tune was already so popular that no variation was permitted. But that may have applied to the local musical tradition. For we know that as late as the 18th century we still have four major variations of this melody, though they are all by this time quite similar.

But analyze it as we may, we will never explain this melody and its haunting beauty. Anyone with some training can take a work of art apart into its component elements but only genius could have originally put these parts together into the artistic creation that it is. Fired by a people's piety on the eve of its holiest day, hammered by its throbbing soul as it stood in awe before the Throne of Judgment, reformed and rehammered on the anvil of a long development through the hopes and tears of many generations, this melody has become the JEWISH SONG without the aid of any literary description from its words.

Hassidim have made music an integral part of religion, not something added to it. Singing was not beautifying prayer but a religious function parallel to prayer. Every melody had spiritual significance and spiritual individuality. It was personified. To them the KOL NIDRE tune had practical power and effectiveness. Rabbi Bunam said. "The world of melody is near to the world of repentance. Sinners frequently repent on hearing the melody of Kol Nidre."

Most of us have lost the sense of personal mysticism in religion. To us these melodies tell a national story. In KOL NIDRE we hear the echo of our people's suffering, wanderings and hopes and the promise of their ultimate victory.

But whether it is of the individual soul of the whole people's experience that we think, KOL NIDRE, now for more than two centuries linked to the holiest day of our religious calendar and set as a prelude to Atonement, has become the bridge of sounds between sinful man and Divine Mercy. In the purity of its sounds we can hear the lofty measures of humility and resolution, of repentance, joyous exaltation and vindication. In it we hear whatever the strength of our spirits enables us to hear for as pure sound it is unrestricted in its meaningfulness. It is the music of the Absolute, the song of the Soul seeking its Divine Source, the immortal melody of an immortal people approaching its God.

## SALOMONE ROSSI AND HIS COMPANY OF MUSICIANS

DANIEL CHAZANOFF

One cannot discuss music or any other aspect of Jewish culture during the Diaspora without being aware of the different national settings in which these developed. In this context, Gradenwitz points out two characteristics of Jewish cultural history which are important to keep in mind. First, he says that it "... never continues in one place for more than a certain period of time ...". To this he adds "... while one flourishing center is cut off and destroyed another has already risen into importance and developed interesting traits".\*

About a century after the expulsion of Jews from Spain, we find another great flowering taking place. This time it is in Italy where Jews made contributions to the Renaissance and Baroque in the fields of music, literature, poetry, drama and dance. In musical art "... a considerable number of Jewish musicians distinguished themselves at the Italian courts, the Papal Court included ..." during the second half of the sixteenth century. This trend continued during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Of historical importance is the fact that Italy became the country in which Jews "... first took part in life outside the ghetto".<sup>4</sup>

Research gives the impression that Jewish participation in music during the Renaissance was concentrated at the Gonzaga Court in Mantua.<sup>5</sup> A whole series of Jewish instrumentalists and vocalists are found in the service of the Mantuan dukes from the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup> It was here that Jewish musicians "... were in the public eye ..." more so than in any other Italian court. The Renaissance spirit, encouraged by the Mantuan Court, permeated the Jewish community, and gave rise to various forms of artistic expression. Along with music came participation in the drama.<sup>8</sup> In all probability, the activity in these art forms set the

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stage for Monteverdi's earliest music dramas in Mantua. It should be pointed out that Jewish women as well as men took part in the development of the arts in that city. One notable example was Salomone Rossi's wife, who is known only by her stage name, "Madama Europa". This should come as no surprise since Jewish women have always played an important role in family and community cultural life.

Court records of Mantua indicate that Salomone Rossi organized and led a group of musicians who were probably all Jews.<sup>9</sup> Various authors refer to this group as a band, orchestra, party and company. Some clarification of terminology is necessary here. At the time of Rossi, the terms band and orchestra were synonymous since instrument groupings were not yet clearly defined. In the emancipation of instrumental from vocal music, composers began to write for specified families of instruments. Giovanni Gabrieli, in Venice, was the first to use brass instruments in a cathedral. Only a few years later, in Mantua, Salomone Rossi wrote sonatas calling for instruments of the violin family. But, in either case, these were innovations in timbre using instruments in small groups. A band or orchestra implied a large grouping of instrumentalists, who were available at a particular place and time.

The terms party and company, on the other hand, **may or may not** have been synonymous with orchestra and band. In the tradition of the 16th and 17th centuries, musicians were trained to 'sing or play from the book'; it should be remembered that Rossi entered the ducal service in 1587 as a viol player and singer. Rossi's orchestra included people with a variety of talents who could provide what we now call a **variety show** for entertainment purposes-and would function as needed in various settings.

It was in the realm of opera that Monteverdi used the orchestra as an organized body, for the first time, to provide dramatic power. Here, Rossi's company of musicians provided both orchestral and vocal personnel. Depending upon the need, then, Rossi's company was at once a group made up of soloists, small ensembles and a large ensemble made up of vocalists and instrumentalists. In summary, Rossi's group of musicians was an orchestra (band) when it functioned in the performance of instrumental music. It was a company when called upon to furnish instrumental and vocal music plus any allied art forms such as dance or drama.

So little is known of Rossi's company. Yet, in its day, it achieved fame in Mantua and at other Italian courts where performances by the group were requested. Who were the musicians that comprised it and what were their talents?

### **SALOMONE ROSSI — Organizer and Conductor**

Salomone Rossi is credited with having been the organizer and conductor of the court band in Mantua. Briefly, he entered the ducal service in 1587 as a viol player and singer, published thirteen books of composition from 1589 to 1628 (religious, secular, vocal and instrumental). He organized the earliest school of violinists and was the first composer to specify instruments of the violin family in his publication of 1613. The 33 psalms entitled, *Hashirim L'Shelomo* (The Songs of Solomon), form a landmark in Jewish music history since Rossi was the first to write polyphonic music for the synagogue. However, his universal importance lies in the realm of instrumental music, an area in which he pioneered. One authority, Riemann, refers to Rossi as the most important representative of the new style, i.e., early Baroque instrumental music.

### **"MADAMA EUROPA" — Singer and Actress**

The \*wife of Salomone Rossi, "Madama Europa" is known only by her stage name "... from her creation of the part of Europa in *L'Idropica* ..."<sup>10</sup> a comedy for which Monteverdi, Rossi and other Mantuan composers wrote music. Her name "... appears in the salary lists of the court in 1600 ..."<sup>11</sup> She is referred to as the "... first famous singer since Biblical times".<sup>12</sup> Holde says that her "... prestige as a singer went far beyond the borders of Italy ..."<sup>13</sup> She was "... admired by Monteverdi ..." <sup>14</sup> in whose early operas she sang leading roles. In 1608, when Monteverdi's earliest opera, *L'Arianna*, was performed at court festivities, she sang what was to become the highlight of the opera. After her performance of the famed *Lamento d'Arianna*, a contemporary notice read, "... Understanding music to perfection, she sang to the great pleasure and greater surprise of her audience, her voice being so delicate and sweet, and her simplicity bringing tears to the eyes".<sup>15</sup>

\* (Note: Madama Europa's two sons, bearing the names Anselmo (Angelo) and Bonaiuto de Rossi, establish her as the wife *not* the sister of Salomone Rossi. The Mantuan archives state that Salomone and his sister Europa were children of Azariah de Rossi. According to Sendrey this is an error since Azariah complained that he had no surviving son. Salomone may have been Azariah's nephew.\*)

### **ANSELMO ROSSI — Lute Player and Composer**

Anselmo (Angelo) Rossi was one of Madama Europa's two sons." His Hebrew given name was Asher. Sendrey refers to him as a lute player and composer. <sup>18</sup> His name appears in the court salary lists of 1621. <sup>19</sup> A composition of his for three voices entitled *Aperi*

Oculos *Meos* (I Opened My Eyes) appeared in an anthology by various musicians who served the Mantuan dukes. The collection was published in Venice in 1618.<sup>20</sup> He must have enjoyed a good reputation as a composer to have been included among well-known contemporaries.

**BONAIUTO ROSSI — Musician**

Bonaiuto Rossi appeared in the salary lists of the Mantuan Court along with his brother, Anselmo.<sup>21</sup> Very little is known about his musical talents. Following the tradition of Renaissance musical training, he probably sang and played an instrument such as a viol or lute. His given name Bonaiuto shows a close relationship to the great Renaissance Scholar, Azariah de Rossi; Azariah's Italian given name was Bonaiuto.

**MATTEO ROSSI — Bass Singer**

Matteo Rossi, another member of the famed family, "... appears in a Mantua Court pay list of 1621 as a bass singer ..."<sup>22</sup> His relationship to Salomone has not been found by this writer. He probably played an instrument as part of his musical training.

**JACCHINO OR ISACCHINO (LITTLE ISAAC) MASSARANO-  
Composer, Lutenist, Singer, Dancer and Ballet-Master**

Jacchino or Isaccino Massarano was a man of many talents. Idelsohn says that he "... played the lute, sang soprano and was instructor in acting and dancing from 1583-1599".<sup>23</sup> Above all, he "... was regarded as an expert on choreography and all that pertained to it",<sup>24</sup> His choreographic commissions were numerous, including the following dates:

- 1583-Massarano provided the dances for the performances of *Gli Inguisti Solegni*, a play by Bernardo Pino.
- 1584-He supervised a similar performance in Ferrara when the Mantuan heir apparent visited there.
- 1591-He composed and supervised the Blindfolded Dance (Balletto della cieca) for Guarini's play-*Il Pastor fido*, the most famous play of its day. It was given on the stage of the ducal palace. Music for the ballet was by Amarilli.
- 1602-He was commissioned by the poet Manfredi to supervise the dances for his new 'sylvan' poem.<sup>25</sup> In a letter addressed to "... Messer Isacchino Ebreo ...", Manfredi said "... he was to pay particular attention to the choir's four canzonette, which were to be danced as well as sung".<sup>26</sup>

It is interesting to note that "...Rossi dedicated one of his ballets for orchestra to Massarano".<sup>27</sup>

Isacchino must have been a man of some means. On "... one evening in 1594 he was host to the duke and other members of the ruling family ..."<sup>28</sup> and entertained them in a lavish manner. "Such a social distinction was certainly no small honor accorded a Jewish musician, even in the enlightened atmosphere of Mantua".<sup>29</sup> His place in history, however, supported by authorities, is that of the greatest dancing master of the Renaissance.

### *ALLEGRO PORTO — Composer*

His first name, Allegro, is the Italianized version of his Hebrew given name, Simcha.<sup>30</sup> He belonged to one of Mantua's leading Jewish families; this is proven by the existence of a Porto Synagogue, in that city which was either built or maintained by the family." Evidence of the synagogue's existence is found in a dirge written on the occasion of a fire in the ghetto.<sup>32</sup> The synagogue, ... together with thirty seven Torah scrolls ...<sup>33</sup> was destroyed on June 19, 1610, the date of the fire.

According to one source, Allegro Porto was born between 1590 and 1595. His date of death is given as circa 1625.<sup>34</sup> During his lifetime, he published a number of collections. In 1625 two books of madrigals for five voices appeared. These he dedicated to Emperor Ferdinand of Austria, whose empress was a daughter of the Duke of Mantua.<sup>35</sup> In 1619, he published a collection of musical pieces in the new style entitled *Nuove Musiche* for three voices with basso continuo and chitarone (bass lute). It was dedicated to Count Alfonso da Porzia, chamberlain of the Duke of Bavaria.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to note that two of the poems set to music by Porto were written by the Count.<sup>37</sup> Another book of compositions, entitled *Madrigals for three voices with some arias and a romanesque dialogue* was published in 1619<sup>38</sup> (Sendrey-Music of the Jews in the Diaspora, P. 260, gives the date as 1622).

All of Allegro Porto's compositions were published in Venice. His dedications indicate that he may have spent some time in Germanic courts. The use of a basso continuo and chitarone for accompaniment shows Baroque tendencies in his works. As a court musician, he was probably also a singer and played upon the keyboard or lute.

Porto's reputation as a composer extended beyond his lifetime. Four works of his were included "... in the great musical collection brought together in the eighteenth century by King Joao of Portugal, and destroyed in the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 ...".

A brief reference to him is found in the Vatican Library; it is contained in a collection of biographical notes about composers.<sup>39</sup> This is further evidence of his importance.

***ABRAMO DALL ARPA EBREO (ABRAHAM, THE HEBREW HARPIST) — Harpist, Singer and Actor***

A letter in the Gonzaga archives, dated 1542, mentions for the first time a Jew, known as Abramo dell' Arpa (Abraham of the Harp).<sup>40</sup> In that year, he played the role of the god Pan in a drama at the ducal court.<sup>41</sup> So successful was his performance "... that shortly thereafter he was summoned to Vienna as music teacher to the children of Ferdinand I of Austria ...".<sup>42</sup> However, he soon returned to Mantua and remained in the ducal service for many years. In 1553, he is mentioned "... as one of the musicians drawing a regular salary from Duke Guglielmo".<sup>43</sup> Two years later, in 1555, he was in Rome. There, he was known as "Abraham, the musician of Mantua".<sup>44</sup> During his late years he returned to Mantua where he collaborated with his nephew, Abramino (Little Abraham) dell' Arpa, who "... came into prominence by his side".<sup>45</sup> This was the case on one occasion in 1587, when the two played at a festivity ... on a lake when Cardinal Gaetano of Bologna came to Mantua to baptize a newborn member of the ducal family".<sup>46</sup>

***ABRAMINO DALL ARPA EBREO (LITTLE ABRAHAM, THE HEBREW HARPIST)***

Abramino was the favorite musician of Duke Guglielmo, who ruled Mantua from 1555 to 1587.<sup>47</sup> When the Duke retired, a dying man "... to the lovely seclusion of the palace he had built ...",<sup>48</sup> Abramino had to accompany him, to cheer his last days with music.

***DAVIT DA CIVITA — Composer, Singer and Instrumentalist***

The Gonzaga archives mention a Jewish composer named Davit da Civita, who was born at the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>49</sup> In 1616, he published a collection of seventeen madrigals for three voices, in Venice, entitled *Premittie Armoniche* (Harmonious First Fruits).<sup>50</sup> It was written for alto, basso and basso continue-and dedicated to the Duke of Mantua.<sup>51</sup> As a musician of the court, he was probably also a singer and instrumentalist.

***KLEZMORIM (WEDDING MUSICIANS)***

According to Holde, a number of itinerant wedding musicians also performed at the courts of the Mantuan Dukes. These played the violin, clarinet, double bass and percussion.<sup>52</sup>



We know that the rise of secular music at the courts of the Renaissance made it possible for Jews to gain employment as musicians.<sup>53</sup> Yet, the lack of adequate records makes it difficult to ascertain just who, and how many, this involved. If Salomone Rossi was the founder of the first great school of violinists, then who were the violinists that played in the ducal orchestra under his direction? Since Rossi represents a beginning, he had no reserve of violinists to draw upon. Rather, he had to recruit and teach the group which became the core of his orchestra's violins. In all probability, viol players of the court were encouraged by Rossi to play the violin. Rossi, himself, after all, entered the ducal service as a viol player and singer. At some point, he learned to play the violin and, seeing the possibilities of the instrument, charted a new course for music history.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Peter Gradenwitz, *The Music of Israel* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1949), P. 117.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *op. cit.*, P. 135
4. Alec Robertson and Denis Stevens (ed.), *A History of Music* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., Second Edition, 1962), Vol. I, P. 114
5. Cecil Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959). P. 287
6. *op. cit.*, P. 283
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Gradenwitz, *op. cit.*, P. 136
10. Eric Blom (ed.) *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1954) VII, P. 243
11. *Ibid.*
12. Alfred Sendrey, *The Music of the Jews in the Diaspora* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1970), P. 257
13. Artur Holde, *Jews in Music* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), P. 174
14. *op. cit.*, P. 3
15. Roth, *op. cit.*, P. 286
16. Sendrey, *op. cit.*, P. 261
17. Blom, *loc. cit.*
18. Sendrey, *op. cit.*, P. 262
19. Blom, *loc. cit.*
20. Sendrey, *op. cit.*, P. 258
21. Blom, *loc. cit.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music* (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1948), P. 196
24. Roth, *op. cit.*, P. 284
25. *Ibid.*

26. Sendrey, op. cit, P 256
27. Gradenwitz, loc. cit.
28. Roth, Loc. cit.
29. Sendrey, op. cit., P 257
30. Gradenwitz, loc. cit.
31. Sendrey, op cit., P. 259
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Roth, op. cit., P. 287
36. Ibid.
37. Sendrey, loc. cit.
38. Roth, loc. cit.
39. Sendrey, loc. cit.
40. Roth, op. cit., P. 283
41. Ibid
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Sendrey, op. cit., P. 256
47. Idelsohn. loc. cit.
48. Roth, op cit., P. 284
49. Sendrey, op. cit., P. 255
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Holde, loc. cit.
53. Robertson and Stevens, loc. cit.

CANADIAN COURT ON THE  
LEGAL STATUS OF THE HAZZAN

*Our readers will be interested in the following decision of the Provincial Court of the Province of Quebec, District of Montreal. It deals with the petition of several hazzanim to be permitted to take advantage of the privilege of a tax deduction for their residences as has been traditionally granted to recognized clergymen.*

*While Canadian and American law on this question differ on a number of technical points, it is interesting to note that the courts of both countries now agree that a hazzan is entitled to those tax privileges normally granted all other clergymen.*

**CANADA PROVINCE OF QUEBEC  
DISTRICT OF MONTREAL  
PROVINCIAL COURT**

**February 6, 1974. Present: JUDGE J. RICHARD HYDE**

**IN THE MATTER OF: (Joined Cases)**

**REVEREND SOLOMON GISSER, Petitioner, vs THE DEPUTY-MINISTER  
OF REVENUE OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, Respondent.**

**No. 3605 Ex parte**

**REVEREND HYMAN GISSER, Petitioner, vs THE DEPUTY-MINISTER  
OF REVENUE OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, Respondent.**

**No. 3528 Ex parte**

**REVEREND TIBOR HOLCZER, Petitioner, vs THE DEPUTY-MINISTER OF  
THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, Respondent.**

**No. 3529 Ex parte**

**REVEREND TIBOR HOLCZER, Petitioner, vs THE DEPUTY-MINISTER OF  
REVENUE OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, Respondent.**

**No. 3635 Ex parte**

**REVEREND BENJAMIN HASS, Petitioner, vs THE DEPUTY-MINISTER  
OF REVENUE OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, Respondent.**

**No. 3604 Ex parte**

**JUDGMENT**

**The Court having heard the parties hereto by their respective attorneys, having heard the evidence produced by each of the parties and having examined the proof of record as well as the extensive notes and authorities submitted by each of the parties hereto and on the whole having duly deliberated:**

*The* attorneys for all of the parties hereto have agreed that the essential facts in connection with each of the above-mentioned cases are similar and that the judgment to be rendered in the first mentioned case that is to say in number 3605 Ex parte will apply mutatis mutandis to each of the other cases.

The present appeals by each of the petitioner taxpayers are from assessments made by respondent for various years between 1963 and 1968. They come before the Court by virtue of the Provisions of Articles 170 and following of the Provincial Income Tax Act as in force for the period under review.

The question to be determined by the Court herein is whether or not the functions performed by each of the appellants who are Cantors of the Jewish faith fulfill the requirements of Section 11 (1) (q) of the Income Tax Act. (This section is substantially unchanged in Section 8 (1) (c) of the Income Tax Act 1972 and is reproduced in essence in Section 69 of the Quebec Taxation Act, 1972, S.Q. Chapt. 23). These provisions are made applicable under the provisions of the then Quebec Provincial Income Tax Act and the Court must determine if petitioners qualify for the deductions for their respective residences as therein provided.

The said section **11 (1) (q)** reads as follows:

“SEC. 11. Deductions allowed.

(1) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), b, and (h) of subsection (1) of section 12, the following amounts may be deducted in computing the income of a taxpayer for a taxation year: ...

(q) *Clergyman's residence*. — where a taxpayer is a member of the clergy or of a religious order or a regular minister of a religious denomination, and is in charge of or ministering to a diocese, parish or congregation, or engaged exclusively in fulltime administrative service by appointment of a religious order or religious denomination, an amount equal to

(i) the value of the residence or other living accommodation occupied by him in the course of or by virtue of his office or employment as such member or minister so in charge of or ministering to a diocese, parish or congregation, or so engaged in such administrative service, to the extent that such value is included in computing his income by virtue of Section 5, or

(ii) rent paid by him for a residence or other living accommodation rented and occupied by him, or the fair rental value of a residence or other living accommodation owned and occupied by him, during the year but not, in

either case, exceeding his remuneration from his office or employment as described in subparagraph (i) ;”

After having taken the case under advisement the Court by judgment dated 16 July 1973 ordered the re-opening of the hearing herein in order to receive testimony concerning the extent to which the homes of petitioners were used by them for the general benefit of their respective congregations or communities.

Such additional hearing was duly held on 23 October 1973 and the Court was satisfied as a result thereof that each of the petitioners did in fact keep more or less open-house to receive members of their congregations for general consultations related to their faith and in particular for teaching of the younger members in preparation for their Bar Mitzvah as well as other study groups. It was also clear that each of petitioners lived within short walking distance of their respective synagogues not only for their own convenience but for the convenience of the members of the congregation.

The text of the law as above cited makes no mention of this aspect of the use by a Clergyman of his residence for the use of his congregation and the Court has found no judicial authority which refers to same. On the other hand, two interesting comments are found, the first: “De Boo, Canada Tax Service” commenting on the new text of Article 8 (1) where at the bottom of page 8-151 we find the following:

“The exemption here granted is in recognition of the extent to which such premises are used for the general benefit of the congregation, through meetings, gatherings of various kinds, consultations, and other church activities.

The second reference is found in the Volume published by F. Eugene Labrie in 1965 entitled “The Principles of Canadian Income Taxation” where at the bottom of page 232 we find the following:

“This is a curious piece of legislation both as to its origin and content. It has often been said and, from the appearance of this legislation, said quite forcefully, that a clergyman’s home is never his own meaning of course, that he is expected as part of his duties to hold a sort of year ‘round “open-house”.”

The evidence submitted before the Court dealt at length with the training, education and preparation of Cantors generally in the Jewish faith, as well as the method of their commissioning or appointment by various councils of Cantors. In particular exhibit P-6 was produced being a photocopy of the Commission granted to the petitioner Solomon Gisser by the Cantors Assembly of America dated 26 April 1954. The evidence, the pleadings and the notes submitted by the respective attorneys herein deal at length with all

of these aspects and the Court can see no useful purpose in repeating same herein.

As a result of a study of all of the evidence as well as the submissions and authorities submitted by each of the parties hereto, the Court has reached the following conclusions:

1) It is agreed by all of the parties hereto that all petitioners are in fact engaged on a full-time basis by their respective congregations.

2) It is agreed by all parties that the Rabbi of a Jewish Congregation is entitled to the deduction in question. In addition it would be possible to have two Rabbis who would be entitled to such deduction for one congregation;

3) The Cantor in the Jewish faith, (more properly called Hazzan and in French "pretre officiant") at least in the cases before the Court, does in fact perform many if not all of the functions of the Rabbi with two specific exceptions:

(a) He is not qualified or in a position to interpret moot questions of the Jewish Law; and

(b) He does not normally preach a sermon to the Congregation. On the other hand the evidence indicated that in certain smaller congregations where there might be a choice between having either a Rabbi or a Cantor, in many cases the congregation would choose to have a Cantor without the Rabbi.

This last point was made clear by Rabbi David Feuerwerker who was called as a witness by respondent. At page 46 of his testimony we find the following:

Q — As they say in English, there are two "pulpits," which is to say there are two leaders.

A — Differentiations.

Q — On the one hand, there is the rabbi, and on the other hand, there is the hazzan.

They accomplish entirely different functions, but do the synagogues have need of both as principals in order to function?

A — It is very true, it is very true that this text says in Chapter 52, that when a community is too poor to afford a rabbi and an officiating minister, and since the rabbi is not an exceptionally extraordinary person, it is more valuable that the community pay for an officiating minister because he is more necessary for the daily life of the community. It is he who is the officiating priest, who must lead the faithful, to conduct them in prayer and, consequently, he is essential.

The same witness at the beginning of his testimony describes generally the role of the Cantor and refers to him as "officiating priest". He prefers this expression to the English term "Cantor" and goes on to say: "it is he who creates the office and he is in charge of it and no one can replace him."

The section of the Law with which we are concerned has received little comment in Canadian Tax journals and only 3 reported cases have been cited to or found by the Court. These are:

Guthrie vs M.N.R., (1955) 14 Tax ABC 90;  
 Bloom vs M.N.R., (1963), 34 Tax ABC 206;  
 Attwell vs M.N.R. (1967) Tax ABC 862;

The Law was changed after the Guthrie case was decided and that case as well as the Attwell case are of little help in resolving the present matter.

The respondent relied heavily upon the decision of the Tax Appeal Board in the Bloom case.

In that case the appellant Bloom was described as ritual director of a Synagogue. He acted as assistant to the Rabbi. In many respects, it would appear that the role of this ritual director was similar to the role of the Cantor or pretre officiant. However, the Court is of opinion that two valid distinctions must be made in the present case and both of these appear on the last page of the judgment rendered by the President of the Tax Appeal Board which appears at page 212.

The President cites a definition of the word "Clergy" and states as follows:

"Clergy" is defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as "the clerical order; the body of men set apart by ordination for religious service in a Christian church; opp. to laity". Even disregarding the reference to the Christian Church in the above definition, the evidence in the present case was that the appellant was not a member of a body of men set apart by ordination for religious service in the Hebrew faith".

In this connection the Court is bound to remark that the text of Law with which we are concerned in no part refers to the question of "ordination" but in fact uses the expression "by appointment". The evidence made it clear that in each case herein the Cantors were duly appointed by their respective congregations.

The second distinction which must be made with the judgment in the Bloom case appears in the last sentence of the judgment therein which reads as follows:

"Furthermore, unlike an ordained minister of any religious or-

ganization, including a Rabbi of the Jewish faith, if the appellant ceased to occupy the position of ritual director with his present congregation and reverted to earning his living as an ordinary businessman, he would carry with him no title or designation which would give him any special recognition as the possessor of any special religious qualifications.”

In each of the cases before the Court, the petitioner was in fact duly “commissioned” as a Cantor and even if he ceased representing his particular congregation, he would continue to carry the title of Cantor or Hazzan.

It is a well recognized rule in taxing statutes that the subject is not to be taxed unless the language of the statute clearly imposes the obligation to pay. On the other hand it is equally well recognized that where the wording is clear and without ambiguity there is no question of seeking out intentions; there is no equity in a tax statute; there is no question of presumption. If the words are clear, that is the tax, that is the obligation of the taxpayer. A further principle which constitutes a sizeable difficulty for petitioners herein is that in order to benefit from the provisions of an exempting section in a tax law, one must comply strictly with each and all of the requirements of the section in question.

In this latter connection, the Court feels it useful to cite another extract from “De Boo Canada Tax Service” beginning at the top of page 8.152:

“The apparent complexity of this provision is due to the desire of the legislators to extend its application beyond clergymen in the larger denominations to include the bona fide practical equivalent thereof and yet at the same time to withhold its application from any individuals who are not actually fulfilling an active role in the direct service of their organizations. Accordingly, a compound test is provided and the deduction is allowed only:

( 1) If the taxpayer is

- a member of the clergy or a religious order, or
- a regular minister of a religious denomination

AND

(2) If he is

- in charge of or ministering to a diocese, parish or congregation, or
- engaged exclusively in full-time administrative service on behalf of his order or denomination.”

The words underlined are so underlined by the Court to stress the disjunctive “or” as well as the conjunctive “and” in the last



part of the above citation, where the operative clauses of the exempting section of the act are paraphrased.

Not only is the text of the section in question complex but its interpretation is rendered more difficult by the series of alternative applications as indicated by the repeated use of the disjunctive "or".

As a result the Court feels bound in applying the text of the law to petitioners in the present case, that said text will then read as follows :

'. . . Where a taxpayer is a member of a religious order and is ministering to a congregation . . .'. In addition he is doing so on a full-time basis.

In the opinion of the Court it follows that petitioners are entitled to the exemption provided by said section.

The attorney for respondent objected to the production in the Court record of the Federal Returns and Assessments received by petitioners for the various years in question, and wherein it is admitted that the Federal Authorities allowed the disputed deductions for the taxation years under review. Such objection was based on the fact that the Federal Assessor concerned should have produced the said assessments and should have been present in Court to explain his decision. With respect to the contested Provincial Assessments in the present cases, same were duly filed in the record as well as copies of certain "Notices of Objection". The witness Bourque an employee of respondent explained how she had studied these "Notices of Objection" and had disallowed same after such study. Her testimony however was of little help in resolving the problem posed in the present case. The Court is of opinion that the reasons which might have been given by the Federal Assessors for adopting a different conclusion would equally have been of little help. The said objection is therefore rejected.

In any event the Court feels that the present case must be decided on its own merits, and the decision of the Federal Authorities are not necessarily binding on the Court.

On the other hand the Court has found it helpful to study at some length the position taken by our own Federal Authorities, as well as by the Courts of the United States dealing with similar provisions. The U.S. decisions are reflected in the notes filed on behalf of petitioner. The texts of the judgments contained therein form part of the present record.

As has been stated elsewhere, "These decisions are not bind-

ing upon me by reason of authority, but by authority of reason”.

In view of all the foregoing, the Court concludes that petitioners herein are entitled to the deduction permitted by Section 11 (1) (q) of the Income Tax Act and mutatis mutandis under section 6 of the Income Tax Act of Quebec and further that the assessments proposed by respondent are unfounded in fact and in law.

WHEREFORE, A) the appeal of petitioner Solomon Gisser in case number 3605 Ex parte is granted and the assessment issued against him for the taxation year 1966 is hereby vacated;

B) the appeal of petitioner Hyman Gisser in case number 3528 Ex parte is granted and the assessment issued against him for the taxation year 1967 is hereby vacated;

C) the appeal of petitioner Tibor Holczer in case number 3529 Ex parte is granted and the assessments issued against him for the taxation years 1966 and 1967 are hereby vacated;

D) the appeal of petitioner Tibor Holczer in case number 3635 Ex parte is granted and the assessments issued against him for the taxation years 1963, 1964 and 1965 are hereby vacated;

E) the appeal of petitioner Benjamin Hass in case number 3604 Ex parte is granted and the assessments issued against him for the taxation years 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968 are hereby vacated:

THE WHOLE with costs.

J. Richard Hyde

Mes. Phillips & Vineberg,  
Attorneys for petitioners.

Me. Gaetan Ouellet,  
Attorney for respondents.

The Minister of Revenue of the  
Province of Quebec.

## REVIEW OF NEW MUSIC

JACK GOTTLIEB

L'CHA ANU SHIRA, Sabbath Eve Service for Cantor, Choir, Congregation and Organ, by Ben Steinberg, Transcontinental Music Publishers (TCL 869), \$4, C. 1973. Commissioned by Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshrun, Milwaukee, Wisc.

ZECHER L'MAASEH, Friday Evening Service for Cantor and Choir, by Lazar Weiner, Transcontinental (TCL 890), \$4, C. 1973. Commissioned by Central Synagogue, New York, N.Y.

MEMORIAL CANTATA, for Chorus, Tenor Solo and Orchestra, by Herbert Fromm, Transcontinental (TCL 380: piano-vocal score), \$3, C. 1973.

## I

It has always struck me that most reviews of new Jewish music have been guilty of indulging in a kind of Christian *agape* or love feast. Since many of the reviewers are themselves composers of liturgical music (like myself), one gets the impression that they tread lightly in their evaluations; for, perhaps next time the tables could be turned, and the reviewer will be critiqued by the reviewee. After all, charity begins at home, and eventually one comes face to face with a colleague, all of us members of a very small circle, indeed. It would seem, then, that the ideal critic is one personally unknown to the composer, a totally objective reporter. (Or could the solution be to adopt a pseudonym?) I, for one, am known to the three distinguished gentlemen herein examined; and so in advance I invite them to heap lavish praise upon me when it comes their turn to roast me in print, no matter what I may say about their work.

## II

Ben Steinberg's L'CHA ANU SHIRA is a work of hits and misses. Its strongest selections are the recitative cantorial solos: *V'ahavta*, *Emet*, *Avot*, *R'tseh Vimnuchatenu* and *Shalom Rav* (which has already become an instant classic). But less successful are some of the choral settings: *Bar'chu*, *Sh'ma*, *Yih'yu L'ratson*

In the fall of 1973, Jack Gottlieb was appointed Director of Special Events and Composer-in-Residence at the School of Sacred Music, Hebrew Union College in New York.

and the **Vaanachnu**, which are rather pedestrian. One gets the impression that these latter pieces are really solos, hiding in four-part disguise.

The choral participation in the opening **L'cha Dodi** also seems arbitrary. That is, the choral parts are not indigenous to the concept of the whole. I find the "Hassidic" main refrain even more questionable. Why the stress on the first letter of the word "P'ney"?-surely misconceived. The tonic chord (bar 3) immediately followed by another root position tonic is just plain dull, and could have been easily avoided by going to a first inversion on the downbeat. But the "let's-get-the-congregation-to-sing-along" artifice of it all does not ring true in a work containing such sensitive cantorial gems as the **Avot** and **V'ahauta**. (However, I wish to emphasize that this is a purely subjective reaction, which may well be a minority opinion. The composer, in his Preface, states that he is striving 'to encourage active music roles' for all, including the congregant.)

Like too many other **gebrauch** services (including Steinberg's earlier **Pirchay Shir Kodesh**), this new work contains sections which begin cold, with no starting pitch or characteristic organ introduction (e.g. **L'cha Dodi**, **Bar'chu**, **V'shamru**, **R'steh Vimmuchatenu** and **Yih'yu L'ratson**, where it is particularly needed). Who is to blame for such sloppiness? Is it an editorial error or should we hold the composer responsible? What is the organist supposed to play: the tonic note, the first note of the soprano, a few bars (which?), melody line or accompaniment figuration? This inattentiveness to overall form detracts from the total musical values, and composers, in general, should be more vigilant about such significant detail. Strictly speaking, this observation does not apply to the **V'shamru**, which is a **cappella**. It is a lovely setting-a bit more difficult than the rest, in this basically sight-readable service. Nevertheless, it too masquerades as a solo in the guise of a group piece.

Miscellany :

1. If alternate notes for the cantor are sometimes given (p. 34) why not elsewhere, when needed (p. 6, which goes to high G) ?
2. The bunching up of the "**Boi v'shalom**" section, p. 10, could have been rectified by eliminating the empty organ bars, and marking the section **a cappella**.
3. Is the F, organ left-hand p. 13, first beat of the second system, really intended by the composer?
4. If the choir performs **Emet** (p. 17)-a refreshing, needed setting, leading into a delightful Mi **Chamocho-they** should be sure

to perform the **R'steh** since the same tune reappears (p. 32), making for a musical link.

5. "**Beyn-ni**," p. 24, seventh bar, is an incorrect transliteration.

6. On p. 27, third system, a D-flat is missing on the last syllable of "**u-va-ruch**."

7. Why no organ phrasings throughout?

8. If the organ duplication of the voices in **Yih'yu L'ratson** (p. 39) is for rehearsal only, it should have been in cue-size notation.

9. The symbolism, at the conclusion, of the D octave on the syllable "**-chad**" is obvious to the eye; but it could have been made obvious to the ear by one more choral repetition, on the same note, for the full word "echad."

Despite its mixed bag attributes, Steinberg's new service is a solid, first-rate contribution to contemporary synagogue music, and its extended solo pieces surely must rank among the finest of their kind.

### III

The title of Lazar Weiner's ZECHER L'MAASEH is appropriate in several ways. First, it "recalls the accomplishments" of the century-old Central Synagogue, where the composer has served as Music Director for more than forty years. It also "remembers the deeds" of our martyrs, with the choir intoning the familiar folk "Ani Maamin", near the end, under the **Kaddish**, followed by a moving **Closing Sh'ma**, "for (in the composer's words) the worshippers to remember our credo." This emphasis on commemoration is reinforced musically throughout by the **leitmotif** use of the traditional Sabbath **nusach** of **Adonai malach**. Stated at the outset, in an unusual organ prelude **cum** choral vocalise, the **motif** reappears in the **Mi Chamocha** (but varied), in the organ meditation (p. 21), bitonally transformed, subliminally in the **Kiddush** and directly in the **Yism'chu** (p. 33), On **That Day** and the final organ bars.

Whereas Steinberg's organ writing is mostly a harmonic mirror of the chorus, Weiner's is far more assertive. This is both its virtue and a distraction. As in other Weiner works, the keyboard figurations often lead independent lives sometimes enhancing the texts, but elsewhere sounding like just so much busy-work, not organic organ writing. Take, for instance, the wistful displaced octave motive that ushers in the **V'shamru**. At first, one wonders what possible connection this chromatic instrumental line could have with the non-chromatic vocal line (practically all "white" notes). For this listener, at least, its separateness suggests a kind of celestial finger pointing

downward, illuminating the Biblical commandment of the text. It is most touching.

On the other hand, the eighth-note activity of the organ in ***Mi Chamocha*** is like a Baroque “sewing-machine” accompaniment, whirring away with no discernable relationship to the vocal components. The writing, by the way, could be simplified by indicating 8’ and 16’ stops for the right hand, with the left hand playing the upper voice of the pedal (“double-stops” in organ pedals always sound muddy). Why the perverse dissonance on the women’s “***feleh***” (p. 11)? When the same major 7th, appears on the last syllable of “***baruch***” in ***Vaanachnu*** (p. 35), we feel the rightness of its voice leading. Similarly, in the ***Closing Sh’ma*** the 7ths in the organ are needlesharp, alerting the listener to the over-all poetic intention. But at the ***Mi Chamocha*** cadence, it merely grates the ear. One other thing about this piece, which surprises me, is the melodic phrase on the top of p. 10 (also found at the start of the ***Sh,ma*** and in the ***Yism-chu***). It is almost an exact duplication of the ***Mi Chamocha*** theme in Raymond Smolover’s rock service **EDGE OF FREEDOM!** Eighth note supportive motion **is** justified in the “plague” section of ***Hashkivenu*** (p. 17), where it generates terrific excitement. Here the drama of the text is intensified, spilling over into sixteenths at the ***molto appassionato*** (p. 19). Although it does not use the entire prayer text, the setting is artistically viable and convincing. I am not sure the same can be said of the ***Yih’yu L’ratson***, where archaic “organum” parallelisms accompany the soprano solo. The male choir takes over this almost monotone role (the organ dropping out) as a background to the women, in a quasi-dirge on “May the Wads.” The musical effect is curiously acerbic, almost antithetical to the text.

However, the ***Kiddush*** banishes all previous severity, returning to a more familiar style, easy flowing, warm and affectionate. It even has hints of a blues flavor. (See, also, the fourth bar of the organ in ***Vaanachnu***, a typical blues phrase if ever there was one). The ***gcmutlichkeit*** continues in the unaccompanied ***Yism’chu***, labeled Hassidic (for popular consumption?). A volunteer choir could probably perform this effectively (especially since it does not modulate), but basses beware-there are intervallic traps.

All in all, this is an important work by an elder statesman of synagogue music, meriting our respectful attention and, ultimately, our gratitude.

#### IV

Something else. There is a current trend to transliterate, from Sephardic Hebrew, the ***tseyreh*** vowel (. .) as “e” alone, making the

sound equivalent to the segol (· ·), as in “met.” However, when the *tseyreh* is followed by a *yud* (‘ ·) it becomes the stronger diphthong “ey,” as in “they.” We find this principle followed in both of these recent publications. If this practice becomes the rule, I hope that the segol could be distinguished from the unsupported *tseyreh* by a transliteration of “eh.” Actually, the sound of the *tseyreh* alone lies somewhere between “eh” and “ey;” but I doubt that most of us non-Sabras can match it. In any case, it will take extra effort to change years of habit in pronunciation, especially when interior rhymes are negated (elg. “*Hashkiveynu Adonai eloheynu*” versus “*Hashkivenu Adonai eloheynu*”).

## V

Like Weiner, Herbert Fromm has been dubbed THE Dean of American Synagogue music. With his new MEMORIAL CANTATA, Fromm has given us a substantial and noble work that can be performed outside of the synagogue, at secular events, as well as at Holocaust observances and other solemn anniversaries. But it is not just a *piece d’occasion*; any choral concert would be handsomely enhanced by its inclusion. Its four movements, in English, are taken respectively from: Samuel II (“How are the mighty fallen”) Job (“Man that is born of women”), Ecclesiastes (“Vanity of vanities”) and Ben Sirach (“Now let us praise famous men”). These are dignified, sober words, craftily selected. Yet a quizzical thought comes to mind. Will the Women’s Lib movement welcome the juxtaposition of David’s lament over Jonathan: “. . . thy love to me, passing the love of women” (end of Movement I) next to “man that is born of woman is . . . full of trouble” (the beginning of Movement II) ?

The influence of Paul Hindemith is keenly felt throughout the entire Cantata. Fromm studied with Hindemith, in 1941, at the Berkshire Music Center. The illustrious teacher was famous for molding his students into facsimiles of himself; and Fromm did not entirely escape this powerful force. It is evident in his Friday Evening service of 1943, ADATH ISRAEL, and, here thirty years later, it still is pervasive. But Fromm sustains and reshapes it with his typical artistic integrity and economy of texture. The Cantata’s vocal writing is basically simple and direct in its declamation. (But is not the stress on the second syllable of “Gil-bo-a,” p. 5, rather than on the first?) Only the relatively dense fugato section of the last movement momentarily befuddles the choral clarity. The tenor solo line is more recitative than aria, but effective nevertheless.

One objection, however, in an otherwise beautiful publication:

the editors have seen fit to put the solo line *under* the choral parts, whenever they appear simultaneously. This is contrary to the usual practice, and it is irritating to hunt for the location of the solo line in several places.

As in Hindemith, much of the orchestral (to be accurate: keyboard) writing is neo-Bachian-exquisite contrapuntal threads weaving in and out of the vocal fabric. The main motive in the second movement (a rising major second followed by a falling minor third) is strikingly akin to a leading motive in the fourth movement of Lukas Foss' A PARABLE OF DEATH of 1953. (There are other connections.) Even here, however, there is a larger controlling factor; for Foss, too, in his early works at least, was a satellite revolving around the Hindemithian sun. But there are good and bad influences; and in this instance Fromm has created a masterful "requiem" of the first rank, one that can stand magnificently alongside any comparable composition by his mentor. It deserves to be widely performed, beyond the sphere of the American-Jewish audience.



## A NEW WORK RECORDED

PINCHAS SPIRO

## PSALMS OF ISRAEL: A HALLEL ORATORIO

by ISSACHAR MIRON

Stereo Recording performed by Beth Abraham Youth Chorale

Hazzan Jerome B. Kopmar, Director

Hazzan Louis Danto, *Soloist*

(The Musical Heritage Society, Inc. MHS 1704)

The good news is that Hazzan Jerome Kopmar, after an interruption of several years, is back in action. He has again commissioned a new work for children's choirs and again performed it in a superlative recording.

In his new position in Dayton, Ohio, he has repeated the miracle that he had created earlier in Akron, namely, organizing and training some sixty youngsters and turning them into a musical ensemble that is, beyond doubt, the finest of its kind in the country. Hazzan Kopmar has also not lost his ability to communicate his enthusiasm for youth choirs to the members of his congregation and to obtain their all-out support. Last year, to celebrate Israel's 25th Anniversary, his congregation provided him with funds to commission Issachar Miron to compose a major work especially for his Youth Chorale. The result of this commission is "Psalms of Israel: A Hallel Oratorio". The premiere performance of this work, last May, was taped and an excellent stereo recording of this live performance is now available to the public. In addition to the inspired group of youngsters directed by Hazazn Kopmar, this gem of a recording also has another great asset, the incomparable Hazzan Louis Danto as soloist.

Since the work was commissioned to celebrate Israel's 25th Anniversary, the choice of both the composer and the subject matter were most appropriate. Issachar Miron is one of Israel's most respected composers, and the theme of thanksgiving of the Hallel text is a logical one.

Pinchas Spiro is the distinguished hazzan of Tifereth Israel Synagogue of Des Moines, Iowa. He is the author of a text on haftarah cantillation, "Haftarah Chanting, Jewish Education Committee Press, New York, and a number of widely used services for Junior Congregations and Junior Hazanim.

The Hallel Oratorio is scored for a high tenor soloist, a three-part youth choir and an instrumental ensemble consisting of two cellos, one bass, a flute, a trumpet, a clarinet, piano and organ. Rather than base his composition on tradition Hallel *nusach* or on familiar Israeli motifs, Miron chose to imbue it with his own personalized style and to be unrestricted by any outside considerations. It is a work of considerable stature. It has a great deal of melodic and harmonic interest as well as a variety of moods and tempi. Some of the selections are ecstatic and dance-like, moving along at a furious pace; others are beautifully lyric and poetic. It must be pointed out that this is a complex and rather difficult work, probably too difficult for most youth choirs, but it is not beyond the capabilities of this rare group. In fact, the work serves as an excellent vehicle for this Youth Chorale's virtuosity.

The fine performance of the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale in its initial debut is clear evidence of its conductor's increasing and maturing ability. It is hard to imagine that a group of ordinary youngsters, culled from a small Jewish community, could perform such an intricate work with such clarity, confidence, enthusiasm and such apparent ease. But hearing is believing. Particularly effective, really stunning, are the several a cappella selections. Just as he had done with his previous choral group in Akron, Hazzan Kopmar has again trained his new group in Dayton to produce a lovely and controlled sound—a sound that emphasises the natural quality of the children's voices. The secret of his success is still the small sound—innocent but precise. The diction is clear and the attacks are clean. The total effect is most satisfying. The choice of Hazzan Danto as soloist was a particularly fortunate one. His lovely, smooth and effortless style of singing is a perfect match to the clear and innocent sound of the children. Together, they spin a magical spell.