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AN ANALYSIS OF SALAMONE ROSSI'S SONATA DETTA LA MODERNA (16131)

Da. DANIEL CHAZANOFF

Included in Rossi's Third Book of variation Sonatas, Sinfonias, Galliards etc; dated 1613, is a work with a curious title. The Sonata in d minor which Rossi subtitled, "detta La Moderna" (called The Modern) is the earliest example of a four section sonata. Its slow-fast-slow-fast format forms the beginning of what was to become the 'sonata da chiesa' (church sonata) by the middle of the 17th Century.

On first glance, from a 20th Century perspective, the work appears to be a sonata with four distinct movements. Yet, when one considers the time in which it was written, it becomes a variation sonata containing four different moods within a single movement. Regardless of which interpretation is acceptable to the reader, Rossi was far ahead of his time in 'La Moderna'. The first approach, as mentioned before, would lead us to the 'sonata da chiesa' while the second would point still farther ahead to the changing moods within individual movements of the late Beethoven string quartets, some 200 years later. One should remember that sonatas, by definition, at the time of Rossi were individual movements to be sounded on instruments in contrast to cantatas, which meant works to be sung by voices. In that sense, also, the Sonata detta La Moderna is a variation sonata.

structure

While the work is only 41 measures in length, without repeats, it nevertheless contains four distinct sections as follows:

1. Grave — measures 1-12
2. Vivace — measures 13-23
3. Largo — measures 24-26
4. Presto — measures 27-41

With repeats, this sonata's length is doubled. Since phrases and cadences during the early Baroque were short, repeats were

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This is the fifth of a series of articles on the music of Salamone Rossi. Dr. Chazanoff's studies on Rossi were made possible by a grant from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

traditionally used to enlarge musical structures. In this case the first section, Grave, is marked with a repeat while the Vivace, Largo and Presto are tied together as a unit with a repeat sign. If any logical explanation can be found for Rossi's choice of repeats, the answer may be found in the character of the four sections. The Grave is slow and serious, resembling a sinfonia which may have been intended as an introduction while the second, third and fourth sections resemble dance forms of the period. The Vivace resembles a lively galliard, the Largo a slow, stately pavan and the Presto, a fast fiddle tune or giga (gigue). But an even more convincing argument for the second, third and fourth movements being tied together is found in the harmonic relationships of the three. The Vivace, in the tonality of D, ends on a D Major chord which becomes the V. or dominant chord of G Major, the key of the Largo which follows. In the same way, the Largo ends on a G Major chord which becomes the dominant chord of the Presto which is in the key of C Major.

Tonality

The four sections are in the following keys:

1. Grave — d minor
2. Vivace — begins in d minor and ends in D Major, a practice of the Baroque.
3. Largo — G Major
4. Presto — begins the C Major and modulates into D, with the final cadence closing on a D Major chord.

Chromaticism

Of the four sections, only the Largo is void of chromaticism; since this section is only three measures in length it has only enough time to establish the key of G Major. Rossi's use of chromatic change as it relates to tempo is interesting; the slower the tempo, the more chromatic change while the faster the tempo the less chromatic change. Chromatics appear six times in the Presto, ten times in the Vivace and twenty-nine times in the Grave section. Obviously, Rossi used chromatics to add interest in the slowest moving section where the ear could absorb more frequent changes in tonality.

Chromaticism also varies the tonality from Major to minor by raising or lowering the third of the tonic and dominant chords in the first and second sections (Largo and Vivace). In the fourth section, marked Presto, Rossi uses chromaticism to modulate from C Major to D Major, the closing key of the sonata.

Instrumentation

The Sonata detta La Moderna is unique in still another way. Rossi specified two violins and basso continuo as his instrumentation for the book of instrumental compositions of 1613. From this beginning the violin became the standard instrument for Italian Baroque composers in the writing of sonatas. Traditionally, trio sonatas are played by four instruments i.e. two violins, a keyboard instrument and a cello, doubling the bass line of the keyboard.

In this sonata, the ranges of the parts are as follows:

EX. 1

EX. 1 shows the ranges of the parts in a musical score. The parts are:

- VLN. I (OCTAVE PLUS A FIFTH)
- VLN. II (OCTAVE PLUS A FIFTH)
- CELLO (OCTAVE PLUS A SIXTH)
- KEYBOARD (3 OCTAVES PLUS A FIFTH)

The ranges point out the similarity of instrumental and vocal writing at the beginning of the 17th Century. It should be pointed out that even the great Arcangelo Corelli, in the latter part of the 17th Century, believed that the violin did not sound right above the third position.

Texture


While Rossi was among the first, if not *the first*, to employ monody (the figured bass), he did not abandon the Renaissance techniques of canon (imitation) and counterpoint (melody against melody). Thus, we find both homophony and polyphony in 'La Moderna'. A clear example of monody is found in the first four measures of the Presto section's keyboard part which exhibits block-like chords:

EX. 2

EX. 2 shows the first four measures of the Presto section's keyboard part, exhibiting block-like chords.

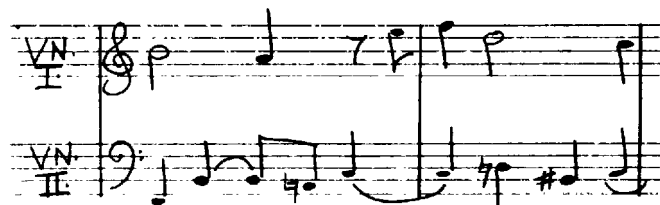
Canon, the strict imitation of a musical subject or theme is absent from this trio sonata. Rossi, however, does make use of rhythmic imitation as illustrated by the two violin parts in the opening two measures of the Grave section:

EX. 3



The composer evidently intended a dialogue between the two violin parts rather than a fugal setting. This is reinforced in the third and fourth measures when, after the initial rhythmic imitation, the two parts carry on counterpoint (the two melodies sounded simultaneously) :

EX. 4



Rhythm

The interrelationship between rhythm and texture has already been pointed out – and, also the inverse relationship between the tempi of the four sections and chromatic change. A rhythmic technique used by Rossi to compensate for the limited range of the parts is syncopation (accents on weak beats) which is found in measures 31 through 33 of the second violin part:

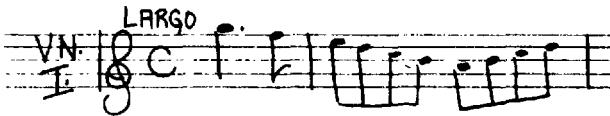
EX. 5



Melody

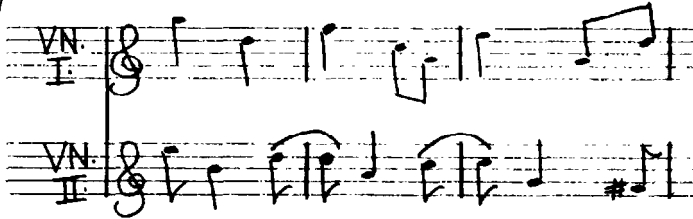
In the emancipation of instrumental from vocal music, early Baroque instrumental melodies display scale-like vocal and chord-like instrumental characteristics. Since playing ranges were limited, crossed-voices were used to add melodic interest. A scale-like vocal passage is found in measures 24 and 25 of the first violin part:

EX. 6



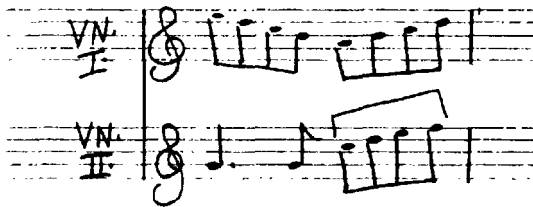
Measures 31 through 33 display chord-like instrumental characteristics in both the first and second violin parts:

EX. 7



An example of crossed-voicing is found in measure 25 where several notes in the second violin part are higher than those of the first violin part:

EX. 8



In conclusion, the Sonata 'detta La Moderna' provided impulses which influenced the works of later composers. Perhaps, the most striking feature is found in the slow-fast-slow-fast format of its structure which led to the 'sonata da chiesa' by the middle of the 17th Century. Looking still farther ahead, to the 18th and 19th Centuries, the concept of a sonata as a four movement work had its beginnings in this composition by Salamone Rossi.

1. Salamone Rossi. "Sonata in d minor detta La Moderna," *Hortus Musicus* 110, (Kassel: Barenreiter)

**“A CANTOR TRAVELS WESTWARD”
FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HIRSCH WEINTRAUB**

Ever since 1967 a vast collection of books and musical manuscripts have been kept at the national library in Jerusalem. This collection of music is entitled “The Jacob Michael Collection of Jewish Music”. Upon superficial examination of this rich collection, the viewer becomes more and more convinced that here is buried a treasure which could provide musicologists and historians enough material for generations of research. This material could conceivably open many roads of deeper understanding with our musical past as well as uncovering many worthwhile compositions. These documents are somewhat lifeless, as though one were reading an encyclopedia of names. However to the discerning reader and musician we recognize a specific period in history of Jewish music with clear distinctive musical characteristics. These musical remnants are rough drafts of musical compositions written by Cantor Hirsch Weintraub (1881-1913). The historic documents themselves deal with his own life; the son of a cantor who, from a congregation in Dobno in Russia seeks to travel to countries where Jews have completely assimilated. We are witness to the change in his musical writings and style as he is influenced by other cantors. He seeks a new musical momentum and success. The many pages of rough manuscript are obviously written for the purpose of requesting an honorary degree from the government of Prussia. It is at this point that we end the short biography.

The historical value alone justifies the publication of this document. It was translated into Hebrew with the permission of the owner of the original paper from the Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, and the holders of the Michael’s Collection in the National Library in Jerusalem. M. S.

My father, Solomon Weintraub, may he rest in peace, was a very famous cantor who was blessed with a tenor voice, high, pleasant, and rich in quality. He possessed a naturally beautiful color-

Translated and edited from the Hebrew by Shoshannah Igra and Hazan Morton Shames from the publication “Tatzlil” (The Chord) September, 1969, the Haifa Museum and Amlil Library, H Struck House, P.O.B. 5111, Israel.

atura, and was also inately musical.' He was a cantor in the great synagogue in Dubno in the district of Volallin, Russia. It was here that I was born in the year 1813 and not 1811 as it was originally recorded in books. He was known as "the Red Head" by all his Jewish brethren, who still call me that name, even in Berlin. 2

My father made sure that I started studying the violin at the age of 7 and by the time I had reached 12 years of age I had already acquired a great facility in playing that instrument. By the time I was 14 years old I had already played many variations of Maisder and could also play the concerto in a minor by Rhode. 3

After the death of my father in 1830 I was appointed his successor as cantor in Dubno, 4 but soon left to concertize with some other cantors. 5 We travelled first in Russia, and then in Galicia, Tamepol, Brodi, Lvov, and from there to Hungary. I finally arrived in Vienna where I remained for four months. In November of 1836, I travelled to Prussia and performed with great success in Breslau in the congregation of Kampan in the region of Pozen. 6, 7 Because I could not get Prussian citizenship I was forced to remain here for 10 months. I then travelled to Leipzig and performed during the high holy days with great success. Then on to Frankfort where several merchants from Berlin had implored me to go. I arrived in Berlin in October of 1837 and conducted two Sabbath services accompanied by a string quartet. The congregation accepted me with great excitement.*, 9 Besides singing, I also appeared as violin soloist with the Philharmonic with great acclaim from the critics who wrote that my playing brought back memories of Paganini. I remained in Berlin for five months and composed many musical settings for the Psalms according to the rules of harmony. The congregation was especially impressed by the fact that a cantor from Russia was capable of performing such a beautiful service. I **WAS also** the first cantor to introduce to the congregation a choir that was trained in the singing of beautiful compositions.¹⁰ During my stay in Berlin I also became aware that one must study composition professionally and therefore I immediately started studying with my first teacher, Mr. Bohmer, who was a musician in the Royal Theater. I remained in Berlin for five months, and was a good student, and could repeat by heart all that I learned from my teacher, Mr. Bohmer.¹¹

Many important people of the synagogue in Berlin were eager to write references for me to the Baron Von Rothschild in Frankfort. Amongst them were influential merchants and a well known banker, Samuel Beichrader. The newspaper in Frankfort announced

my coming but I did not go there; instead, I went to Breslau, Pozen, etc. In August I arrived in Konigsburg and after I auditioned I was accepted as cantor. Since I already was famous the synagogue was filled every Sabbath with congregants as well as Christians. After a while I organized a choir.

The recommendations I received in Berlin were destroyed in a fire in which I also lost my home.

Here in Konigsburg I continued studying composition with a genius, Mr. Sobolewski.¹² I thoroughly learned double counterpoint and fugue and I practiced a good deal. I wrote many compositions under his supervision, and later on wrote independently; however, he continued to be my advisor as long as I stayed here.¹³

For a few years (as long as Sobolewski was conductor) I played in the theater in order to acquaint myself with various operas. Since the Musical Academy was founded in 1843 by Sobolewski I remained a member of the orchestra, and I learned many partitas by Mozart, Beethoven and others.

In 1859, I published my composition "Songs of the House of God" and Mr. Sobolewski who was then working in Barimen's Theater, wrote a very warm critique for the magazine "Leipziger Neue Zeitschrift fur Musik, 1859."¹⁴

Therefore, I submit that since I was the very first cantor in Prussia not only to sing with a choir compositions according to the rules of harmony, and according to the rules prescribed for synagogue worship, and that I also was the very first cantor to publish a book of synagogue music. I herewith request that I may be worthy and privileged to earn the title of Royal Music Manager.¹⁵

NOTES

1. **The intention here is to emphasize the understanding of the artistic music of Europe as opposed to the traditional music of a cantor. Solomon Weintraub's style is demonstrated well in the book "The Songs of Solomon" which were published by Weintraub, the son. Dritter Theil des Schire Beth Adonai, herausgegeben Von H. Weintraub: Grosstentheils componirt von meinen vater Solomon Weintraub, genannt Kaschtan, Konigsberg 1859.**
2. **It was the custom among the Ashkenazic congregations to bestow nicknames upon their favorite cantors.**
3. **Joseph Mayseder (1863-1789) was one of the greatest violinists of Vienna between the years 1810-1830. He wrote 20 booklets of variations for the violin. Pierre Rode (Paris 1772-1830) was violin soloist for the Czar in Petersburg (1804-1808). He composed 13 concertos.**
4. **He was then 17 years old and the professional slogan seemed to be "a cantor and a son of a cantor."**

5. Weintraub joined the group of so-called wandering cantors when he was 21. Usually such a tour was reserved for well known cantors who could return to their own congregations. Weintraub had no such congregation and was only trying his luck.
6. He probably became familiar with the works of Solomon Sulzer.
7. "Kampan" was in those days an important community where rich merchants and learned Jews lived.
8. The great Jewish merchants from all over Europe came to Leipzig which encouraged the growth of many synagogues and also encouraged many cantors who could find a position there.
9. These performances are mentioned in many books in Berlin. He was one of the first cantors who performed with his choir in the synagogue run by an affluent industrialist Levinstein, and then in the great Synagogue Heiderentergasse. Since this was a first, it attracted attention. In the congregational records it states that before the service he played several pieces of Rossini on the violin with unbelievable perfection.
10. Weintraub's performance prompted the Jews of Berlin to establish a musical group of singers of men and boys. This job was given to Asher Lion, a cantor and representative of singers. The job was finally put into the hands of Louis Lewandowski (1839).
11. This was apparently the violinist and composer Karl Bohmer born in 1802, who played the viola in the orchestra of the royal theater.
12. Fredrick Edward Sobolewski (1808-1872) Polish was a violinist and conductor, and a well known musical figure in Kongisburg.
13. In 1854, Sobolewski received a position in Bremen and in 1859 he emigrated to the United States.
14. A respectable music magazine founded by Robert Schumann, Sobolewski published critiques under a pseudonym, J. Fiske. Weintraub's book attracted much interest among certain musical circles, for example Carl Eugil, *The Music of the Most Ancient Nations* pg. 343-346, London 1864 (reprint 1929).
15. He received this title in 1873. In 1862, he was given a small honorary coin made of gold. Since the writer does not mention the coin, we may assume that he wrote that request after 1859 but before 1862. As a result he received the coin instead of the title. It seems that Weintraub made his request after the establishment of the kingdom of Germany in 1871 and it was granted two years later. He died in 1881.

HAZZANIM AND HAZZANUT

PINCHOS JASSINOWSKY

Pinches Jassinowsky, cantor, composer, author and poet, was born in the Ukraine in 1886, son of a hasidic family of considerable prestige. He attended cheder to the age of fourteen and began to display musical talents at an even earlier age. He had a fine voice and sang in a number of synagogue choirs, including that of Pinchos Minkowsky. At twenty, he entered the Royal Conservatory in St. Petersburg and became the assistant choir director of that city's great Central Synagogue.

He graduated in **1915** and visited Europe's principal cities lecturing on Jewish music. He came to America in 1916 where he was called to be the cantor of a St. Louis synagogue. In 1920, he came to New York's Sixty-Eighth Street Jewish Center which he served with distinction until he retired.

During the course of a long career he published a large variety of synagogue compositions, Jewish Art Songs set to the texts of the leading Yiddish folk songs for chorus and published several collections of his own poetry.

Prior to World War II, he established a music publishing company called "Renanah Music" which finally ceased operations shortly before his death in 1954. S. R.

The art of hazzanut, the chants of the hazzanim, is a unique manifestation among our people. It began its development shortly after destruction of the first Temple. The Jews carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar formed themselves into communities and instituted yeshivot of learning and houses of prayer. The many **Levites** among the exiles, remembering the chants they had employed in the Temple service, applied the same music to the prayers offered in the alien land.

Scores of synagogues arose in Babylonia. In these precincts the exiles poured out their hearts, and offered up hopeful prayers for return to their Holy Land. The saddened orisons for the devastated land and Temple brought relief to their hearts, and provided both solace and trust in a better future. When, seventy years after beginning of the exilic period, they returned to Palestine, they brought back with them the entire repertory of liturgical music developed during their sojourn in Babylonia.

A similar process accompanied the era of the second destruction. The descendants of the early exiles, now exiled in Rome, carried with them the Temple singers and the Temple songs temporarily

silenced by all-conquering Titus. It must be said that these melodies exercised a profound influence not alone upon the Jewish population, but also upon the pagan people of ancient Rome, who learnt much from the Hebrew forms of worship.

The chants thus remembered and practiced by Israel were known as community prayers. However, the Jewish liturgy long antedated the exilic hymns. In the olden days, when Abraham, the first Hebrew, on God's behest crossed the Euphrates to spread the divine word among the inhabitants of the land, there were individual prayers rising from the inner needs and cravings of the individual. The first Patriarch had despatched Eliezer, his steward, to find a bride for his son, Isaac. With gifts of great worth he traversed the lands on his quest, ultimately reaching Aram-Naharaim to bestow his master's possessions upon Abraham's distant relatives.

The shades of night were spreading over the land as Eliezer came near the city of Near. He brought his camels to rest at the well, and prepared to utter prayer to his God. "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham ... show kindness unto my master. ... Behold, I stand by the foundations of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. So let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say: Drink, and I shall give thy camels drink also; let the same be *she* that Thou hast appointed for Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast shown kindness unto my master."

Had Eliezer not seen and heard the conduct of prayer in the tents of his master, he would never have thought to offer his own supplication. It is evident from Scripture that Abraham was a most worshipful man. It was he who prayed to the Creator of the universe to show mercy toward Sodom. "Wilt Thou indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ... That be far from Thee; shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly?" It was he who prayed for the health and security of Abimelech. It was through his supplications for the just and the righteous that Abraham attained the admiration and devotion of all God-fearing men.

The first communal prayer of Israel was heard in Egypt, when the people as a whole, in their deep trial and bondage, pleaded for surcease of their cruel enslavement. "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up to God." From these and other incidents we first learned that, just as a prayer can well up from the heart of an individual in distress, it can also rise simultaneously from the hearts of a multitude.

Jewish prayer is not solely the product of the Men of the Great Assembly, who formulated and coordinated the modes of public worship. The aim was not merely to replace the Temple service with words spoken by the lips. According to Maimonides, prayer is a positive commandment direct from the Torah, which declares in the Shema, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and in the ensuing paragraph, employing the plural form, "I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." By "serve" is meant pray, says Maimonides, service of the heart. From the days of Moses to those of Ezra the Scribe, it was the duty of every Israelite to offer up daily prayers to the Lord.

But exposition of biblical verses is not the task of this essay. Its aim is to demonstrate the gradual development of Israel's liturgy, and attainment of the present high literary and religious level. One of our most prized creations as a people is the musically elevated recitative that marks modern hazzanut. Both through its content and form it has thrilled not alone the regular attendant at synagogue services, whose spirit is already permeated with longing and prayerful remembrance of olden glories, but it has given the highest esthetic pleasure to everyone with an appreciation of emotion in music. It may well be said that the majestic chants of the synagogue service have been of more powerful effect upon the souls of the listeners than the prayers themselves. For when Israel was in exile, prayer chanted was the deepest expression of folk emotion, awakening every national and religious feeling calculated to keep alive the spirit of the people, and mitigating the sorrowful experiences engendered by a hapless life in an alien environment. The prayers that are sung are part of the cantorial art of earlier days, and now our regular liturgical expression.

The full humanity of any person never so surely reflects the image of God as when he is engaged in prayer. No great art, no skilled artist, can so affect the heart of man as does a simple silent prayer wafting from a heart fully attuned to the divinity in every human soul. There is no fire to melt steel so powerful as the warm-hearted prayer that bends the iron will of man and brings him closer to those virtues which heaven would instill within him.

The first exponents of prayer, the hazzanim shelichei-tzibbur, popular representatives — came from the people. The precentor was the man considered outstanding in the community, He was

expected to possess the virtues of good appearance, character, learning, and an acceptable voice. To hold this place among the people was a matter of honor, for which many householders strove. So great was the desire to attain that post, that often prominent men were given bribes to further the candidacy of various aspirants. In ancient days men actually sought to buy their way into the honorific high priesthood; against such ambitious men did the prophets and later leaders powerfully fulminate. It was a Jewish precept, in fact, that any prayer representative who ascended the platform against the actual will of the congregation was not entitled to hear the Amen after the conclusion of blessings recited by him. As time went on, the art of synagogue singing developed; a skilled professional class of cantors arose; and the right to recite the prayers aloft was taken from communal wrangling; and assigned to designated and able chanters of the Hebrew melodies. First called baalei tefillah — masters of prayer — they were later designated hazzanim, and then, in modern times, cantors.

The earliest hazzanim were not singers alone, but also poets, liturgists, who composed new hymns and prayers. Eliezer Kalir, who in the tenth century served as cantor in a small Italian town, was the writer of many liturgical forms — laments, selichot, yotzerot — in acrostic form. A later cantor and poet of note was Meir of Worms, who authored the famed Akdamut — sung on Shavuoth. The great commentator Rashi, his contemporary, wrote of Meir as “my colleague, my master, and prayerful representative of the people, faithful and venerable.” To this day that unique festival prayer is sung according to a special and impressive chant, out of which many additional hymns have been derived.

In various parts of Europe were to be found similarly gifted cantors and poets. There were R. Joseph Alkalay, cantor of Sicily; the composer and writer, Isaac Sahud, who flourished in Spain; R. Moses the Elder of London — none of whom was possessed of great technical musical knowledge, since the music of that day was still in developmental form. But they were highly talented and pious men, marked by that religious fire and fervor which impelled them, while singing, to pour their very hearts out to the Lord. Their chants were actually improvised from the emotions that welled from their souls in prayer; their musical expression was dictated by inner feeling. This tendency toward improvisation in conduct of religious service is not to be found in the history of any other religious group. For this reason our melodies have to this day

remained thoroughly flexible, attuned to the emotions of those chanting them before a congregation of worshippers. These were never mere hymns or prayer songs; they have always been actual expressions of the spirit of the singer in his moment of devotional ecstasy.

However, hazzanut itself, in its history, has been marked by many alterations and developments, both toward betterment and toward decline. These changes can be traced to the actual vicissitudes of Jewish exilic life, with its long story of persecution and martyrdom. Not always have Jewish leaders looked with approval upon the current progress of the cantorial art. Often the learned men, cold reasoners and researchers in the law, did not hold sway over the minds of the people. They stood above the run of Jewry and looked down upon them. But the masses were not interested in the teaching and convoluted philosophic reasoning of the more enlightened savants; instead of the problems of Jewish law, they sought spiritual nourishment for their starved souls. Far from the pilpul and involved thinking of the learned classes, they sought only serenity and forgetfulness in their religious ardor. Rather than be instructed concerning the nature and fearsomeness of God, they preferred to yield their souls to their Maker with the trust and faith of innocent children. Life was so difficult that they were perpetually seeking some haven of refuge; let the intellectuals feed their minds — they wanted only to soothe their innermost emotions. The common man was not concerned over the arduous theological and scientific searchings of the learned; to sing the wonders and gifts of the Lord was all they required. Love, reverence, wonderment, and thankfulness were their metiers.

In the song of the hazzan the people found what they had so long been seeking. New congregations in farflung communities were built about the art of the cantor. And as that art developed, however, spiritual leaders began to look askance at the cantor; on many occasions had spiritual leaders in Israel found fault with similar expressions of Jewish spirituality through the instrumentality of the human voice. This attitude was existent even in the days of the first Temple, when the priests developed a feeling of jealousy toward the great popular chants of the Levites. It was quite natural, therefore, that in the exile a like attitude should repeat itself. It was much aggravated when cantors began to strike out for themselves musically and employ new hymns and musical forms, different from traditional modes. The cantors must not be blamed for creating

such differences; it was a truth even in the days of Moses **that**, while the folk were seeking interest in alien cultures, their representatives in song tended to adopt musical and devotional forms taken from their environment. The new songs were strange to the ears of the masses, who showed their displeasure. Two opposing streams in Jewish life — the centripetal and centrifugal — are evidenced in the whole story of the development of synagogue song.

The quarrel did not long endure, however. In ensuing years there arose numbers of religious hazzanim or high musical talent, who were completely devoted to employing their capabilities in the interest of their people. The voices of some of these later cantors were of the highest calibre; the power of their prayers was aptly names shaagat Ha-ari — “the roar of the lion.” The people were overwhelmed by the strength and melodic beauty of their singing. Yet there were also chazzanim who had no voices at all, but were thoroughly capable in the art of liturgic music. Unable to express themselves with their own vocal chords, they turned to choir singing and emotional vocal expression to attract the mitpallelim of the congregation. Chief representative of this class of wailers and weepers was Nissi Belzer.

The synagogues in which these men served were as a rule without large means, unable to maintain both cantor and singers. For this reason the cantors would regularly appear in adjacent communities on Sabbaths, so that with the fees thus amassed they might cover the deficits created in their own communities. As a result the wandering singers were able to spread knowledge of Jewish liturgical music in towns that would otherwise never have learnt to understand and appreciate it. The success of these tours was out of the ordinary; the worshippers listened enthralled to the prayerful song. The cantors were pursued by the populace everywhere, and often they were carried aloft on the hands of their admirers.

The tremendous influence of the wandering cantor on the people can be indicated from a single example. Once Nissi Belzer and his choir conducted a Sabbath service in a small town, with vast success. The company was scheduled to depart for another town, but the inhabitants pleaded that they remain with them for another Sabbath service. This was obviously impossible. The people, seeing that neither pleas nor offers of more money were of any avail, stationed themselves on the outskirts of the city, and when the coaches bearing the singers approached they demolished the wheels

and compelled them to stay over. This shows the power of Belzer's art; though he lacked a musical voice, his form of prayer was sufficient to bring more than ordinary satisfaction to the ear of the ordinary listener. All were fascinated by his melodies and his artistry. His excellent large choir aided in creating this impression among the worshippers. The choir singers, many of them, also became distinguished cantors under his tutelage. It was a mark of high distinction to say that any hazzan had once sung for the famed Nissi Belzer. His pious and heartfelt synagogue songs became musical canon, and many later composers have built their music upon his foundation.

In later days both rabbis and householders opposed the extension of the new synagogue music, because of the added time required to present it. This, together with the too lengthy discourses of rabbis and itinerant preachers, created many difficulties in the service of the synagogue. As the difficulties multiplied, many a thoughtful congregant began to contemplate the emergence of a more controlled form of cantorial artistry. There was also the effort to reduce the rambling discourses of the chance preacher to the limited confines of the modern sermon.

In East Europe, in Russia and adjacent lands, there arose the modern type of synagogue, great edifices boasting trained cantors and choirs. In the West came the temples of the Kultus-Gemeinde; and in America the Reform temples, centers, and other contemporary developments of the synagogue. The spirit of emancipation wafting through all progressive countries was largely responsible for the new movement. As the ghetto walls fell, and revolutionary movements gained power in European lands, all this was reflected in the life of the synagogue. Hazzanut derived from the traditional European forms was developed under such auspices.

Solomon Sulzer pioneered in introducing the new movement. His work, *Shir Zion*, became the basis for synagogue and choir singing throughout the world. In the ordered chanting developed by Sulzer and other moderns, worshippers found both joy and spiritual comfort. Always despairing over their condition, suppressed by their enemies, oppressed by blood accusations and other false charges, they achieved a measure of solace and serenity in the elevating tones of synagogue melody. If men wonder how Jewry was enabled to live through hardship and persecution, let them comprehend the extraordinary power of our many minor sanctuaries in providing new strength and substance for the Jewish soul. Our sacred song also raised our repute among our neighbors. Men who

came to harm us were softened by the strains that swept from **our** places of worship into the heart of the world. Frequently representatives of the government attended the synagogue, eager to hear the chants that brought delight to them as well as to the regular worshippers. They marveled that, after they had written off the existence of Israel, that people was still in position to erect such splendid synagogues and indulge in such magnificent songs of prayer. Thereafter it was easier for our professional intercessors to obtain remission of harsh decrees and to gain the good will of the rulers.

The song of the synagogue raised worshippers to the highest human realms. They felt again that their strivings were not directed to mere personal and selfish aims, but toward preservation of people, of faith, of love of God, and all things worthwhile in the existence of humankind. It was brought home to them that above the material efforts of life, their true duty was to provide for family and community in such a manner that children and all others might grow to honor the Lord and His highest ethical teachings. And as God spoke to Israel through the Torah, they in turn spoke to the Master of the universe in their formal supplications. The cardinal attributes of Jewish striving have been Repentance, Prayer, and Charity. All that Israel does must be carried on in the name of God. The Jewish concept of God's unity was spread among the nations, among the Christian churches and Mohammedan mosques, adding their own substance to the power of our ideals.

Tremendous are the emotions engendered by the voice of the cantor. It carries the episodes of Israel's long sad history back into the recollection of every worshipper. From generation to generation our song has accompanied us; it has lightened every burden. It has given us the perennial hope that our redemption is still to come, and that life will yet be beautiful. Raptly do we plead, as we stand in prayer, "Grant peace, welfare, blessing, grace, lovingkindness, and mercy unto us and unto all Israel Thy people." In the days when brigands were granted carte blanche to rob and oppress and murder the citizenry, the Jews in their ghettos chanted this prayer: "Open my heart to Thy law, and let my soul pursue Thy commandments. . . . If any design evil against me, speedily make their counsel of no effect. Do it for the sake of Thy name." Jubilantly do we ply the people with peace. In such words and chants is concealed our racial strength; these are our armies, our government, our power. One can sense the true might of Israel in the exclamation. "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be one, and His name one!"

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS IN THE WORKS OF SHOLOM ALEICHEM

MAX WOHLBERG

Of our three Yiddish classicists, Mendele Moicher Seforim only rarely touched on the subject of music and when he did so it was in a pedestrian manner. Yitzchok Leib Peretz dealt with the subject more frequently and he treated it in a highly poetic and idealistic fashion, often assigning it to ethereal realms.

To Sholom Aleichem (Sholom Rabinowitz 1859-1916), music was an inescapable fact, a concomitant of life, a constant companion, a subject endowed with qualities angelic and mundane, capable to soar into heavenly spheres while its roots are firmly secured in earth, adaptable to both pathos and humor.

Sholom Aleichem loved music and was infatuated with Jewish music. He was attracted to musicians and fascinated by hazzanim. The hero of his first novel was a Jewish musician and one of his most poignant characters was the son of a hazzan. While "Stempenyu" did not acquire the scope of "Jean-Christophe," it is safe to say that Romaine Rolland could neither penetrate the milieu of "Stempenyu" nor fathom the depths of "Motel," the son of Paisyeh the Hazzan.

A study of his works reveals the presence of an inordinate number of musicians and hazzanim in either primary or secondary roles. Of instrumentalists we have Yehoshua Heshel, Avrom and Ben Zion in "Funem Yarid;" Tchetek and Naftole Bezbrodke in "Oifen Fiedel;" Shaye Dovid and Peretz Dirizhorim "Me'Hulyet" and, of course, "Stempenyu."

Of hazzanim, approximately fifteen are mentioned by name and an equal number appear with apt adjectives. "Yosele Solovey", Sholom Aleichem's second novel, is in fact, the first Yiddish novel in which the hero is a hazzan.

Since the element of music is so integral in the works of Sholom Aleichem — and since the sixtieth anniversary of his death is approaching — this essay will attempt to delineate and to analyze (long overdue) the aspects of music so abundantly represented in his works.

In an article: "Tzu Mein Biographie" (1903) the author recalls (all quotes in this essay are free translations by this writer) : "I was always drawn to the realms of the spirit, the world of dreams, the source of song (see "Yosele Solovey") and music (see

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“Stempenyu”). After my Bar Mitzvah I stealthily began to study the violin and promptly received from my father a terse reprimand (see “Oifen Fiddle”) .”

Sholom Aleichem, as facile in fusing fact with fantasy as he was in mixing tragedy with travesty, was quite revealing — in the frankly autobiographical “Funem Yarid” (“From the Fair”) — regarding his initiation into the world of music. Speaking of himself in the third person he writes:

“Sholom became a constant visitor at the home of Yehoshua Heshel the Klezmer. He did not miss rehearsals which took place at frequent intervals. He thus got to know intimately the group of musicians, their life style, their habits and peculiarities, their gypsy-bohemian outlook including their music-lingo of which he made good use in “Oifen Fiddle”, “Stempenyu”, “Blonzhende Shtern” and others.

. . . That takes care of our infatuation with song. As for instrumental music, the opportunities of our hero to hear bands of musicians were even more numerous than those to hear hazzanim because both Yehoshua Heshel, with the thick side-locks and Ben Zion, with the flattened nose, lived quite close to my cheder. To tell the truth, it would have been easy to avoid them and, as a matter of fact, by avoiding them the distance between house and cheder would have been shorter. Sholom, however, preferred the digression which enabled him to pass by their homes and, incidentally, stop under their windows in order to better hear as Ben Zion gives his students violin lessons, and to listen to Yehoshua Heshel rehearse with his sons who played all sorts of instruments. At such times it was practically impossible to chase Sholom away from his advantages listening post (ibid).

. . . Summer — Municipal Park — sheer heaven! A military band with its handsome leader — a black-bearded Jew with cherry black eyes and full lips. All the girls were in love with his baton (ibid).

“Hazzanim and choristers were never absent from his home because Nochum Rabinowitz was a Ba-al Tefiloh on his own and appreciated good singing. Besides, their boarding house was, one may as well admit it, the only available place in town for transient hazzanim (ibid).

. . . The wondering actors were quartered on one side of our hostelry while opposite them stayed a Lithuanian hazzan with twelve choristers. They came for the Sabbath and

their reputation preceded them. So, from one side, we hear the rehearsal of the Lithuanian hazzan who, incidentally, gesticulates and goes through odd contortions:

“Yismechu B-
malchuscho Shom-
rei Shabos V-
Korei Oneg.”

“The choir is evenly divided. One half sings: “Turaril! Turaril!” The other half contributes: “Pim-Porn! Pim Porn!” While from the roof of the actors we hear: “Fiselech! Un Fiselech! Un Fiselech! Un lebedige! Fiselech! Of mir aza yohr!” (Little legs — of coquettes. Lively legs of coquettes. Who could wish for more?) (Alt-nei Kasrilevke — Hoteln).

“As a result, the Rabinowitz children accumulated an inexhaustible fund of musical knowledge. They, for example, promptly recognized the composer of this Kedusho and the arranger of that Tikanto Shabos. Whether it was Pitze, Mitze, Kashtan, the hazzan of Shedlitz or Kalvarie or, perchance, Nisi Belzer. These were days of spiritual exaltation: the body as if floating in air, the mind spinning endless ideas and a little tune relentlessly pursuing one through the sleepless night (“Funem Yarid”) .”

Children wish for many things. Some develop a strong desire for an object or a talent. With the passing years the object of their desires changes. The young Sholom persisted with remarkable constancy in his overwhelming desire to play the violin.

“He only knows that ever since his infancy he yearned for a fiddle and would gladly sacrifice all he has to be able to play it. And, as if fate would wish to tease him, he always found himself in a world of song and music, among hazzanim and musicians (ibid).

“Most young boys of well-to-do families studied the violin but my father remained adamant. “What sort of vocation is that for a Jewish boy?!” (“Tzu Mein Biographie”).

. . . Thus, as you see, the study of the violin did not prove a disadvantage. The opportunity to hear music — he had. Talent — if you believed Ben Zion the Klezmer — he also had. So what did he miss? A fiddle (“Funem Yarid”).

“It seems to me, there is nothing more attractive or admirable than the ability to play the violin. Ever since I became

conscious of things I've yearned for a fiddle and loved musicians as life itself. If a wedding took place in town I was the first to run to welcome the band of musicians. I quickly hid behind the bass-fiddle pulled on the thick string: Boom! And ran away. Boom! And ran ("Oifen Fiddle". See also: "Mesushe-lach" and "Meisiyos Far Yiddishe Kinder").

. . . The fiddle, you understand, says to me Naftole Bezboradke, is the oldest of all instruments. The first fiddler in the world was Tubal-Cain or Methuselah. I don't rightly remember but surely you as a cheder student must know. The second one was King David. The third, a Jew of course, was Paganini. As a matter of fact all the best violinists were Jews. Take Stempenyu, Pedohtzur; of myself I won't speak though, they say, I play a mean fiddle but how can I be compared to Paganini? He, they say, sold his soul to the devil for the fiddle ("Oifen Fiddle") ."

One may debate whether Tevye was Sholom Aleichem's favorite adult character but there can be no doubt that no child was treated with greater deference, with more sympathy, warmth and compassion than was Motel, the son of Paisyeh the Hazzan.

"Mazel Tov! I've memorized both the orphan's and the rabbinic Kaddish. In the synagogue I stand on a bench and rattle off the Kaddish like a glib huckster. My voice, inherited from my father, is a true soprano. All the boys stand about me gaping, full of envy. Women wail, men push coins in my hands ("Motel").

. . . The Rebbe, his thumb against his windpipe, in the manner of an ancient hazzan, calls on me with the festive melody reserved for a groom: "Ya-amod He-chosen Sholem Be-reb Nochum Maf-tir!" ("Dos Meserel").

. . . Oh, if only my mother would permit me to become a musician. But I know she won't, not because she is mean but because "what would the world say if Paisyeh the hazzan's son would become a musician or a tradesman?" ("Motel") ."

No truer view of the Shtetel and its attachment to music — can be found than in the stories of Sholom Aleichem. In the synagogue, in the market-place, in joy as in sadness for the rich and for the poor, for both men and women. At every possible occasion — the author instinctively turns to music for both description and characterization.

What connection do a melamed and a hazzan have with a county fair? Nevertheless the melamed releases his pupils a little earlier and the hazzan dismisses the choristers in the middle of the “Melech Elyon”. (“Yosele Solovey”)

Once, it was on Hoshanoh Raboh, the new hazzan and the new choir sang the “Kol Mevaseir, Mevaseir Ve-omeii’ most impressively whereupon the worshippers began to beat rhythmically the leaves off their Hoshanoh’s. (“Opgeschlogene Hoshanohs”)

. . . In the monastery garden, the nocturnal, solitary nightingale — as happens after every spring — lost its sweet voice and — forgive the comparison — like a hazzan after the High Holy Days — had only a screech left. (“Stempenyu”)

. . . The rooster, the screamer, hearing the band play thought a new day had arrived. He alighted from his perch, flapped his wings, crowed his assigned verse and concluded his “KuKuriKu” with a “Munach Esnachto”. (Sender Blank)

“Since Stritch is in existence, no one can recall a case of a woman who either owned a dog or played the piano. A Jewish woman should be a musician?! (“Perele”)

. . . In one breath, as a good hazzan enumerates — the ten sons of Haman, this one talks of wheat, the other discusses doctors, a third, hazzanim. A Jew that loves singing — say what you will — wants to know everything, even how to play a fiddle. (“Funem Yarid”)

“Reb Nachman Kahana was a venerable and venerated gentleman who also happened to be rich. Such a one, as a rule, occupies in the synagogue a prominent position. The hazzan will not dare to chant the Amidah until Reb Nachman concludes his silent devotion — even if this lasts an eternity (ibid).

“While the assembled dry their tears, he, the father remains untouched. Even when the hazzan and the choir appear and begin the tedious rendition of the tearful nusach for the “Eil Molei”, he shows no emotion. The synagogue becomes filled with moaning, children cry, adults wail, women faint and the father — nothing. Only when the hazzan utters the words: “Es nishmas habesuloh Miriam Gitel bas Reb Lipe” the unfortunate father feels a painful stab in his heart, something blocking his windpipe, a ferocious bang in his brain and an inhuman, frightful sob escapes from his heart while neither the

choir ceases its singing nor the hazzan to show what he can do . . . (“In Shturm”).

So, be a prophet and foretell that the hazzan’s daughter will become infatuated with an army officer and announce that she is ready to convert and marry him. The city was abuzz. Wherever one went: “The hazzan’s daughter . . . The tragedy of these two – I mean the hazzan and the hazzente” – was, as you can well imagine, unbearable. Our poor hazzan delivered a Selichos that was soul-shattering. His “Haneshomo loch vehaguf sheloch” could have moved a stone (Eisenbahn Geshichtes – Keiver Ovos) .”

If the Shtetel suffered no dearth of tragedies it also provided occasional joys. Such were the rapturous, fun filled “HaKofoh” services on Simchas Torah and the mirthful – on occasion marred – wedding celebrations.

We are just reaching “Ato Horeiso” and the first verses are assigned to the “Ba-alei Batim” sitting at the eastern wall who recite them standing at their places each with his peculiar voice and in varying manner. Although the nusach is, after all, the same throughout the world. Nevertheless, due to the differences in the vocal quality and timbre, and, no doubt, because of the shock in hearing their own voices, the resulting renditions seem to carry no semblance to what was intended. The musical ornamentation planned for the concluding syllables invariably vanishes altogether (“HaKofos”).

“ . . . So Elik, to please him, executes in his grave basso the extended festival Kiddush and manipulates adroitly, as a hazzan would. The band of convivial friends respond, as would professional choristers: “O-o-mein!” Although Kopel (a shoemaker) has the voice – if you deign to call it that – of a folding-bed, he, nonetheless, attempts to assist Elik and as Elik sings Kopel frequently intervenes with a loud “Born”! When Elik concludes the Kiddush with a flourished “MeKa-deish Yisroeil” and a dramatically embellished “Ve-haz-ma-nim” and is about to place the cup to his lips Kopel grabs the cup out of his hand (“Me’Hulyet”).

“Elchonon, the sexton, twists his sidelocks behind his ears, inflates his cheeks and with blazing eyes and mincing gate commences a Russian tune adapted to “Hayom Te’am-tzeinu”. Zalmen Bar dons – as if it were a talis – a white scarf and stationed at the wall intones loudly with the sad “Ne-ilah”

melody : “You old one, you cold one, malodorous one — your ugly croaking screeches are surely no fun!” And Shmulik, Shimshon Yankel, Reb Kalmen and Elchonon supply, with wildly undulating arms, frightful sounds, still in the “Meilah” melody, the necessary obligato: “Oy, oy, oy, ay, ay-oy, oy, oy, ay, ay”! (“Yosele Solovey”)

“The cup of wine in one hand, the other, in the manner of old-fashioned hazzanim, pressing on his throat, his face — with eyes closed — turned upward, Shmulik cleared his throat and sounded his old, decrepit voice. As he tearfully concluded “Mesameiach Choson im HaKaloh” sadness permeated all those present (“Bitere Sheva Broches”) .

“As Reb Yehoshua Heshel, their leader, an old Jew with a wadded coat, thick side-locks, and a long fringed talis-koton strikes the fiddle with the bow, winks to his companions and the Kasrilevke band shows its mettle. They briskly play a “Freilechs”, work on all cylinders, pluck on the strings, strum on the bass, blow on the trumpets, pipe on the flutes and crash the cymbals. The guests clap their hands, spread out, forming an ever wider circle. The in-laws, men and women clasp each other’s hands and off they go in a merry round (“A Farshterte Chasene”).

It should be noted that wedding music in the shtetel consisted of multicolored elements and combined music of many moods. It included lively music welcoming the guests; stately music accompanying the in-laws and distinguished officiants; subdued music following the entourage of the bride to the ritual bath; joyous music at the headquarters of the groom; somber and melancholy music at the veiling (“Bazetzen” and “Badeken”) of the bride; merry music at the “Mitzvah Tantz” and the boisterous “Freilachs” for public dancing. While the task of the Badchan (or Marshelik) was to entertain, his melodic recitations bore a moralistic, nay, pietistic coloration. Scriptural quotations abounded throughout his sermonic renditions. A brief musical interlude was often interposed between specific subject matters. The latter delineated the moral requisites and ritual obligations of a modest and pious Jewish wife. He extolled the virtues of Torah and Mitzvos and extended the good wishes of the wedding guests. When, by good fortune, a good violinist was available he improvised a musical sermon such as described, in his inimitable manner, by Sholom Aleichem.

“The band played, the violin wept, the trumpet blasted,

the flute piped, the drum boomed: “Bam-bam-bam”! And my heart — tik-tak! . . . (“Mein Ershter Roman”).

“Jews everywhere considered it a great merit to have heard Nisi Belzer sing. Godik, the Badchen entertain and Stempenyu play (“Stempenyu”).

With us, if a Cantor comes to concertize we run to buy tickets for the event. And to hear the wedding musicians play we consider a clear moral obligation. To hear the band play a “selection” during the ceremony of the “Golden Soup” (first food shared by the bridal couple) customarily something sad, the merry tunes will come later — we will gladly give in exchange a sack of borsht. The audience sits reverently and the band plays a melancholy and heart-rending tune. The fiddle cries, the bow slides to the thick string and the other instruments offer him sympathetic support. A strangely elegiac mood hovers over the audience and this blend the mournful sounds of the instruments with the morose thoughts of the listeners. Every sob of the violin: “tioch-tioch-tioch” penetrates directly into the hearts of the wedding guests and finds an echo there (ibid).

“ . . . For, after all, the heart in general and particularly the Jewish heart is no more than a fiddle; one plucks on the strings and draws forth all sorts, but especially doleful and gloomy songs. One only needs a real artist, a master, a musician such as Stempenyu was (ibid) .”

Surely, no more reliable measure of the author’s affinity to music need be cited than his descriptions of its effect on him.

“In short, with the help of God, Stempenyu was ready to serenade the bride (bazetzen di Kaleh). I truly feel that my pen is powerless to describe his serenading the bride. That was no mere playing and thrumming; it was akin to a religious service, a lofty worship of God in the highest and purest form. Stempenyu stationed himself facing the bride and delivered a beautiful, extended sermon on the fiddle. And Stempenyu submerging his very being became totally absorbed in the playing of such sad and gloomy tunes that those present remained simply breathless, dead-a-dead audience! One’s heart literally melted, eyes were filled with tears. Jews sighed, and whined, and cried. And Stempenyu? Who? What ? Where? You don’t see him. You see no fiddle. You only hear sweet, heavenly sounds encompassing all space (ibid).

“I ceased noticing anything. I only heard some singing, a sob, a cry, a moan, an almost-spoken word, a murmur, unearthly sounds such as I’ve never heard before! Echoes sweet as honey and smooth as oil flowed ceaselessly into my heart. And my soul-wafted aloft, far-far into another world, into a Paradise of pure sound and total song.

“From their swaying and floating there emanated delicate and rare voices, song after song, in perfect beauty and sweetness, as the sounds of the Priests and Levites and the organ in the Temple in days of yore, as described in our holy books (ibid) .”

Sholom Aleichem evinces — if not admiration, at least — empathy and appreciation and, perhaps, attraction for the peripatetic life of a musician. For the artist he had undiluted adulation.

“Most band-musicians, they say, are less than devout. Such is their profession, having to do with girls and women. And on what occasions? At weddings, engagements. Far from piety. Away from religious practices. And the garish attire they adopt! (“Me’Hulyet”)

“Avrom, the musician, is an artist, a real maestro. Music he could not read. Yet he had his own compositions and played so exquisitely that one could literally melt under the magic of his hands. He was a kind of Stempenyu and perhaps even a bit superior (“Funem Yarid”).

“I saw a roundish fiddle with an odd belly. And fingers that danced over the strings with such speed that a human mind can’t comprehend. Where does one get so many fingers?

“Forte — you scoundrel! Forte — Fortissimo! Time! Beat . . . you Mamzer. Time! One, two, three! One, two, three!” (“Tehatchek”)

Musicianship was inbred in his family for generations. His father, Berel-Bass played the bass-fiddle. Berel’s father, Reb Shmulik — the trumpet; his grandfather was Reb Feivish Zimbalist and his great-grandfather — Reb Ephraim, a flutist. In other words: Stempenyu is a descendant of ten generations of musicians — and is not at all ashamed of it, as among us — need we deny it? — many a laborer is embarrassed with his trade; and it is no wonder. Such a reputation as Stempenyu had in Mazepevke, such fame as he acquired, almost, in the whole world is no mean achievement. To merely pronounce the name Stempenyu! . . . (“Stempenyu”)

An even warmer, almost paternal, kinship did the author express toward the young choir singers, the wandering minstrels who, deprived of parental supervision, exposed to severe taskmasters, served as the exponents of the musical art of the synagogue.

“The choristers are by nature, good fellows — mostly lively uninhibited youths but recently liberated from the narrow, dark cheider, from the melamed’s biting cane or from a repressive apprenticeship. Frankly, they were wild mustangs. No matter what their origin they soon form a tight relationship, think alike, eat from one pot and, piety discarded, they live as in Paradise. To eat aplenty is the great desideratum: As hungry locusts they devour the meals purchased at the local taverns. Between rehearsals, smoking cigarettes, they leisurely stroll through town. Joking and working they live to the hilt (“Yosele Solovey”).

“No Sabbath of Blessing the New Moon passed without the prior arrival of a wagonload of an odd assortment of lively, famished group of people. Though clad like ragamuffins their throats were protected by warm, woolen scarves. Like locusts they attacked the kitchen, devouring everything that was edible. It was a generally accepted axiom that if the group is starved they are the choristers of some renowned hazzan.

“For days the well-known hazzan “worked” on his throat, vocalized, practiced his coloratura and swallowed raw eggs. And the little singers were involved in all sorts of mischief. While their voices may have been weak their appetites were strong.

“Their hunger sated, their thirst quenched, their singing — at times — less than perfect but their bills were invariably left unpaid (“Funem Yarid”) .”

Marie W. Goldberg, the author’s daughter describes the care with which her father dressed before leaving for Yom Kippur services. By all accounts Sholom Aleichem was not a daily — or weekly — synagogue attendant but, without doubt, prayer held a strong attraction for him. No more convincing evidence need be cited than the following (autobiographical) passage.

“It was long since the young hero prayed so heartily and with such fervor as he did that morning. He was already far from piety. This, after all, was the age of enlightenment, when being pious was a disgrace, when being a fanatic was worse than being a debaucher or — according to current standards — an apostate. But his strong emotions assumed a quality of

religious ecstasy and he sang aloud with complete abandon. At the Amidah he broke into sobs and wept bitterly and without restraint. After this tearful experience he felt lighter as if a heavy burden were removed from his heart (“Funem Yarid”) .”

For many years, concurrent with his literary career, Sholom Aleichem was involved in commerce, the stock market and assorted business ventures. For a brief period he served as a (government-appointed) Crown-Rabbi. These activities necessitated extended travels — domestic and foreign. Whenever opportunities arose he visited local synagogues and — in his stories — recorded his impressions. In a pithy phrase or subtle nuance he tells us his reactions to the service, to the hazzan.

An analysis of his comments reveals (1) the standards he set for hazzanim and (2) his fondness for the old-fashioned hazzanim and ba-alei tefilah. The economic difficulties of the latter were a serious concern to him.

“A hazzan is not an actor. Of course, the worshipper likes to hear fine singing, masterful interpretation, perhaps even some novel artistry, etc. The hazzan, however, must not forget that he is a Sheliach Tzibur, a congregational representative, a defense attorney, a deputy and is therefore expected to be a man of noble habits, a fine Jew and not a shiftless, irresponsible lout (hefker-yung) because a Beis Hamidrash is not a theater (“Yosele Solovey”).

“When Yosele Solovey lived a pious and modest Jewish life has davenen had a quality of utmost sweetness and incomparable charm. Later, when he abandoned the former style of his life the congregants lost their taste for his singing. A fine Ba-al Tefilah is he, they said with sarcasm, playing cards, eating terefos, strolling with maidens. Some Ba-al Tefilah! (ibid)

“Where have you acquired such poses? Esther once asked him. I learned them from Pitze’s tenor, he replied, who assured me this is the way they sing in the theater; body stiffly drawn up, hands outstretched and every limb in motion (ibid).

Reb Melech, the hazzan, died at Neilah like a saint. Reb Melech was a handsome Jew with a long beard. Since early morning he stood at the pulpit with hands uplifted in prayer before the master of the universe, humbly appealing and earnestly pleading for mercy in behalf of those who appointed him

as their spokesman; for forgiveness of their many sins and for the blessings of a new year.

On such an advocate as was Reb Melech the worshippers of the old Beis Hamidrash could safely rely. To being with — his voice. The older ba-alei batim recalled that as a youth Reb Melech had a phenomenal voice, the roar of a lion; when he opened his mouth the walls shook and the windows rattled. Furthermore, he was easily moved to tears and when he cried his tears flowed as from a faucet. Seeing him cry was infectious and soon the whole congregation was weeping.

Reb Melech lifted his arms as if in a debate with the Almighty employing that doleful meilah melody: “Oy veh, Tate! Oy veh, Foter! Oy veh ...” He rested a bit, caught his breath and again raised his voice in an old-fashioned tremolo: “Atunem, nem, nem, de-e-ei, e-e-ei” and concluded the passage with an entreating: “Oy veh! Oy veh!” And suddenly there was silence ... Reb Yozeffel proved with incontrovertible evidence based on numerous biblical verses and Midrashic exegesis that thus only a saint dies. Such a death should be the envy of everyone (“Ihm meg men mekane zeyn”).

“So it has to happen to no less a person than a hazzan, a spokesmen of religion! Who will permit him to officiate at the pulpit? Well you may ask: how will he earn a living? Not to mention the shame of it all for the members of the Cold Synagogue; why did it have to happen to the hazzan of their synagogue? (“Funem Yarid”)

“How do you account for such a learned Jew to be a fool? If only, in addition to his scholarship, he would be more pushy, don’t you think he could have been chosen to be our rabbi? But, you say, what will we do with the old rabbi? By the same logic you could ask: what will we do with the old hazzan? Was it really necessary to engage a new hazzan in order to have the old hazzan, who, by the way, was no mean pauper even previously, starve? The reason is being given that our local man of wealth suddenly acquired a taste for singing! Let him go to the treayter and he’ll hear singing till he bursts at the seams (“Monologen-Genz”).

“Shmulik listened to her with closed lips and left with his singers to compose a new “Od Yizkor Lonu” for Rosh Has-honoh. When Zlate returned from the market he was engaged

in a rehearsal of a “Mechalkeil Chayim,” a “Veye-esoyu” or simply in vocalizing (“Y osele Solovey”).

“Yosele was his entire support at the pulpit. While Yosele used to indulge in all his vocal tricks and trills Shmulik enjoyed a welcome opportunity to rest and to recoup his strength for the remainder of the service (ibid).

“So I, thank God, found my first position. I became the guide of an old hazzan who, once upon a time, was famous, somewhere. In his old age he became totally blind and had to go from house to house begging alms. My position would not have been bad were it not for his unpredictable, capricious habits which were unbearable. He was never, but never, satisfied. He pinched and poked, and pushed and pulled, and turned and twisted, and scratched and screamed. I did not lead him — he argued — to the proper places. Where the proper places were, I have as yet not learned (“A Mensh Fun Buenos Aires”) .”

Reading the works of Sholom Aleichem we are transported back a century into the drab but aspiring life of the shtetel. While one still praises a hazzan because “one always knows where in the prayers he is up to and what text he is chanting” (“Motel”) expectations rise and greater demands are made in the area of synagogue music. Of particular interest are the numerous instances of self-taught musicians in the field. A proliferation of autodidacts took place. Experiments — musical and vocal — were commonplace. We encounter the old-style Ba-alei Tefilah who are eager to improve their calling by crumbs of “modernism”. We meet the “voiceless” hazzanim who, having mastered the rudiments of music, delight audiences with “novel” choral selections, topped with solos and duets. And we observe — sometimes with admiration and occasionally with good humored derision — the attempts of “modern” cantors to ape customs and practices foreign to the traditional synagogue.

“Such a Ba-al Tefilah was Shmulik Yampoler. His voice was “a roar of a lion” augmented by a falsetto, a sort of a highly focused echo-like sound which he artfully manipulated. With his “Mimkomcho” — “borrowed” from the Krutianer — he enthralled us. His voice was mellow and he was a Hebrew scholar blessed with clear enunciation. His chanting was pure gold and silver. If our Shmulik — it was often said — had only studied notes he would be superior to the greatest haz-

Zanim.

“He, surely, outshone Pitze, Mitze and Yeruchom as well as other, so called, modern cantors. Our Shmulik! If he only wants to he can still produce a neat little Keser with a first class “volechel” better than those maestros together with their choirs.

“On the Holy Days, Shmulik was assisted by his own son, Yosele, the possessor of a penetrating little voice and accompanied by a choir consisting of a bass and a screamer — and that’s all. The rest was attended to by his own “blessed” throat. The “pieces” that he “premiered” for each festival were afterwards sung by the populace throughout the year — sung during meals or hummed while walking.

“Of such things as notes Shmulik had no knowledge. That is, he had heard that there are Cantors who sing from written notes but to actually seeing it done he did only once in his life. That was when Pitze visited Mazepevke with his eighteen choristers. Shmulik heard many cantors during his lifetime but they all sang in the old style: that is either a “prepared” selection or an “improvisation” — straight from the head. You need no better example than the great Cantor of Paretz whom Shmulik heard daven a Musaf at the Rebbe’s court, entirely without notes. The taste of that event will stay with him as long as he’ll live. But when Pitze arrived with his eighteen assistants in Mazepevke Shmulik heard for the first time how one davens with notes. He was so enthused by Pitze’s davenen that he was practically glued to his seat. “That was Notes! Notes!!” The whole Sabbath he walked around like a dead man, unable to find a place for himself. “That was Notes!”

“ . . . Having observed Shmulik’s modest mannerisms and having listened to his voice there arose in Pitze an irrepressible urge to show his visitor some of the art of hazzanut and accompanied by his eighteen choristers he sang a few Sulzerian compositions. Shmulik was completely overcome by emotion. His eyes filled with tears. “Is anything wrong?” “It is only now, Reb Pitze, that I realize the enormity of my incompetence.” sighed Reb Shmulik naively. “But here is my son Yosele. Let him but grow up a bit, begin donning his Tefillin and, God willing, I will apprentice him to a hazzan of renown; to Pitze or Mitze or even to Yeruchom.”

Yosele perceived all sorts of sweet sounds: low, deep-way-down ones, middle ones, then ones and high, piercing ones which together fused and merged harmoniously. And they, a

clear, sweet, pure solo which progressively diminished in volume and in range until it vanished altogether.

“ . . . Yosele sang without effort; he didn’t force, shout or strain his voice. As if of themselves there flowed from his throat — and from his heart and soul — such pleasant, soft and sweet sounds that entered deep — deep into one’s very being. With all these attributes such natural artistry was evident in his voice, gliding smoothly up and down the scale and executing intricate coloratura passages that all were dumb-founded (“Yosele **Solovey**”) .

“I listened to the sadly beautiful old nusach of the ancient “Kol Nidrei” — a melody sung throughout the world. Later, when the hazzan arrived at the verses of the tearful “Ya-a-leh” which he sang tearfully with a tearful tune the tears of the women increased considerably (Budapest).

In a light spirit I attended the services and heard a fine hazzan who, although a bit artificial and indulged in peculiar vocal gymnastics, warbled the “Lecho Dodi” like a nightingale, ended the “Mizmor Shir” for the Sabbath as would a performer at the theater, he sang the “Kegavno” so melodiously and with such sweetness that one wished to hear it over and over again. I have for years not heard such a hazzan, such a Kiddush and such Zemiros as in Chabne (“Monologen-Chabne”).

“The hazzan, Hersh Ber, is a real musician (menagen). That is, as far as he is considered, he cannot sing; he, poor fellow — my father says — has no voice. But he understands the art. Of choristers he has fifteen and his bad temper is legendary. He grants me an audience. I sing an intricate “Mogein Ovos” He pats my head and tells my brother that my voice is a soprano. He has an enormous tuning-fork which he places first to his teeth then to his ear (“Motel”).

“In the manner done by all large synagogue choirs the choir attacked the “Mah Tov” with full force (“Yosele Solovey”).

“The handsome hazzan, with the shaven countenance, steps forward and launches into a “Mi Shebeirach” in the traditional Jewish manner — as our own Reb Hersh Ber would do — and when he gets to the phrase “Ufas lo-orchim, utzdoko lo-aniyim” (food for the wayfarer and charity for the poor) he declaims with maudlin affectation — the devil take him — (er nemt eyn a mise **meshune**) . The “Yayin leKidush

ulhavdoloh" he hurriedly dismisses but of the "Ufas lo-orchim" etc. he makes a whole tzimes. He chops into it a "volechel" (popular Roumanian tunes in the Ukranian-Dorian scale), repeats the "Ufas lo-orchim" at least thirty times, and again "lo-orchim" and once more "lo-orchim". Then "Utzdokoh" and, for good measure, reiterates endlessly "Utzdokoh lo-aniyim". Finally, at long last, at "lo-aniyim" he gradually descends, with a diminuendo, lower and lower and almost inaudibly, in a falsetto, he whispers "lo-a-ni-yim". Then, of a sudden, without warning he thunders forth: "Vechol . . . be-emunoh!" And with a simulated pious expression he squeezes the "be-e-mu-noh" as if Satan were after him. Reaching "Veyishlach berocho" . . . he reverts to their insane nusach joined by the chorus and accompanied by the organ. This was followed by a well-turned out Musaf.

"I should make mention of the Shemonoh Esrei. The orderly stance of the congregation (may mine enemies so live!) was admirable. Of actual praying — nothing need be said; no one prayed — not a word. The prayers of the hazzan and the sounds of the organ sufficed. But, you should have seen their effect, motionless position! Like manikins they stood! No motion — no movement. Still — Sha! ("Meshugoim").

Some subjects — notably music and synagogue — seemed to have exerted great attraction for Sholom Aleichem as a result of which he returned to them frequently. An examination of these — seemingly redundant — versions confirms our belief that although the author was by instinct a traditionalist and reserved his most favorable and sympathetic treatment for the old-fashioned "religion" and its functionaries the contemporary advancements made in the music of the synagogue filled him with admiration and received his approval. A comparison of the old with the new seems worthwhile.

"The evening service is now in progress. Tzale, the hazzan of the Cold-Synagogue is at the pulpit with his two assistants. One — a dark young man with fleshy, thick lips — a bass. The other — an emaciated youth with a pale face — a soprano. As for Tzale himself, a tall yellowish Jew, with a golden voice, his nose bent like a shofar, his sidelocks as well as his beard — yellow, thin and curled — appeared as if glued on ("Hakofes").

"The noise and the excitement were so great that one can

hear neither the hazzan nor the choir. Futile were the congregants' shouting: "Sha!" . . . Of no effect — the shames' banging on the table . . . ("Funem Yarid").

"Such spendthrifts as the Ba-alei Batim of the Cold-Synagogue in Mazepevke, search as you may, you won't find in any part of the world. The sum they spend on hazzanim in one year — according to local gossip — is the envy of all and sundry. This is due to the fact that the congregants of the Cold-Synagogue are — as is universally acknowledged — exceptional connoisseurs of music. Such lovers of singing one won't find no matter how widely one travels. When the renowned Pitze comes to Mazepevke where does he daven? In the Cold-Synagogue. Where can you hear Yeruchom? Or Nisi? Or Mitze? In the Cold-Synagogue.

"It is not easy for them to select a Ba-al Tefiloh whose chants they can enjoy while he won't embarrass them before visitors. Much water flows under the bridge until they find the right hazzan who should be able to please everyone and to satisfy their particular preferences. But, once having found the right one, they will hold on to him permanently and he will find all his needs catered to ("Yosele Solovey").

"He conducts a tuneless service. Amen! Concludes the Rabbi his wonderful sermon and spontaneously there comes the response of the entire chorus: "A-a-men!" I could have sworn that I heard the sounds of a violin, a flute, a trumpet and a contrabass. "You have an orchestra playing here on the Sabbath?" I ask quietly the sexton. "It's not an orchestra — it's an organ". "What sort of an instrument is that?" "An organ, haven't you heard, is what the Levites played in the Holy Temple." "Oh! An Organ!" I reply. "Why didn't you say so in the first place?" (Meshugoim-Di Roite Yidelech)

"The synagogue in Odessa is well worth a visit. To begin with — they call it the Choir-Synagogue because it is topped with a cupola and it has no "eastern" wall as all sit facing it. And the hazzan (Pinye is his name and is he some hazzan?!) though clean-shaven is a Hebrew scholar not in the same class as your old dunce Moshe Dovid. Then you should hear what he does with the "Berich Shemay" — it's out of this world, the devil take him. To hear his "Mizmor Shir" for the Sabbath is worth buying tickets for to see. His choristers, supplied with narrow prayer-shawls surround him — is a pleasure! If Sabbath were twice a week I'd attend services twice a week.

I really can't understand the local Jews who do not go to daven there. Though, truth to tell, even those who attend do not daven. They sit under top-hats, like manikins, with well-fed faces, wearing small prayer-shawls and — "Sha!" Should a visitor wish to raise his voice a bit in prayer, he is immediately approached by the Shames in a buttoned uniform and is promptly silenced. Peculiar Jews, these in Odessa ("Menachem Mendel")."

Since, notwithstanding a few lessons on the violin and a slight acquaintance with the piano, Sholom Aleichem was no musician, it is surprising to read both his penetrating analysis and incisive comments on the subject of improvisation.

"When he came under the spell of melancholy he took his fiddle, put the chain-lock on his door and, for three hours or so, he improvised on his fiddle. Whatever motif came to his mind he instantly played it. First it was something mournful and desperate slowly becoming subdued and relaxed. Now, all of a sudden, sounds of anger, increasing in volume reaching a climax that was surprisingly interrupted by what sounded like a deep sigh. The flames were now controlled, the storm abated and somber, sweet melodies followed one another until again the tunes assumed a livelier and merrier quality.

"True, this did not happen often. The desire for such experiences were not frequent. However, when it surfaced, it could not be repressed. Stempenyu's fantasies emerged bubbling, bursting forth as from a well with ever greater creativity ("Stempenyu").

"One with "soul" and sensitivity could hardly contain himself during a recital of this "free" music that was surely incapable of being notated. One, it seemed, heard the plea of a broken heart to the Master of the Universe; a sort of prayer for pity and grace; a prayer destined to find acceptance before the Heavenly throne. It is related that the Rebbe of Rizhin had his private orchestra that used to play while he sang the praises of the Eternal. This is a concept worthy of a great man possessing a highly poetic soul (ibid).

"Suddenly, a new motif appears in his mind, a new type of nusach for "Ve-al Hamdinos". And Yosele slowly ascends the scale and gradually increases the volume. And his voice floats with ease throughout the vocal range encountering no limits even in the highest register. His ideas flow freely and

he sings with abandon and with a coloratura so effortless that it surprises him, weaving a melodic pattern, not quite knowing where it will lead him and how it will all end ... (“Yosele Solovey”).

“Yosele sang utilizing no text — what hazzanim refer to as “embellishing a motif” (nehmen a shtell). It was related of the Vilner Balebeisel that when, on a Saturday night at the first Selichos, he thus improvised, without a text, Jews were bathed in tears due to the enchanting sounds. Thus did Yosele begin to improvise. Novel motifs simply followed one another, sweet tunes emanated from his throat and filled the hall. Then he modulated to a sad, heartbreaking melody expressing pleading and compassion. Meanwhile his voice maneuvered with dexterity as if diving into and rising from deep waters; now it assumed a color of such anger that the windowpanes quavered, and now it modulated softly and sweetly, lower and lower as if departing altogether; then sending, as from a distance, smooth melodies interwoven with tricky trills reminiscent of little peas rolling and descending, chasing each other with surprising rapidity ... And now, as if suddenly reawakened he combined in his passionate singing the qualities of both plea and desperation (ibid) .”

Motel, the son of Paisy the hazzan (the Jewish Oliver Twist?) presents us with the author’s most precious characterizations. It also depicts the laity in its relation to the song of the synagogue. Finally, due to the hero’s peregrinations, we are introduced to the raucous sounds of the new world’s teeming tenements. With subtle sarcasm and inflated hyperbole Sholom Aleichem describes the crass commercialism rampant among the uprooted masses. Motel, ever conscious of his honored heritage, (“If the son of Paisyeh the hazzan should be seen smoking on the Sabbath — he deserves capital punishment”) is fated to utilize his inherited talent on the ship bringing him and his dear ones to the Blessed Land.

“And who will lead the service? Sing “Kol Nidrei”? My brother Eliyohu, of course. So what if he never was a cantor? His father was one, and a famous one. A fine voice he has, Hebrew he knows. What else does one need? Of immeasurable help in getting an official invitation for my brother, were the efforts of my friend Pinye. He helped circulate throughout the ship the “secret” that this young man with the yellow beard is a fantastic musician. His davenen — tremendous and, con-

fidentially, if his little brother (meaning me) should assist him with his superlative soprano we'll have a Yom Kippur that will be the envy of God and man. And we served up a "Kol Nidrei" the passengers will remember for generations to come. And as my brother Eliyohu was engrossed in his singing and I'm helping him — in a distant corner. Among the women, stands my mother in her silken festival-shawl, the prayer book in her hands and is bathed in tears ("Motel").

"One doesn't expect a bearded young man, the son of Paisyeh the hazzan to become a servant! However if Washington and Lincoln could perform manual labor it is no indignity for the son of Paisyeh the hazzan to peddle sausages (ibid).

With the arrival of the month of Elul, the newspapers were filled with advertisements for hazzanim, synagogues and minyanim ("Monologen"),

What position should I seek? Apply for one as a hazzan? I was never a shoemaker ... A ritual slaughterer? My father never drove a horse and wagon ... A Reverend I surely won't become because my knowledge of Hebrew is too good ... Perhaps a strictly Kosher butcher? But, in the old country, I never dealt in stolen horses (Monologen — Mr. Green Hot a Job).

"Who's Sholom Aleichem of Sabbath eve may be compared to his father's? Who's "Eishes Chayil" sounded as beautiful as his father's? And the Kiddush? Every Jew makes Kiddush but not on everyone rests the Divine Presence ("Funem Yarid").

"Whenever he arrives at an inn or a hostelry and there is a Minyan he wraps a red kerchief around his soiled Kaftan, stations himself facing the eastern wall and recites the Mincha prayers in a voice both hoarse and nasal, yet incorporating the customary hazzanic frills ("Reb Moshe Velvel-Bal Agoleh").

"I don't know about you, but as for me, I confess to love a weekday Mincha. I prefer one weekday "Shemonoh Esrei" to ten hazzanic artistic selections, Sabbath — coloraturas and festival modes. The "Shemonoh Esrei" of the yohrzeit on the train was so full of heart and soul that it simply enervated us. And it seemed to me that even the tenth one, the whistler, was similarly affected. To hear a father say Kaddish after a son is no small thing. Add to this the yohrzeit's warm, sweet voice that poured as oil into our beings and, above all, the Kaddish.

Only a stone could remain untouched. In brief — that was a Mincha to remember (“Eisenbahn Geshichtes-Der Tzenter”) .”

It may have been said with tongue in cheek, but the characters of Sholom Aleichem were in need of no confirmation of the fact that they — above all others — are the true savants (Meivinim) when music is considered. For the genuine Meivin, no study, no scholarship, no professionalism is required. It is an innate, inalienable, undoubted talent that every Jew can — and does — claim. Singing, after all, is a “free” art in which everyone may — and, alas, does — indulge. For let’s not kid ourselves, there are some voices that are better still . . . In those exceptional cases, the author is entitled to treat the matter in his merciful manner.

“That Jews love music and understand the art of musicianship will not be denied even by our enemies. Although, arguing the reverse, we, but seldom get to hear it. Because due to what great joy should we, of a sudden, indulge in song and in dance? Nevertheless, say what you will, we are still the great connoisseurs of singing and, likewise, of playing as well as of other matters (“Stempenyu”).

Wine — that is one of the three things on which we are the greatest specialists in the world (the other two are: music and diamonds). But then it is no wonder, for what Jew dislikes music? Which Jew hasn’t heard such world-renowned hazzanim as Yeruchom, Pitze, Benny, Bezalel, Nisi Belzer, Boruch Karliner, Blumenthal, Bachman, Pinye Minkowsky and such other famous world-Hazzanim? And, in case he himself hasn’t heard them, others did. What’s the difference? We have an instinctive understanding of the musical art (“Arba Koises”).

“When they call him to the Torah and he chants the Maftir like a bell, sings the benedictions like a nightingale; then — “Aha!” From above, in the women’s gallery, there appear female noses and feminine eyes. On the noses is clearly evident — envy. (“Shmuel Schmelke Un Zein Yubileum”).

“Until she reached the age of fifteen or sixteen, Rochele used to sing free as a bird; no matter whether a “Nakdishcho”, a “Kevakoras”, a chasidic melody or an orchestral tune. Whatever she sang with her pleasant voice and modest mieu was a delight to hear (“Stempenyu”).

“Master of the World! What sort of ingredient is there

in Jewish singing and playing that produces such a mood of melancholy?! (“Bittere Sheva Broches”).

“Traveling thus through the forest I raise my voice and sing a tune. A festive joy fills my heart and I launch into “Veye-esoyu, Vechol Ma-aminim” and into passages from “Hallel” (“Tevye-Heintige Kinder”).

“In the morning we hastened to arise a little earlier and commence the “Adon Olam” with the old, well-known nusach (“Motel”).

“Shimon Elye-Shema Koleinu, so called because at services his habit was to sing with enthusiasm, holler with excitement, effervesce in the highest vocal register and effuse a spirit of frenzy. In addition he possessed a fairly good voice though a bit shrill and throaty. But he memorized all the proper nuschaot and melodies for practically the whole liturgy and he loved the pulpit with a life-consuming love. He was also the Gabai in the synagogue of the tailors and received, as expected, thunderious slaps on Simchas Torah at assigning the verses of “Atoh Horeiso” (“Der Farkishefter Shneider”).

“I can see why the glass-cutter wants to daven in the synagogue of the glazers, why the meat-cutters prefer the Butchers’ Synagogue and the Melamed prays with the Lubavitcher. Every bird to his flock — everyone to his profession. But you widower, why do you insist on crowding into the old synagogue to hear Sirota? Are you really such a meivin of music? You should hear this bird’s “Zemiros” on the Sabbath. A misfortune on him! The voice of a slaughtered rooster with the ambitions of a songbird! He so stupefies you with his off-key “Boruch She-ochalnu” that you cannot get rid of the sound all day Sunday (“Der Yomtovdiger Tzimes”).

The year 1899 was a crucial one in the history of the Yiddish folksong. In that year Peretz published (in the German Journal: “Urquell”) the first collection of Yiddish folksongs (he had collected about fifty). In the same year Ginsburg and Marek launched their collection — a major effort resulting in the gathering of approximately four hundred songs — by inserting announcements in various periodicals requesting readers to write down, have notated and send in all the folksongs known to them.

It was also in 1899 that Sholom Aleichem learned of an obscure, semi-assimilated lawyer in Kiev (where the author then resided) who dabbled in composing Yiddish songs which he sang to the

delight of all at intimate gatherings. "Bring the bird to me" requested Sholom Aleichem. Thus he met and formed a warm friendship with Mark Markewitch Warshawsky. The latter was a shy and retiring person and it took considerable persuasion to have Warshawsky write down and collect the songs he composed "in his mind". While the composer was able to accompany himself on the piano he had difficulty in writing down the melodies.

Sholom Aleichem cajoled, urged, helped, saw to the publication (in 1901) of the book of songs and wrote the foreward for the first edition as well as for the second edition (in 1914).

"Three-four years ago, a number of his acquaintances — I among them — chanced to hear him play and sing his Yiddish songs and we all became enthused. We heard a new type of song and we felt a novel flavor, a particular sweetness both in the text as well as in the melodies. And we implored him to write them down. We finally persuaded him to dictate the text to me and the melodies to a musician to notate them.

"In the early days, at Zionist gatherings, the dessert consisted of stories by Sholom Aleichem. Later, the songs of Warshawsky were added. They were acclaimed by throngs till the walls perspired. Virtually every evening they dragged us from Kretchatchik to Podol and from Podol to Kretchatchik. Since then one may hear these songs sung in many Jewish homes here in Kiev as well as in other cities. In these songs are reflected, as in clear waters, the gamut of Jewish life; its joys and its grief, its travails, its poverty and its tears."

A year and a half after their publication Sholom Aleichem arranged, in his own house, a celebration of the event. These, incidentally, were the happiest days in Warshawsky's life. At that time he received a position as an agent, representing a Belgian Hardware Company but shortly thereafter, following a brief illness, he died.

Not the least of Sholom Aleichem's accomplishments was his help in the publishing and popularizing the songs of Warshawsky many of which: "Teiere Malke"; "Hecher-Beser"; "Kinder mir hoben Simchas Toire" "Di Mechutonim Geien; Kinder"; "Dos Lied Fun Broit"; "Di Bobe and Oifen Pripetchok" have achieved the status of folksongs.

Neither before nor after Sholom Aleichem has there been a writer who so understood and loved Jewish music and musicians.

TODROS THE CANTOR

Interviewed by MICHAEL MINER

Todros Greenberg, at 83, looks back on his life and shares his memories with our readers. We glean more than one cantor's personal history, but the history of a remarkable generation of Jews, now almost gone, that served as the bridge between two great Jewish communities — Eastern Europe and America. If there is still a vibrant and recognizable Jewish life in America today, it is in no small measure owing to Todros Greenberg and his contemporaries who armed with nothing more than their faith, their people's history and their determination to see these both survive, built a life and a community on this continent which, despite its imperfections, bears still the unmistakable stamp of the seed of Abraham.

We have all too few such bits of oral history about cantors of the immigrant generation. It is our hope that Greenberg's moving biographical account will inspire others to record their own life stories for us and for posterity.

In addition to almost four decades of service as a hazzan, Greenberg is well known as a teacher, composer and scholar.

My life? Oh, there is nothing sensational. Between 38 and 40 I lost my eyesight. I got up in the morning, Saturday morning, and everything was black. So I thought — maybe the window shade. I put my hands out and I saw that the window shade isn't there. So I went to a doctor — I still remember him, Dr. Emil Braun, an old eye specialist — and he kept me for six hours in his office. And then he told me "Cantor Greenberg, you're an intelligent man. You had a hemorrhage in both eyes. We can't take out the eyes and take out the hemorrhage."

I had these shivers. So he told me the blood is still warm. He told me that might take a day or two, it'll cool off and it won't bother you, but that you won't be able to use it. But one thing he told me — "I want that you should promise me not to go to no doctors. Because you'll ruin yourself. You'll ruin your family. That is it for you. It's a case that happens very seldom. Sometimes it happens in one eye. But this time it happened in both eyes." And really, that is what I went through. ...

I was raised in a very poor house. I forgot who wrote it — "Hunger, Hunger." Somebody wrote a book about how life was miserable. No comparison to my life. I had eight sisters. My father

was a very poor man. He was a scholar, an intelligent man. For breakfast, or even lunch, a piece of herring. A little piece of herring.

We used to buy the head from the herring. Everybody had a piece, a glass of tea and a piece of bread. What else? Grapes and watermelons was very cheap. A piece of bread and a piece of watermelon was breakfast some times. Watermelons were three kopeks. A kopek was like a penny. They had marvelous grapes, the best. The Ukraine — they used to call it the mother earth.

But the government was very bad. Very bad. Not only to the Jew but especially to the Jew. My mother or my father would take me to the store and buy me a pair of new shoes. They used to buy them for five or ten or twenty kopeks. Twenty cents per shoe. So you can imagine what kind of shoes they were. Life was very, very miserable.

We lived most of the time in Odessa. I had an uncle that was a cantor, too. He found out that I had an exceptional alto voice with a high range. My uncle was in the reserves. He had to go to the Japanese War (1904). Most of the Jews didn't care to stay and help Russia. So he went to Austria and he took me with him. I could get out but he could not, so he paid I imagine about 20 ... 35 rubles. All over the border you could find a certain person that takes you over. They took you on their shoulders and they took you over to the other side. The other side was Austria. This was Russia. Legally you couldn't go.

You see, he (the uncle) needed me. He used to make money on me because I was a child prodigy. I used to sing arias and folk songs and Jewish and Hebrew prayers. He traveled with me all over Austria, Hungary, Budapest, Bucharest. I love very much Hungary. It's the most beautiful I've ever seen. I was in Berlin, too, but it doesn't compare to Budapest. The cleanliness! The people! Very honest people, and most of them lived very good. We traveled to all the big cities and small towns until I lost my voice. You know the change. And then I started thinking. What am I going to do? I have no other profession. I have nothing. I was at that time about 17 years old.

So I came back to Russia and I came to the town where my father was. Zivotow, in the state of Kiev. It's a little town, about 400 population. And my father tried to praise his son so he said my son is a cantor already, and I wasn't. But they put me out to the pulpit and I *did* perform. And they liked it! You know a Jewish cantor at that time — and I'm not talking about now, don't forget it must have been 1909 or 1908 — and at that time they will

not accept a cantor without a wife. He must be married. He shouldn't have to go around to look for women. They want him to be pure.

So it happened that there was a Jew that was the president of the congregation, and he had a lot of girls in his house — boys and girls. I used to go in there. A cousin of mine lived next door, so he told me, 'What's the difference, as long as you have a wife. The president has so many girls. Let him pick out a girl and get married.' So I said to myself, 'That's not a bad idea. I'll have a wife and I'll have a job.' And I decided to.

I got acquainted to one of the girls, by the name Raysel, then I got married. The story of my marriage could be an episode. You see, when I was in the little town I was a choirleader before my (adult) voice came. She wanted to study, she loved music and she wanted to study Hebrew. And she had a beautiful library of books, music. She loved Russian folk music. And I loved it very much. I used to take a walk in the fields and I heard them sing. I adopted certain melodies and put them in our prayers.

I went to a Jewish cheder. That was a school just for Jews. Hebrew and prayers and the Torah, the Bible. Otherwise you could not go to school. You see we had a per cent. If in the neighborhood where you live there's a hundred non-Jewish that go to school, they'll accept one Jew. One per cent. So it was pretty hard to study there in Russia for a Jew. The life of the Jew was very miserable there.

It's not so much the people that were in Russia. Fact is, the muzik, what we call him, the plain farmer, was a goodhearted fellow. But the government was as rotten as the rest. The czar Nickolai and Alexandrovich, the second and the third and the last one, they were murderers. They need something to blame. Go hate the Jew! Rob the Jew! And they didn't care what.

I remember a picture I will never forget. I was in the street and I had my grandfather, and suddenly I looked up and somebody hit him with a stone and he dropped dead. Dead on the street. And mind you, on the corner there was a policeman because in Odessa on almost every corner there was a policeman. He didn't even turn. He was still alive a little bit. I remember him, he told me, 'Todros, run home. Run home.' And he went down and died. So that's one more picture.

My wife's parents were well-to-do but not rich. When I got married they promised me 500 rubles. I didn't take it because, at that time, I told them our mind is settled that we are going to

America. It was 1913, a year before the first World War. I wasn't afraid they would take me, because my eyes were never good. So we decided to go to America. I told them they'd have to pay my expenses to America, so they gave me, I don't remember, 300 rubles, 400 rubles. It was about 200 dollars. The dollar was two rubles. I went in the boat for 24 days. It was terrible. It was with cattle. I landed in Galveston, Texas. It was the first time people landed in Galveston. Most of them landed in New York.

I came to Kansas City, Missouri, because my wife had a brother who came to America the year before. They told me that there was a position open and I performed in an audition, and they seemed to like it, otherwise they wouldn't accept me, and I stayed there until 1919.

My wife came in 1914 from Russia at the beginning of the war. She was on the last boat. If I had waited another month, two months, I could not have brought her back. At the same time I received a telegram to meet my wife at the station, I received a telegram from Odessa that my father passed away. The same day. My father died young. He was 54 years old. My mother was always the sick person but my father died young. My mother lived till about 72, 73. I didn't know even that he was sick. And he wasn't sick. But he was neglected. I'm sure that he would be sick here but, I don't know, they watch more than they did there.

In 1919 there was a synagogue here — maybe you pass by it, Ashland and Polk — considered the top Orthodox congregation here. And they needed a cantor. I had a friend from Kansas City and he knew the president of the shul (synagogue) so he says, 'What's going on at the Shul?' So he says, 'We have a problem. Our cantor left us.' So my friend told him, "There is a young fellow, I don't know if he's married or not. I think he's married, yeah. He lives in Kansas City." And I suppose he gave a good recommendation.

They wired me I should come for an audition and I came and I accepted the position. But I stayed only one year and then this congregation took me — K. J. ... Kehilath Jacob — and I stayed there about 35 years. It's a strict Orthodox synagogue.

I try to write music, songs, but my main language that I possess is Yiddish, Jewish or Russian. English — I'm not so up-to-date. When I was 20 years old I published 37 songs. I was real much interested in music. I organized a school here. At that time we were connected with the College of Jewish Studies and I happened to be the dean of the music department — in the cantorial school, And I had lots of students. I have published about four,

five, six publications. My students, especially two of them, are working on a big publication. This will have almost everything I have composed.

You know we have prayers for the high holidays. The fact is the Conservative movement changed a lot of prayers. They made them beautiful, there's no question about it. But the strict Orthodox does not agree with them. I was raised under strict Orthodox but now when the prayers are changed we have to change the words too. Everybody agrees the prayer books are beautiful, but it's a little hard for me, especially when I have problems with my eyes. At least it gave me something to work.

And that was my life in short. But six years ago my wife got sick and I got sick. There was a doctor Horowitz, he was an eye doctor but now he became only nose, throat and ears. So when he looked at my throat he said, "I'm sorry Cantor Greenberg, your vocal chords are paralyzed. You should be glad at least you'll be able to talk. Because sometimes when the vocal chords are getting paralyzed . . ."

My wife died about three years ago in this place. I lived with her for 60 years. She was a very lovely woman. Intelligent and also a musician. She loved music. So it was all right with me. I had two children with her. One, my older daughter, a musician, married a rabbi. A Conservative rabbi. And she passed away about 30 years ago. So now I've got one daughter, and her husband is also a rabbi in Gary, Indiana. So that's almost everything in a nutshell.

And now I'm doing very little. As far as life is concerned . . . You get used to some things. If ten years ago somebody would tell me that I'll come in a home, to stay in a home . . . Please, I must tell you the home is marvelous. The home is very good, outstanding. They take so much care. The food is the best and they have good doctors. The room is OK. The only thing is, I don't know what to do with myself! I am blind. And I have problems with my feet. So what's the use, today, when you cannot produce, when you can't do what you did? Does it pay to live all day for three cups of coffee? I don't think it does. But that's it, take it or leave it.

I'll tell you, I'm a coward by nature. You see I have no luck. **Mazel.** I told myself, when I would go to the building of the twentieth floor and jump I wouldn't get killed. I would just break my feet. So that's why I don't want to take chances. If I would know that I would get killed — but luck is not with me. So — break my head, my nose, my ears. But listen, the fact is I'm a cowardly person.

(Greenberg puts a record on his portable phonograph and listens

to himself sing. The keening voice is strong and graceful and Greenberg mouths the words of the prayers his old voice is singing.)

I tell you, about three years ago I decided ... the fact is this is not a commercial record ... I come to the conclusion to myself, well, I may be too old ... so I decided what could I leave for my grandchildren ... my great-grandchildren ... for my family ... my nieces ... my nephews? Money I have not got, so I decided it would cost me a few hundred dollars and I'll leave them with this. So once in a while, ten years from now, twenty years from now ... "Let's hear it again, papa." "Let's hear father." You see I have here — tapes. So from the tapes I made the records ...

I used to sing beautiful. Especially in Hungarian and Russian. That was my pride ... You see, a Jew is a businessman. You know the Jew, the type of Jew. And if a Jew keeps a rabbi or a cantor for 35 years he must have been good. Otherwise they wouldn't keep me on hand 35 days.

You see a congregation is built — I would say, 40-50 per cent is the members that they have, but that wouldn't cover the expenses. So they figure 50 per cent will come from outside. You see, the public who come in each shul, they depend upon the cantor, or the rabbi. It's competition all over. Even the religious life.

Years ago a congregation kept a cantor three years, four years, two years, a year. They used to change around. Now they stay for years and years. So I have no kick coming. I mean as far as my profession is concerned. I made a nice living and I raised two fine children, one of whom passed away. So I have no kick coming against America. I was happy. Especially when a Jew comes from Russia ... he has to struggle for a livelihood — he still is happy.

At first I lived on Ashland Boulevard when I was a cantor there for a year. At Ashland and Polk there's a big synagogue and now the Greeks bought it I think. And then I lived on Douglas Boulevard for 29 years, in one flat, and then I moved here, I think, for about six years. You see, time with me is something — I remember things that happened 50, 60, 70 years. What happened yesterday I don't know.

I did get up once in the morning and I think "Is it morning? Is it noon?" I knew I had to go to eat but I didn't ... I think, "Is it morning?" But then I look at myself! I was dressed! It couldn't be morning. I wouldn't sleep with my suit! So now the question is, is it noon or is it supper? Somebody pass by and came in and said hi, tells me "How do you feel?" So I ask him — I was ashamed — I ask him "Do we have to go to eat?" "Oh no, you still got time. You know supper'll be at five o'clock." So then I

found out it was three and then some. I suppose I came from lunch and took a nap.

But the home I'm telling you is worth a million dollars. Such a good home! We have a synagogue here. We pray every day. We have the moon prayer at the beginning of the month, give us life, happiness, and everything that is good. We also pray every day the same thing. No, if prayers would help I would pray day in and day out . . . You see religion, when you start, either believe or don't believe. Don't start to making this out, this in, this out. You start to rationalize, nothing will be left. You know, you are a Jew or you're not . . .

Sometimes I envy a strict religious man. I myself am not so strict. Because if something happens with him, well this is the way that God has most wanted him, I am then blind, well God wanted you should be blind. So in other words I have nothing to do with it. It's God's deed. He has to lean upon somebody. So the nearest to his heart is God.

To be honest with you . . . there are between three, four billion people on this world. It happens there are rare cases such as mine. I don't believe that it's God's doing. If he did it, why? why? why? You see it was about two weeks ago I was lying down listening to the radio, so then I start to cry. I'm a very easy crier. I can cry for any little thing. So I start to cry and I feel . . . "God, why did you do it?" I had about seven, eight boys, they came for my help, and I have God and I want to give it to them but I can't. So I start to cry and then I ask, "God why did you do it God? Why did you? At least take one eye and leave me one eye." But then I told myself, "Todros, what kind of fool are you? Aren't you glad at least God didn't take away your mind? You still have your mind. You should be happy with your mind alone." And that is it. If I'm right or wrong, it makes no difference. Why? Why? Why? Who can give an answer? Nobody can answer. Nobody can, no. It's foolish. . .

The Talmud says that a person shall not praise himself. Somebody else shall praise you. But if nobody knows you, how can you expect they should praise you? They don't know you. King Solomon says . . . he came into this town and he said, "I am Solomon." Nobody believed him. So he says, "If you come in a strange town and nobody knows you and you want to be known, you're allowed to praise yourself. Don't be afraid. But don't overdo it."

You see, I tried to live a nice life and I *had* a nice life. Please God, my children, my grandchildren, not to be ashamed of their grandfather!

MUSIC SECTION

Two heretofore unpublished compositions by the late Chemjo Vinaver. They were commissioned by Hazzan Saul Meisels for the Temple on the Heights, Cleveland, Ohio.

V' CHOL MAAMI NIM - (*) -

Moderato

Chemjo Vinaver

Soprano: (ppp) (HM)

Alto: (HM)

Tenor: (HM)

Bass: (HM)

V' - CHOL MA - - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM

Soprano: MA - - MI - NIM, MA - - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM

Alto: (HM)

Tenor: (HM)

Bass: (HM)

CHOL MA - - MI - NIM

CHOL MA - MI - NIM

Soprano: (mf) MA - - MI - - NIM, MA - - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM. (p) (poco rit.) (pp)

Alto: (HM)

Tenor: (HM)

Bass: (HM)

MA - - MI - NIM, MA - - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM.

MA - - MI - NIM, MA - - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM.

Cantor:-

(mf) V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM SHE - HU EYL E - MU - NO HA -

Cantor:-

BO-CHEYN U - VO - DEYK GIN-ZEY NIS - TO-ROS

(pp)

V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM V' -

V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM V' -

- CHOL MA - MI - NIM MA - - - MI - NIM MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - -

- CHOL MA - MI - NIM MA - - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - -

- NIM, MA - - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - - NIM.

- NIM, MA - - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - - NIM.

Cantor

V' - CHOL MA - - MI - NIM SHE-HU BO-CHEYN K'-LO-YOS HA- GO-

- EYL MI' - MO - - - - VES'U' - FO' - DE' MI - SHA - CHAS.

Choir Unison: V'CHOL MA- MI-NIM V'

Choir:

-CHOL MA - MI - NIM, MA - - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI -

- NIM, MA - - MI - - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - - NIM.

Cantor: -

V' - CHOL, V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM, MA - MI - - NIM SHE-

- - HU GO-EYLCHO-ZOK HA- DON Y' - CHI - DI L' - VO- EY O- LOM.

[Choir Unison:-

V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM, MA - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' -

- CHOL MA - MI - - - - NIM, MA - - MI - - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' -

[Cantor:-

V' - CHOL MA - A - MI - NIM SHE -

[Choir :-

- CHOL MA - MI - - - - NIM.

- HU DA - YON E - MES HE - | HO - GUI B' - E - HE - YEH, A - SHER E - HE - YEH.

[Unison:-

V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' -

- CHOL MA - - MI - - - - NIM. MA - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' -

Cantor:-

Choir:-

V' - CHOL MA - MI-NIM SHE-HU HO-YO V' -

- CHOL MA - MI - - - - NIM.

- HO - VE V' - YIH - YE HA - VA - - DAY SH' -MO KEYN T' -HI- LO- SO.

(HM), MA - MI - NIM, MA-MI-NIM V'-CHOL MA-MI-

V'CHOL MA - MI-NIM V' - CHOL MA-MI-NIM, (HM),

(HM)

S. - MIN, MA - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM.

R. CHOL MA - MI-NIM, MA - - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM.

T. - CHOL MA - MI-NIM, MA - MI - NIM, MA - MI - NIM V' - CHOL MA - MI - - NIM.

B.

SH' MA KOLEYNU - (*) -

for

Cantor, Choir and Organ

Chemjo Vianaver

Andante

(pp)

(rit.)

Cantor:-

Sh' ma ko- ley- nu A - do - noi e - lo - hey- nu, chus

chus v' - ra - cheym o - ley - - nu, v' - ka -

beyl b' - ra - cha - mim uv - ro - tson, es t' - fi - lo - sey - - nu,

(mf)

(*) - Commissioned by Cantor Saul Meisels for the Temple on the Heights, Cleveland, Ohio

(f) ha-shi - vey - - - nu a - do - noi _____, ey -
 (f) ha - shi - vey - nu a - do - noi
 (f) ha - shi - vey - nu a - do - noi

The first system consists of five staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 12/4 time signature. It begins with a rest, followed by a fermata, and then the lyrics "ha-shi - vey - - - nu a - do - noi _____, ey -". The second and third staves are piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs respectively, with a 4/4 time signature. They feature chords and moving lines, with dynamic markings of (f) and accents. The fourth and fifth staves are piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs with a 12/4 time signature, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal line.

- le - cho v' - no - shu - vo (sf) cha - deysh, cha - deysh yomeynu k' -
 (oi) _____, ey - le - cho v' - no - shu - - - - vo
 (oi) _____, ey - le - cho v' - no - shu - - - - vo

The second system consists of five staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 12/4 time signature. It contains the lyrics "- le - cho v' - no - shu - vo (sf) cha - deysh, cha - deysh yomeynu k' -". The second and third staves are piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs with a 4/4 time signature. They feature sustained chords and moving lines, with dynamic markings of (sf) and (oi). The fourth and fifth staves are piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs with a 12/4 time signature, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal line.

- ke - dem

(mp) cha - deysh yo - mey - - - nu k' - ke - - - - dem.

(mp) cha - deysh yo - mey - - - nu k' - ke - - - - - dem.

(pp) A - mo - rev - nha - a - - zi - no a - do - noi, bi - no ha - gi - gey - - nu,

(pp) A - mo - rev - nu ha - a - zi - no a - do - noi, bi - no ha - gi - gey - - nu,

(p) Yih' - - - yu l' - ro - tson im - - rey fi - - - nu v' - heg +

(p) Yih' - - - yu l' - ro - tson im - - rey fi - - - nu v' - heg

(pp)

- yon li - bey - nu l' - fo - ne - - - cho a - do - noi tsu -
 - yon li - bey - nu l' - fo - ne - - - cho a - do - noi tsu -

(mp) pp

- rey - nu, tsu - rey - nu v' - - - go - a - ley - - - nu.
 - rey - nu. tsu - rey - nu v' - - - go - a - ley - - - nu.

Cantor:-

(f) Al tash - li - chey - nu mil - fo - - - ne - - - cho v' - - ru - ach

(HM)

(HM)

6

kod-she -cho _____, al ti -kach mi-mey -nu.

Al tash -li - chey - nu mil-fo

Al tash -li - chey - nu mil-fo

- ne - - - cho v' - ru - ach kod -she-cho _____, al ti -kach mi - me - nu.

- ne - - - cho v' - ru - ach kod -she-cho _____, al ti -kach mi-me - nu.

Cantor:-

(*mp*) Al tash-li -chey - nu _____ l' - eys zik - - - - no kich - los ko -

Organ:- (*pp*)

- chey - - nu al _____, al ta-az vey - - - nu.

(*ff*) Al tash-li - chey - nu l' - eys zik - - - no kich - los ko -

(*ff*) Al tash-li - chey - nu l' - eys zik - - - no kich - los ko -

- chey - - - nu, al ta - az - - vey - nu

- chey - - - nu, al ta - az - - vey - nu

RECORD REVIEW

MORTON SHAMES

MUSIC FROM ANSHE EMET SYNAGOGUE OF CHICAGO

Featuring Cantor Moses J. Silverman with
Burton H. Scalin at the Organ

Cantor Moses J. Silverman has been the Hazzan of Anshe Emet Synagogue for over thirty years, and it is indeed an honor to him that in recognition of the congregation's centennial year they have issued this album.

There is no doubt that Hazzan Silverman is a most gifted man with a very beautiful voice and a great talent as an exponent of the music and liturgy of our people. It is a voice of great range and flexibility, and encompasses many moods. He is a gifted interpreter of the texts. There are moments of great beauty, as in the composition "Hineni" which he sings with understatement and deep fervor. On the other hand there are times when the intonation is not good, especially in some of the exclamatory attacks in the upper register. It is difficult, however, to tell whether this is, in fact, a fault of the recording which was made from tapes recorded on different occasions in the synagogue. Hazzan Silverman's falsetto is uncanny in its purity and beauty, and he uses it with great effect.

The compositions are mostly those composed by the Hazzan himself in traditional style. They include, in addition to the "Hineni" which is inventive and interesting, "Sim Shalom", "Elohai N'tzor," and "Modim"; but there is a sameness about the other compositions. The balance between the organ (played beautifully by Burton H. Scalin) is often uneven, and, in many instances, although you hear the organ, does not give the feeling of presence. This is true also of the choir in "Kol Nidre" where it is difficult to hear them. There is also a short cello obligatto in that composition which unfortunately is almost inaudible.

Hazzan Silverman is indeed a *sheliach tzibbur* in the finest sense and his talents in this field are on the highest level possible. It is unfortunate that these technical shortcomings take away from the beauty and artistry of the artist and the music. Yet, I am delighted to own the album and I would urge every lover of synagogue music to place it in his record library. (The record may be obtained from the Anshe Emet Synagogue.)