IN THE SYNAGOGUE WITH THE GREAT CANTORS

A SPECIAL GREATER RECORDING COMPANY LONG PLAYING RECORD SERIES
RECAPTURING THE MOST MEMORABLE PERFORMANCES OF WORLD FAMOUS
CANTORS AND COMPOSERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE LITURGY
In the Synagogue with the Great Cantors Series

SIDE 1
CANTOR SHLOMO BEINHORN
V'HRUSHALAYIM IRCHU
CANTOR MEYER KANEFSKY
ARIO ZOCER
CANTOR MORRIS STEINBERG
(MOSHE DER ZOCER)
YIRU EINAYNU
V'HU RACHUM
BIRCHAS KOHANIM
SIM SHALOM

SIDE 2
CANTOR MORDECHAI SHAPIRO
MI SHEBERACH
YEHI RATZON (ROSH CHODESH)
CANTOR YAAYOV RAPAPORT
UNSANE TOIKEF
K'VAKoras
KOL NIDRE
HAyEIN YAKIR LI
CANTOR SHLOMO BEINHORN
AL TIROH MIPACHAD PISOM

SIDE 3
CANTOR YITZCHOK GLUCKSTEIN
RETZE VIYNUCHOSAYNU
BROSH HASHONAH
YAALEH TACHANUNAYNU
CANTOR MOISHELE SOORKIS
(THE BLIND CANTOR)
MENORES HOKHEM
V'CHULUM MKABILIM
L'MAN YIRBU
CANTOR YITZCHOK GLUCKSTEIN
HASHIVOH SHOFTAYNU

SIDE 4
CANTOR YITZCHOK GLUCKSTEIN
MIN HAMAYTZAR
CANTOR MOISHELE SOORKIS
(THE BLIND CANTOR)
KIDDUSH
CANTOR ELYAHU KRITICHMAR
L'YKEL BORUCH
BIRCHAS KohenIM
AKAVYO
CANTOR YITZCHOK GLUCKSTEIN
BIRCHAS KohenIM

SIDE 5
CANTOR YISROEL T'KATCH
V'SEREV
KYDO
CANTOR MAYER SCHOR
HINENI HEONI
ARESHEIS STOSAYNU
CANTOR GERSHEN SIROTA
HAMECHADES B'TUVO
CANTOR SHLOOMEL ROTHSTEIN
KOL NIDRE

SIDE 6
CANTOR SHLOOMEL ROTHSTEIN
OVINU HOOV HORACHAMON
YEHI ROTHZON MILPENE OVINU
CANTOR YOSELE SHILSKY
KOL HASHEM
CANTOR YESHAYAH MEISELS
ROSH CHODESH BENCHEN
YISHITABACH
CANTOR BORUCH SCHOR
V'SEREV

Song and music have always played an important role in Jewish culture. Indeed, the Bible itself enumerates the various musical instruments used during Temple days as well as the songs sung by the Levites during the services. The earliest reference to music is found in the Book of Genesis (IV,21)where jubal is mentioned as the world's first musician. Early Biblical music, however, was primarily of a religious nature, used mostly in prayer and during religious holidays. After the destruction of the Second Temple, synagogues became the centers of Jewish worship. In these small houses of worship, the services were conducted by a representative of the congregation, Sheliach Tzibbur. The first cantors were known as Paytanim (poets) and they not only sang the melodies but also composed the tunes and poems as well. The Paytan took the place of the Levites who performed the Amidah (service) in the Temple. These cantors inspired the people with beautiful liturgical melodies of the written prayers and helped to maintain a continuous interest in Jewish song and music. Unfortunately, the early cantor was not professionally trained in the art of musical notation, thus many fine musical compositions were forever lost. The ancient melodies that remain today have been passed on from father to son, from generation to generation, and are accepted as the pillars of the synagogue liturgy.

With the advent of the Siddur, many new melodies were introduced to the Jewish people. Compositions called "Zmirot" were chanted at the Sabbath table and on other religious occasions, adding beauty and spiritual uplift to the Jewish home.

The year 1734 marked the founding of the Hasidic movement by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. This was the most significant event in Jewish musical history. Hasidism encouraged the emotional aspect of religion. Their belief that certain emunot (religious beliefs) were better expressed by song or dance, paved the way for new compositions of spiritual inspiration and elevation. Early Hasidic leaders constantly encouraged their followers to create new melodies in honor of various religious occasions, thus enhancing their observance.

Cantorial music as it is known today first took root in Eastern Europe at the start of the 19th century. Eager students flocked about the early masters, and a number of cantorial schools soon developed. Each school was noted for its individual style. Musical notation was still uncommon in cantorial circles, forcing the young cantors to memorize hundreds of intricate compositions. This sometimes resulted in a temporary lapse of memory, which tested the cantor's skill in improvisation.

The continuous appearance of new melodies and compositions eventually helped the formal acceptance of musical notation by the cantors. Unfortunately, this led to a more fixed rather than flexible service. It was not at all unusual for a cantor to attend a professional school of music, while continuing with his cantorial lessons. Larger cities engaged full time cantors who organized choirs to enhance the services. Smaller towns favored congregational singing without cantorial embellishments, blending their singing with that of the Baal T'filoh.

The twentieth century brought unrest and persecution to the Jews of Eastern Europe. Countless restrictions were placed on the Jewish community by the European governments and the Jew was the first to be deprived of his religious freedom. This unfortunate situation encouraged many Jews to leave Eastern Europe and settle in America. Little did those immigrants realize how truly fortunate they were. Those Jews who remained in Europe were later slaughtered in the greatest holocaust that ever befell the Jewish people. Among the early immigrants that came to the Western world, were cantors with voices whose equal are seldom heard today. This marked the start of a new Jewish era known as "the Golden Age of Cantors."

This great era was not destined to endure for long. With the death of the twentieth century cantors, people were deprived of an art priceless to Jewish culture and music. Few cantors recorded their music. Today these recordings are collectors' items and the original discs are extremely rare.

Many of the performances appearing in this series were among the first discs to be recorded on phonograph records.

Appearing is a collection of the most famous masterpieces of the great cantors. These recordings were expressly engineered to recapture for the listener the full flavor of actual concerts by the artists as they performed many years ago.

The latest technical advances have been employed to best represent the original voices in both range and quality of sound. Special engineering skills were used to make it possible for the Greater Recording Co., Inc. to offer you a recording of superior quality and the highest attainable standards.

ABOUT THE COVER
A beautiful oil painting by the late Saul Raskin, depicting the interior of a very ancient Sephardic Synagogue in Safed, Israel, appears on the jacket cover.

RABBI ALAN YACKOW PRODUCTION

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