The Incomparable

JOSEF ROSENBLATT

MY YIDDISHE MOMME • EILI, EILI • KOL NIDREI
and other great Jewish favorites
Cantor Josef Rosenblatt was to Jewish liturgical music what Enrico Caruso was to opera. As every tenor strives to emulate Caruso, so it is that every cantor models himself after the immortal Rosenblatt. He was an intensely devout Jew, and one can detect that devotion to God in his heart and soul when he sings. On the High Holy Days, Jews—whether Orthodox—would come from afar just to hear him. His artistry was such that it could both mesmerize and elevate the listener to the highest plane of spirituality. He could easily have had a concert career, but he steadfastly refused, choosing to remain a cantor.

This album presents the unique versatility of Josef Rosenblatt. It includes concert music (Massenet's 'Elégie'), Jewish folk songs such as 'Eli, Eli' and 'My Yiddische Momme'—both sung in Yiddish—and liturgical masterpieces such as 'Kol Nidrei' and Tikanto Shabbos.

—Harold S. Brown

Side 1

My Yiddische Momme

(Recorded 5/17/26) (3:32)

Of things I should be thankful for I've had a good share, and as I sit here in the comfort of a cozy chair, my fancy takes me to a humble East Side tenement—three flats up in the rear to where my childhood days were spent.

It wasn't much like paradise, but ‘mid the dirt and all there sat the sweetest angel, one that I fondly call: My yiddische momme—she needed more than ever now, My yiddische momme—I’d love to kiss that wrinkled cheek. I long to hold her hands once as in days gone by and ask her to forgive me for things that made her cry.

How few were her pleasures! She never cared for fashion's styles. Her jewels and treasures—she found them in her baby's smiles.

Oh, I know that I owe what I am today to that dear little lady so old and gray, to that wonderful yiddische momme, momme mine.

Translation by Jack Yellen

Eli, Eli

(Recorded 4/4/33) (4:33)

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?
In fire and flame our race did they burn,
with shame's ignominy its masses brand.
Yet one was able to rise from Thee to turn,
not from Thee, my God,
or Thy sacred Torah, Thine own command.
My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?

Day and night, in my plight,
I think but of Thee, my God,
I keep, with awe, Thy sacred Law
though bearing oppression's rod.

Rescue me, rescue me once more,
as Thou didst my fathers in days of yore!

Hear me, O Lord, and show Thine ear to me!
All my reliance is on Thee.

Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God. The Lord is one.

Der Neuer "Omar Rabbi Elsor"

(The New "Omar Rabbi Elazar")

(Recorded 9/13/21) (4:47)

Said Rabbi Elazar in the name of Rabbi Channa:
The disciples of the ages increase peace throughout the world, as it is said:

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Read not here baranyah, thy children, but baranyah, thy builders.—Great peace have they that love Thy Torah;
and there is no stumbling for them. Peace be within thy rampart, tranquility within thy palaces.

For my children's and companion's sake, I would fain speak peace concerning thee.

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God I would seek thy good.

The Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

—a quotation from the end of the first tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, included in the order of services of the eve of the Sabbath as well as in the additional services of Sabbath and holiday mornings. In the traditional chant used in the study of the Talmud a colorful pattern of robusto tones; contrast and coloratura in falsoetto has been woven by the composer and has been executed by him in his own inimitable manner.

Sog Ze Rebenu

(Recorded 5/5/26) (4:47)

with Cantor Samuel Malavsky

Tell me, rabbi dear,
what will happen when Messiah will come?
When Messiah will come, we shall have a gala feast.
What will we eat at this gala feast?
The meat of the wild ox of the Levithian.

That's what we shall eat at the Messiah's feast.

That's what we shall drink, the wine kept from creation's day.

That's what we shall drink.

That's what we shall eat, the meat of the wild ox of the Levithian.

What will the prophet say at this gala feast?
Moses, our teacher, will expound the Torah.

Who will make music for us at this gala feast?
David, the king, will play the music.

Moses, our teacher, etc.

Who will speak words of wisdom at this gala feast?
Solomon, the king, will speak words of wisdom.

David, the king, etc.

Who will dance at this gala feast?
King Solomon, the prophet, will dance.

Solomon, the king, etc.

Tikanto Shabbos

(Recorded 9/13/21) (4:21)

Thou didst institute the Sabbath and didst accept its offerings.

Thou didst command special obligations with the order of its drink offerings.

They that find delight in it shall inherit glory for everlastingly.

They that taste these are worthy of life, while such as love its teachings have chosen true greatness.

Already from Sinai they were commanded concerning it, and Thou hast commanded us, O Lord our God to bring in additional offerings of the Sabbath as is meet.

May it be Thy will, O Lord, that the God of our fathers, to lead us up in joy unto our land, and to plant us within our borders, where we will prepare unto Thee the offerings that are obligatory for us, the continual offerings according to their order, and the additional offerings according to their enactment.

—the beginning of the special section from the fundamental prayer of the additional service of the Sabbath that is read after the Pentecostal lesson. Sabbath joy, the fulfillment of the obligations prescribed for the Sabbath and hope for Israel's return to its ancestral land are the motifs that lend variety as well as color to this recitative in which each different emotion is given its own formulation.

Elégie

(Recorded 9/22/25) (2:08)

O spring of days long ago, blooming and bright, far from thy good.
No more the skies' azure light,
caroling birds waken and glisten for me.

Bearing all joy from sin's dark zone,
how far from my life hast thou flown?

Vainly to me does the springtime return.

It brings thee never again.

Dark is the sunless day the days of delight.
Cold is my heart and as dark as the grave.

Life is in vain evermore.

Translation by Charlotte H. Gussen
Side 1 Mono

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Josef Rosenblatt

Yellen-Pollack
My Yiddishe Momme

RCA

VICTROLA

Eili, Eili
Der Neuer "Omar Rabbi Elosor" (Arr.: N. Shilkret)
Sog Ze Rebenju
Tikanto Shabbos (Arr.: N. Shilkret)
Massenet Élégie
1-5. with Orch. cond. by Nathaniel Shilkret
4. with Cantor Samuel Malavsky
6. with Orch.
(1, 2, 6. In Yiddish)
(3-5. In Hebrew)

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Side 2 Mono
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Kol Nidrei
Tal

Rosenblatt Wehu Rachum
Seltz-Rosenblatt-Portnoff
Lomir Sich Iberbeten

1. with Organ, S. Braslovsky
2. Assisted by Mr. Meilech Kaufman
   with Orch. cond. by Nathaniel Shilkret
3. with Organ, Isadore Freed
4. with Cantor Samuel Malavsky
   with Orch. cond. by Nathaniel Shilkret
   (In Hebrew)

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