THE CHANUKKAH STORY

sung by THE WESTERN WIND

written by RABBI GERALD C. SKOLNIK
Excerpt from Benedetto Marcello's transcription of Maoz Tzur published in Estro Poetico Armonico (Venice 1724).

Temporary idiom that illuminates the beauty and rapture of this melody.

The second version of Maoz Tzur (Rock Of Ages in English) is one which will be familiar to almost every Jew of German and Eastern European background as well as to Christians raised in the Protestant tradition. Our harmonized version is taken from the Union Hymnal, the songbook of the late 19th-century American German Jewish community. This melody is based on some of the same sources that Luther used for his hymns—German folk melodies from the Renaissance.

Folk melodies form a major part of the music on The Chanukkah Story. The texts for these songs were written by several important writers who were part of a movement, starting in the 1850's, to create two new literary languages: Yiddish and modern Hebrew. Yiddish had evolved since the middle ages as the vernacular of European Jewry, but its literature only began late in the 19th century. Mordkhe Rivesman (1868-1924), who provided the poems for Chanukkah Oy Chanukkah and Tzindt On Likhtelekh, and the "labor poet," Morris Rosenfeld (1862-1923), who gave us the poignant, O Ir Kleyne Likhtelekh, were two important figures in the development of Yiddish poetry. Two of their counterparts in developing a modern Hebrew literature were Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873-1934), author of the text for Lichvod Hachanukkah, and Levin Kipnis (b.1894) who wrote many poems for children, including Mi Ze Hidlik, and S'vivon. The marriage of these Yiddish and Hebrew poems to folk melodies supports the poets' aspiration to create a literature that was rooted in the experience and language of the people.

A corresponding Yiddish art-song movement pioneered by well-educated and musically literate composers is represented on our recording by Solomon Golub (1887-1952), Michel Gelbart (1899-1966), and Meir Posner (1892-1931). Often beginning their musical careers as boy soprano "meshorerim," choristers who improvised accompaniments for cantors, these composers went on to conservatory training in Europe and came to America in the early decades of the twentieth century intent on raising the level of Jewish music. Gelbart organized the Workmen's Circle chorus and devoted himself to educating children and creating children's music—and lyrics under the nom de plume of Ben Aaron—like his Chanukkah "hit," I Have A Little Dreydle. Posner succeeded Gelbart as the conductor of the Workmen's Circle chorus, authored a Yiddish harmony text, and created a Yiddish singing translation of Mendelssohn's oratorio, Elijah. They were also popularizers of contemporary Yiddish poetry as evidenced by Solomon Golub's setting of Boruch Ate, Zingt Der Tate by Avrom Reisen (1876-1953), which touchingly conveys the harsher side of the American experience and the uplifting energy of the Chanukkah lights.

Certainly no recording containing Yiddish songs could be complete without a "number" by Avrom Goldfaden (1840-1908), the founder of the Yiddish musical theater. A musically illiterate tunesmith, Goldfaden brought the music of the Eastern European ghetto to the stages of Europe and
MI ZE Y’MALEL (Sephardic Song)
Who can describe the miracles of God—
performed in the days of Mattathias the son of Yochanan.
I will rejoice in the Lord.
He performed great deeds for the sons of the Hasmoneans.
He is exalted above all exalted ones.
He was revealed at Sinai.
His chariots are “myriads upon myriads.”
In each generation many rise up against us
and would destroy all memory of our remnant—
If not for our God, Lord of Hosts, who humbles them.
And in the days of the Greeks, sons of iniquity, they took
counsel against us.
They prohibited the observance of the Sabbath,
the celebration of the New Moon and circumcision.
These three they tried to take away from us.
Our arrogant enemies drew their bows against us—
Alisha, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim,* —
(Against us) a nation of priests
They entered and defiled the temple...
* Biblical names traditionally associated with the Greeks.

Translated by Shalom Goldman

HAYO HAYA (Chassidic Song)
Once there was a wicked King,
His sword was sharp, his darts did sting.
What was his name? — Antiochus!

He came to Jerusalem’s holy quarter,
And shed our blood like water.
What was his name? — Antiochus!

He came and burned the Torah,
Put out the Menorah.
What was his name? — Antiochus!

Rise the hero Judah the brave,
His ancient land to save.
What was his name? — the Maccabee!

In the Temple he lit the Menorah,
And then the Jews had light.
When was this? On Chanukkah!

MI Y’MALEL (Menashe Ravina)
Who can retell the things that befell us? Who can count them?
In every age a hero or sage arose to our aid!
Hark! In days of yore, in Israel’s ancient land,
Brave Maccabeus led the faithful band.

Notes by William Zukof

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TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

CHANUKKAH, OY CHANUKKAH
(Mordkhe Rivesman)
Oh Chanukkah, oh Chanukkah
What a beautiful holiday!
It is happy and joyous. It has no equal.
Every night we play dreydle (spin the top)
And eat tasty, hot latkes (pancakes), as many as you want.
Hurry children, light the candles.
Each one of you sing “al hanissim” (about the miracles).
Praise God for the miracles and dance together in circles.
But now all Israel must as one arise, 
Redeem itself through deed and sacrifice.

Translation by Ben N. Edidin

AL HANISSIM (Prayer Book)
For the miracles, and for the deliverance, and for the mighty acts, 
and for the acts of salvation that You performed for our ancestors in those days, at this time of year; In the days of Mattathias the 
son of Yochanan, the High Priest, the Hasmonean and his sons, 
when the Greek Empire sought to force Your people Israel to 
abandon Your Torah and to deviate from Your chosen laws and practices, You in Your great mercy stood with them in their hour of distress...

Translated by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

MAOZ TZUR (Mordechai, 13th Century)
Enter singing translation by Marcus Jastrow and Gustave 
Gottheil, adapted from the German of Leopold Stein

LO B'CHAYIL (Zachariah IV, 6)
Not by might, nor by strength, but by my spirit, 
said the Lord of Hosts.

PSALM 30 1-4, 10, 12
A Psalm: A Song for the Dedication of The Temple, by David 
I will extol thee, Lord, for Thou hast lifted me up and not 
made my foes rejoice over me.
Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee and Thou hast healed me.
Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: Thou 
didst keep me alive that I should not go down into the pit.
Sing unto the Lord, ye who follow Him, and give thanks at 
the remembrance of His holiness.

LOS SIETE HIJOS DE HANNA (Sephardic Song)
Hanna has seven sons, 
Hanna the good Jewess, 
The king had them summoned 
all seven in one day.
"Come here, son of Hanna, 
Hanna the good Jewess. 
I will give you my crown 
and you will sit upon my throne."

"I do not want your crown, 
nor will I sit upon your throne. 
I will not forsake my Holy Law; 
nor believe in idolatry."

HANEROT HALLALU (Prayer Book)
We kindle these lights in remembrance of the miraculous 
deliverance Thou didst effect for our forefathers through Thy holy 
priests. These lights are sacred to us throughout the eight days 
of Chanukkah. We are not permitted to use their light. We are 
only to contemplate them, and thus to offer praises for the 
wonderful miracles of Thy deliverance.

OIR KLEYNE LIKHELEKH (Morris Rosenfeld)
O you little candles, you tell stories, tales without an end: 
You tell of bloody battles, of skill and courage — 
Wonders of the past!
When I see you glimmering, a dream comes to me, twinkling, 
and this old dream reminds me:
"Jews, you once fought battles, Jews, you once were victorious," 
it is hardly believable!

"You were once a nation and you ruled a people, 
you had a country, and you were strong!" —
Oh, how deeply I am stirred!
Oh, little candles!
your stories arouse my anguish; 
Deep in my heart something begins to stir 
And I ask with tears in my eyes: 
What will happen now?...

BORUCH ATE, ZINGT DER TATE (Avrom Reisen)
"Boruch Ate," (Blessed art Thou), the father sings 
As he lights the candles. 
And the mild, delicate light falls upon his pale face. 
A fire that's holy and precious shines in his eyes; 
And this stooped, tired man begins to stand erect. 
And it seems to me—and we believe it—
There still is something here, there remains much to love. 
The hour is a holy one. 
Old sounds, long forgotten? But no, they are still resounding. 
Sing father, "Boruch Ate..."
I am still your child.

TZINDT ON LIKHELEKH (Mordkhe Rivesman)
Light little candles, the little thin ones, the pretty ones. 
Let them burn one after another. 
You, as a people, will live forever. 
For eight days we Jews sing happily, 
For eight whole days our song resounds.
Twinkle cheerfully, little candles, twinkle,
May you brightly light up every corner.
Children loudly sing "al hanissim" (about the miracles).
Brothers, merrily sing Chanukkah songs
So that you do not forget the miracle of Chanukkah.

**MI ZE HIDLIK** (Levin Kipnis)
Who is it who has lit these thin candles like stars above.
The children themselves know that today is Chanukkah.
Every happy candle, every dear candle, burns, hints, sparkles.
The children stand around and their joy is boundless.
Translated by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

**AKHT KLEYNE BRIDER** (A. Katz)
Eight little brothers create a great flame
They sing silent songs of a noble ancestry.
Of an ancestry of fighters, brave and loyal,
Of proud victors who triumphed over slavery.
Eight silent witnesses, your light recalls
Our forefathers In a distant land.

**LICHVOD HACHANUKKAH** (Chaim Nachman Bialik)
My father lit candles for me,
And the shamesh (helper candle) was his torch.
Do you know in whose honor he did this?
In honor of Chanukkah.
My teacher gave me a dreidle,
made of poured and molded lead.
Do you know in whose honor she did this?
In honor of Chanukkah.
My mother gave me a pancake,
a pancake hot and sweet.
Do you know in whose honor she did this?
In honor of Chanukkah.
Translated by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

**KEMACH MIN HASAK** (S. Bass)
Flour from the sack, oil from the pitcher
It's Chanukkah today, a pleasant and beautiful holiday,
la,la,la...
Flour from the sack oil from the pitcher,
Let us prepare pancakes for the holiday, la,la,la...
We'll add an egg from the basket, more sugar, thin and fine,
Come to the table, we'll eat pancakes, la,la,la...
Translated by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

**HAZEREMOS UNA MERENDA** (Sephardic Song)
Let's make a meal! What time? You decide.
One takes the oil from a container.
The other takes flour from a sack,
To make little cakes for Chanukkah.

**QUITA'IL TAS** (Sephardic Song)
Bring out the tray. Put down the food.
The girls set the table in the month of Chanukkah.
Let's feast again.
Take the chicken from the kitchen, give the soup to the neighbor,
So that the month of Chanukkah may be sweet for her.
Let's feast again.
One takes ten measures of oil from a container.
The other takes ten handfuls of flour from a sack,
To make little cakes for Chanukkah.
Let's feast again.

**OCHO KANDELIKAS** (Sephardic Song/Flory Jagoda)
Beautiful Chanukkah is here
Eight candles for me.
One candle, two candles, three candles, four candles,
Five candles, six candles, seven candles,
Eight candles for me.
I will give many parties with happiness and pleasure.
I will eat the little cakes with almonds and honey.

**WE COME TO YOU CHILDREN/ GUT-YONTEF AYKH KINDER** (S. Tsesler)
English singing translation by William Zukof

**S'YIVON** (Levin Kipnis)
English singing translation by Max Helfman

**DREY ZIKH, DREYDELE** (Chana Mlotek)
English singing translation by William Zukof

**I HAVE A LITTLE DREYDE/ IKH BIN A KLEYNER DREYDL**
(Ben Aaron)
English singing translation by Samuel S. Grossman

Yiddish translations by Abe and Gert Gershowitz
THE WESTERN WIND VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Since 1969, the internationally acclaimed vocal sextet, The Western Wind, has played a significant role in rekindling America's awareness of the special beauty and variety of a cappella music. The Ensemble's repertoire reveals its wide-ranging interests—from Renaissance motets to Fifties rock 'n' roll, from medieval carols to barbershop quartets, from complex works by avant-garde composers to the simplest folk tunes.

In America, the Ensemble has appeared at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, ArtPark, New York’s Metropolitan Museum and Frick Museum, The Folger Shakespeare Library, The Library of Congress, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, The University of Michigan, U.C.L.A., and The University of Wisconsin. In Europe, the sextet has recorded for the West German National Radio (WDR), and toured Italy performing with the RAI Orchestra and Chorus of Rome, the Rome Opera, and at Venice’s legendary opera house, La Fenice. In 1985, under the auspices of the State Department (USIA), The Western Wind toured Asia.

In addition to its concert tours, the Ensemble produces The Western Wind on the Air, a series of holiday specials for National Public Radio. They have appeared on the Today Show and made many award-winning recordings: Early American Vocal Music, L'Ampfiparnaso, An Old-Fashioned Christmas, and The Happy Journey (Nonesuch Records), Christmas in the New World (Musical Heritage), Birth of the WarGod (Laurel), The Western Wind Songbook: Volume I, Sacred (Resmiranda), and Satires, Ballads and Bop (Newport Classics). The Western Wind can also be heard singing Philip Glass’ music for the film Koyaanisqatsi (Antilles Records) and The Passover Story (Western Wind Records).

THEODORE BIKEI

Mr. Bikel was born in Vienna and left for Israel (then Palestine) at the age of 13. He joined the Habimah Theatre at 19, and one year later, became a co-founder of the Israel Chamber Theatre. He is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. He appeared in several West End plays including A Streetcar Named Desire under the direction of Sir Laurence Olivier, and The Love of Four Colonels with Peter Ustinov. He has made 41 films including The Defiant Ones, for which he received an Academy Award nomination, The African Queen, The Enemy Below, My Fair Lady, and The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming. He has appeared on stage in The Sound of Music, and more recently in Fiddler on the Roof,
Zorba, The Inspector General, The Three Penny Opera, and She Loves Me. Mr. Bikel makes over sixty concert appearances each year and is highly regarded as both musician and raconteur. His television appearances include guest roles on Murder She Wrote, Falcon Crest, Dynasty, Beauty and the Beast, The Equalizer, and as Henry Kissinger in The Final Days. Mr. Bikel appears with The Western Wind as the narrator of The Passover Story which was released in 1991 on Western Wind Records.

RABBI GERALD C. SKOLNIK

Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik is spiritual leader of the Forest Hills Jewish Center in New York City. He lectures extensively in the New York area and has appeared on national radio and television. He was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary and received a master's degree in Rabbinics. He also holds a master's degree in Hebrew Culture and Education from New York University and a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Yeshiva University. In addition to his responsibilities at the Forest Hills Jewish Center, he is involved in numerous communal activities. He sits on the Board of Directors of the UJA-Federation and the New York Board of Rabbis, the Solomon Schechter School of Queens, and the Forest Hills Community House. Rabbi Skolnik is President of the Queens region of The Rabbinical Assembly and a member of its Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. He is also a member of the National Rabbinical Cabinet of Israel Bonds. Rabbi Skolnik chaired the UJA-Federation subcommittee on AIDS. He is married to Robin Seagal Skolnik, a social worker, and has three children.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The music for The Chanukkah Story is an eclectic compilation of songs and compositions from many different sources reflecting the diverse and multi-national nature of the Jewish experience.

The oldest music on the recording is drawn from the songs of the Spanish Jews, the Sephardim. Residing in Spain for a millennium until their expulsion in 1492, the Spanish Jewish community carried thousands of songs with them to the Near East, Greece, Italy, North Africa, England and Holland as part of their rich cultural heritage. These songs, many of them in Ladino (the Spanish vernacular of the Sephardim), Hebrew, or a mixture of both, were passed on from generation to generation until they were captured for posterity—notated—by early twentieth-century musicologists. These songs often personalize and elaborate on biblical stories—Mi Ze Y'malel gives us a Chanukkah history lesson in five verses of elegant Hebrew; Los Siete Hijos de Hanna (The Seven Sons of Hanna) movingly depicts Hanna, “the good Jewess” and her sons withstanding the temptations of apostasy. Other songs give us delicious details of everyday life—as in the recipe songs Quit'al Tas and Hazeremos Una Merenda. A more modern melody, Flory Jagoda's delightful version of Ocho Kandelikas, sung in the Sephardic-Yugoslav dialect of Sarajevo...revives exciting memories of Chanukkah from her childhood: On each night of the holiday matchmaking parties were held; while the children sang and danced, their parents and grandparents enjoyed planning their weddings. Traditional “pastelikos”—almond honey cakes—were served as a portent of good luck and happiness, an assurance of a successful match.

Perhaps the best known Chanukkah song is Maoz Tzur, an acrostic poem by Mordechai from the 13th century. Its rapid dispersal throughout Europe at the time of the Third Crusade, a period of vicious persecutions, attests to the morale-raising power of the Maccabean heroic archetype. Our recording presents two versions of Maoz Tzur: Hugo Chaim Adler's setting of the Benedetto Marcello tune, and the popular German synagogue hymn. Both melodies have interesting and traceable histories.

In about 1720 in a synagogue in Venice, the Italian composer and Judeophile, Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739), heard a hymn sung by Venice's German Jewish community. Recognizing a great tune when he heard it, he carefully transcribed Maoz Tzur with the music written from right to left to follow the Hebrew. He published this Hebrew transcription above his own setting (in Italian) of Psalm 15 which he based on this haunting Jewish melody. Over the years many Jewish composers harmonized this melody but often attributed their compositions to Marcello. The first version of Maoz Tzur sung on The Chanukkah Story is a four-part setting of Marcello's transcription by Hugo Chaim Adler (1896-1955). Originally published as By The Waters of Babylon, Adler created a lucid composition in a con-
# THE CHANUKKAH STORY

**The Western Wind Vocal Ensemble**
Phyllis Elaine Clark, Cheryl Bensman Rowe, sopranos
William Zukof, countertenor/Lawrence Bennett,
William Lyon Lee, tenors/ Elliot Z. Levine, baritone, guitar

**Guest Artists:** Scott Reiss, recorders, tof; Tina Chancey, violin, kamenc, rebec, vielle, viol, recorder;
Grant Herreid, lute, guitar, shawm and recorder; Margot Leverett, clarinet; Lorin Sklamberg, accordion;
Mark Dresser, bass violin

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Arranger</th>
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<td>CHANUKKAH, OY CHANUKKAH (2:12)</td>
<td>Chassidic Melody</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>MI ZE Y'MALEL (2:31)</td>
<td>Sephardic Folk Song</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>HAYO HAYA (1:54)</td>
<td>Chassidic Song, solos: Zukof/Clark/Levine/Bensman Rowe, arr. Elliot Z. Levine</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>MI Y'MALEL (1:31)</td>
<td>Israeli Folk Song, C.I.C.L.P., Israel</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>AI HANISSIM (2:13)</td>
<td>Folk Melody, arr. Elliot Z. Levine</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>MAOZ TZUR (1:34)</td>
<td>Hugo Chaim Adler (1895-1955) ©1946 Transcontinental Music (based on a melody by Benedetto Marcello)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>MAOZ TZUR (1:42)</td>
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<td>LO B'CHAYIL (2:36)</td>
<td>Elliot Z. Levine (b. 1948) ©1991, BMI</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>PSALM 30 (instrumental—1:22)</td>
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<td>LOS SIETE HIJOS DE HANNA (5:11)</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>HANEROT HALLALU (1:46)</td>
<td>Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894)</td>
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<td>OR KLEYNE LIKTHELEK (3:22)</td>
<td>Folk Melody, solo: Bensman Rowe, arr. Lawrence E. Bennett</td>
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<td>TZINDT ON LIKTHELEK (1:21)</td>
<td>Folk Melody, arr. Cheryl Bensman Rowe</td>
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<td>MI ZE HIDLIK (1:44)</td>
<td>Folk Melody, arr. Elliot Z. Levine</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>LICHVOD HACHANUKKAH (2:35)</td>
<td>Folk Melody, solos: Lee/Bensman Rowe/Levine/Zukof, arr. Phyllis E. Clark</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>KEMACH MIN HASAK (1:33)</td>
<td>F. Greenspan arr. Cheryl Bensman Rowe</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>HAZEREMOS UNA MERENDA (0:57)</td>
<td>Sephardic Song, solos: Clark/Bensman Rowe, arr. Western Wind</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>QUITA'IL TAS (2:16)</td>
<td>Sephardic Song, arr. Cheryl Bensman Rowe</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>GUNT YON-TEF, AYKH KINDER (We Come To You Children) (1:35)</td>
<td>L. Dreytsel, Solos: Bennett/Clark/Levine, arr. William Zukof</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>DREY ZIKH, DREYDELE (2:14)</td>
<td>Avrom Goldfaden (1840-1908), arr. Elliot Z. Levine</td>
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**Total Timing:** 61:58

**Credits:** Producer: William Zukof, Recording, Editing: Mikhail Liberman, LRP Digital Productions, Recording Supervision: Albert DeRuiter, Project Consultant: Matthew Lazar. Special thanks to Dina Abramowitz and Chana Mlotek of YIVO, Celia Zukof, Esther Golgor, Syma Crane, Fanny Portnoy and Ralph Dennis. *The Chanukkah Story* was originally created for National Public Radio with the support of The Nathan Cummings Foundation. Design: Penina M. Wissner

**Western Wind Records**
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