Pnina Blake

The Heart Sings

featuring Brahm Goldhammer
on Piano

Songs from the Yiddish, Sephardic and Hebrew heritage
Pnina Blake

Pnina Blake began her musical studies in Toronto where she received her Associate in Voice from the Royal Conservatory of Music. Her interest in composition began at Temple Tikvah where she was a lay cantor and teacher. She then continued her musical studies with the eminent composer Srul Irving Glick and at Brock University with Professor Ronald Tremain and Professor Landey. As an accomplished singer she has performed with the Canadian Opera Company and enjoys doing recitals in Toronto and the Niagara region.

Her compositions display a fresh, contemporary approach that is beautiful, direct and sensitive to the text.

Brahm Goldhammer

Brahm Goldhammer is the founder/music director of the Opera Ensemble at the Glenn Gould School, Royal Conservatory of Music, where he has been a faculty member since 1982. Mr. Goldhammer has performed with Opera in Concert, the Banff and Elora Festivals, and has recorded extensively for the CBC. In addition, he was music director for Oberlin’s Italian Summer Opera Program at Casalmaggiore. For the past twenty-five years he has been very active in the Jewish liturgical music scene, currently serving as choir director at Beth Shalom.

Cantor Ronald E. Graner

In Israel Cantor Ronald Graner has performed as a soloist with the Jerusalem Symphony and Haifa Orchestra. As well as his cantorial work, he has appeared in concerts with the Edmonton Symphony, the Friends of Yiddish in Toronto and for the David Nowakowsky Foundation for which he is the Canadian representative.

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For more information about the music of Pnina Blake see www.pninablake.com
Many Thanks to all the people who helped put this CD together. An especial thanks to Brahms for his incandescent piano playing and to Rob for the late night hours put into mastering this disk. My sincere thanks to the people at Inception Sound and Mike at Target who made the technical work so much easier. And last but not least, to my husband Roy, for his endless support and interest in this music.

Six Yiddish Folk Songs
Arr. Pnina Blake

Gey Ikh Mir Shpatsieren
(I Go Out Walking)
I go out walking, when lo! - I meet a fellow. He says he will marry me, but he must put it off for the summer. Summer comes at last, but he does not marry me. No! He does not marry me - Aha! Aha!

Shlof Mayn Kind
(Sleep, My Child)
Text. Shalom Aleichem in 1892.
Sleep, my child, my darling one. In America lives your papa, who will send for us. But until we get the happy letter, we must wait. So sleep, my darling one.

Der Filozof
(The Philosopher)
Come here, you philosopher with your little cat's brain. You invented an air balloon and think yourself a genius. Do you have any idea what the Rebbe can do? In one moment he can fly to heaven, and eat there the third Sabbath meal.

Di Goldene Pave
(The Golden Peacock)
A golden peacock came flying and lost her golden feather in burning shame. Just as 'tis bitter, my dear mother, for a little bird on the sea. So it is bitter, my dear mother, to put up with a cruel husband.

Mayn Harts Veynt in Mir
(My Heart, My Soul Cries Aloud.)
My heart, my soul cries aloud, as I must bid a sad farewell to you. If you should cross a flowing brook, do not drown your dear self there. Should you find another pretty girl, - think of me, remember me.

Rozhinkes mit Mandlen
(Raisins and Almonds)
from the play "Shulamith" by Abraham Goldfaden.
Beneath Yidele's cradle is a young, white kid. When it goes to market so will you, to deal in raisins and almonds. But for now, hushabye, my son.
Eli, Eli
Jacob K. Sandler, Arr. Heinrich Schalit.
My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? In fire and flames we have been burnt for You. But no one could turn us away from you, my God and from your Holy Torah.

Tu Madre Cuando Te Pario*
(Your Mother When She Bore You)
Folk tune Arr. By Richard J. Neumann
Your mother when she bore you, did not give you a heart, to love anyone else. Good-bye dearest; I don’t want a life for you have embittered it.

Respondemos*
(Answer us)
Arr. Richard J. Neumann, Adapted Pnina Blake
Answer us, god of Abraham. The one who answers in the hour of grace, in the hour of anguish. Answer us, piteous and merciful Father.

Durme Hermozo Hijico*
(Sleep, Beautiful Son)
Arr. Richard J. Neumann
Sleep my beautiful son, sleep with pleasure. Tomorrow you will go to school and learn the holy law.

El Dio Alto*
(The Lord on High)
Arr. Richard J. Neumann
The Lord on high in His Grace May he send us many rewards. Come let us bless His name and ask blessings for all Israel.

Prayer
Composed Pnina Blake
Piano: Brahm Goldhammer

L’Cha Dodi
(Come to Meet the Sabbath Bride)
composed Pnina Blake
Soloists: Pnina Blake, Cantor Ronald E. Graner, Joseph Peleg (Violin) & Andreas Weber (Cello)
Choir: Anne White, Andrea Bellefeuille, Jennifer Neveu, Eva Mezzo, Allen Gasser, Ron McCauley & Frederick Shainbaum
Beloved, come to meet the bride; Come to greet Shabbat. To the one God all praise and honour is due.

Recorded at the Cathedral of St. Catharine, 1992 and reproduced with permission from Cantor Ronald E. Graner.

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The Heart Sings:
One of the special pleasures of putting together this CD has been my contact with the characters and stories in these songs. The haunting sadness in the lullaby, ‘Shlof Mayn Kind’ gives way to the carefree attitude of the girl in ‘Gey Ikh Mir Spatsieren’ and the sly humour in ‘Der Filozof’. Love songs such as ‘Tu Madre Cuando Te Pario’ alternate with passionate religious songs such as ‘Respondemos’ and the innocence and pride of ‘El Dio Alto’. And although all this music has Jewish culture and background in common, it is as varied as the countries from which it sprang. Yiddish music with its characteristic lilt gives way to Spanish rhythms and then to Hebrew for the composition for Friday night’s ‘L’Cha Dodi’.

It was my intention in creating this collection, to help carry on our traditions for a new generation. I am happy to be able to present the music and arrangements I and other composers have made from the inspiration of this wonderful heritage. I hope they help you appreciate this living tradition of Jewish music that we are so lucky to have.

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The Heart Sings

1. Gey Ikh Mir Shpatsieren  (2:27)
2. Shlof Mayn Kind         (4:07)
3. Der Filozof             (1:56)
4. Di Goldene Pave         (3:17)
5. Mayn Harts Veynt in Mir (4:07)
6. Rozhinkes mit Mandlen   (2:16)
7. Eli, Eli                (4:05)
8. Tu Madre Cuando Te Pario (3:30)
9. Respondemos            (2:35)
10. Durme Hermozo Hijico   (3:39)
11. El Dio Alto            (1:42)
12. Prayer                (2:18)
13. L‘Cha Dodi            (2:36)