CANTOR ZAWEL KWARTIN
SINGS HIS ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS
OUTSTANDING CANTORIAL MASTERPIECES
VOLUME 2

Y' Hakohanim
Y' Ale
Oshamnu
Ahavas Olom
Kiddush L'Sho'losh R'Golim
Uvchen Ten Pachdecho
Kaper Chato'Aynu
Y'Chol Ma'Aminim
Mi Sheberach
K'Dusha
The Marriage Service
Y' Kom Purkon
Kiddush L'Shabbos
Mogen Ovos
Y' Chadshayhu

The Greater Recording Co.
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 Deuteronomy (31:29) where it is mentioned as one of the three pillars of the congregation. Hallelujah! The first cantors were known as Rabbis and they not only sang the melodies but also composed the tunes and poems as well. The Psalmists took the place of the Levites who performed the Atodah (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 cantors were 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 down from father to son, from generation to generation, and are accepted as the pillars of the contemporary Jewish liturgy.

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

The year 1784 marked the founding of the Chasidic movement by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. This was most significant to Jewish musical history. Chassidism stressed the emotional rather than the rational aspects of religion. Their belief that certain emanations (religious beliefs) are better expressed by song or dance was a way for more people to participate in spiritual inspiration and elevation. Early Chassidic 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 turn of the 19th century. Rabbis started to write music for the early masses 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 rigid 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 Bial Tiferet.

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 Jews was the first to be deprived of his religious freedom. This unfortunate situation encouraged many Jews to emigrate to 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, the tradition was in danger of dying out. Those who organized choirs to enhance the services. Smaller towns favored congregational singing without cantorial embellishments, blending their singing with that of the Bial Tiferet.

The twentieth century saw a major resurgence in the field of Jewish music. Countless recordings were released by the Great Recorder Co., Inc. to offer a recording of superior quality and the highest attainable standards.

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