A TOWN HALL CONCERT
ORANIM
ZABAR
GEULA GILL
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It was the evening of February 4, 1961, and one of New York's paralyzing blizzards had just ended. Midtown was empty and silent; not even the snowplows had yet come through. The veteran attendants at Town Hall shook their heads. This was no night for a concert! But materializing out of the snowdrifts like some ghostly legion came a crowd to jam the house to its rafters. Only the attendants were amazed, however. To those of us who know the incredible, electric rapport that develops instantly between an audience and the Oranim Zabar, it was no surprise. Nothing so puny as a seventeen-inch blizzard could keep their enthusiastic fans at home.

The Oranim Zabar is a group that needs no introduction; their name has become synonymous with Israeli folk music. The extraordinary voice of Geula Gill and the rich backing furnished by the playing and singing of Dov Seltzer (composer-arranger-accordionist) and Michael Kagan (singer and persuasive percussionist), have brought the young trio acclaim in every corner of the United States, Canada, and South America, to say nothing of their native Israel. Since their first visit to these shores, their concert, recording, radio, and TV schedules have been phenomenal in both scope and success.

The folk music of Israel differs from that of most other countries in one decisive respect. Most nations have had centuries during which to build a tradition of folk music, characterized by the technical innocence of peasants and hill people, and quite divorced from the professional or art music, which pursues a parallel but separate existence.

As the work of the Oranim Zabar shows, this has not been the case in Israel. In less than one generation, in a land which for almost two thousand years had been little more than a desert wasteland, a modern nation has grown, built by the hands and skills of settlers who came, in many cases, from the most advanced countries of the world, bringing their cultural and esthetic standards with them. They found almost no folk music, as they found almost no folk. So, like the Oranim, they had to create it. Thus we witness a folk music appearing in full bloom, coming from the minds and hearts of the highly cultivated and sophisticated among the pioneers and their immediate descendants.

The music of the Oranim is such music. True, they often use ancient themes for inspiration, but their treatments are twentieth-century in both form and content. In other words, the split between art and folk music, which is the rule elsewhere, here disappears, and the finest music of a folk is also its folk music.

As an illustration, the Oranim Zabar's Dov Seltzer is also recognized as a leading young Israeli composer and conductor, and there is no sense of disparity between what in other lands would be felt to be two different roles.

You will find, therefore, that the harmonies and arrangements used by the Oranim are the true and integral part of their songs, and far from being dressings, have an unmistakable sense of righteousness and validity.

You will notice that not all the selections in this album are Israeli. Some come from other countries and other cultures. This is because modern Israelis not only come from all parts of the world, but—and especially the Oranim—also go to all parts of the world, with their minds and eyes and ears open to all that the world has to offer. Let's take this for our cue and listen now to what the Oranim have to offer!

GENE RASKIN

VOCAL & INSTRUMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS BY DOV SELTZER

assisting musicians—CHESTER BARKLEY & PHILIP DUNNIGAN (piano)
GUSTAVO LOPEZ & WALTER RAHM (guitar) JOHN DREW (bass)

production supervisor—JAC HOLZMAN
engineering—MARK ABRAMSON

COMPLETE TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS ENCLOSED

We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Felix Gerstman, producer of this concert, for his cooperation in the preparation of this album.

THE ELEKTRA CORPORATION
51 W. 51st St. • N.Y.C.
A TOWN HALL CONCERT

ORANIM ZABAR

GEULA GILL

1. SHEER YAYIN 2:15
2. TA’AM HAMAN 2:25
3. BIM BAM 4:30
4. SHADUMA 2:10
5. SHABAT SHALOM 2:10
6. HAVA NAGILA 2:10

All arrangements by Dov Seltzer

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1. KI MITZION 2:25
2. YEMANJA 2:00
3. TUMBALALAYKA 2:20
4. ROUMANIAN MEDLEY 5:00
5. TANI TANI 3:00
6. HALLELUJAH 2:05

All arrangements by Dov Seltzer

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