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rca VICTOR
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GEMS OF THE SYNAGOGUE

by Cantor Josef Rosenblatt, tenor

LONG 33 1/3 PLAY
The name of Cantor Josef Rosenblatt is principally associated with synagogal, secular and classical music, as both singer and composer of liturgical compositions. He was born in Bielaja Cierkiew, near Kiev, Russia, in 1882.

Josef received little formal training in music, since his family was too orthodox to permit him to enter a conservatory. His was a rich talent developed in a natural background. His father, a synagogue precentor, was expelled from Russia, taking refuge in Austria. With him, the boy Josef toured Central Europe, officiating as boy cantor at Synagogues, and giving sacred concerts which met with considerable public success.

At the age of 14, Josef began to compose and, four years later (1900), was appointed cantor of Munkacz Synagogue in Hungary. Not long after his appointment he participated in a competition in which he won, over forty others, the coveted post of Chief Cantor in Pressburg, Austria (later Bratislava, Czechoslovakia). The next step for him was his appointment as Chief Cantor of the Bornstrasse Synagogue in Hamburg, Germany.

Cantor Rosenblatt’s fame soon reached America, with an invitation to officiate at the American-Hungarian Congregation Ohab Zedek, in New York City. He later toured the United States (in 1916) for the benefit of World War I sufferers. However, his first important concert appearance was at Carnegie Hall on May 19, 1918, in a repertoire of classical, secular and synagogue music. This concert drew enthusiastic notices from the press, and established the artist’s great popularity with American audiences. His subsequent public appearances brought him a lucrative offer to sing in Halévy’s Opera “La Juive,” but Rosenblatt was not free to accept, because of his extreme orthodox convictions. Besides his extensive Synagogue work, he confined himself chiefly to phonograph recordings.

In 1922 Rosenblatt sponsored a daily newspaper, Light of Israel, which he believed would strengthen Judaism in America. The paper failed financially, leaving him with a loss of $150,000. To satisfy the creditors, Rosenblatt resigned his post with Congregation Ohab Zedek and turned to the concert stage, resolved to personally repay the entire sum.

To this end he toured the world, singing operatic, western, and liturgical music. He died (1933) at the early age of 51, while in Palestine, shortly after the completion of a picture he made for the American Palestine Fox Film Company.

Personally, Rosenblatt was a simple, unaffected, truthful man with an unquestioning religious faith. He was known for his democratic spirit, for his tremendous energy, and for his lack of temperament. He was also known for his extensive charities—most of which were anonymous. He was married at Brzesko, Austria, August 15, 1900, to Taube Kaufman, daughter of a rabbi. Eight children were born of this union.

This record offers four sacred gems, all part of the Jewish traditional services, sung by Cantor Rosenblatt, who possessed one of the most remarkable voices ever heard. He commanded all registers between bass A and mezzo-soprano E. Besides this 2½ octaves of full voice, he had a falsetto a soprano might envy. His was a brilliant voice, tempered by the dignity and simplicity required by his religious selections.
GEMS OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Band 1—

RACHEM NOO
(Have Mercy) (J. Rosenblatt)
with Organ
(Recorded October 25, 1923)

Band 2—

YHI ROZON MILIFNE OVINU
(It Shall Be the Will of God) (J. Rosenblatt)
(Recorded January 18, 1924)

Cantor Josef Rosenblatt
Tenor with Orchestra

E2FL-4491
GEMS OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Band 1—רו מ'נישו
ROM W'NISSO
(He is High and Exalted) (J. Rosenblatt)
with Organ, Violin, Flute and Viola
(Recorded August 21, 1924)

Band 2—ט'ל פאר פסחא
TAL (FUR PESSACH)
(Dew) (For Passover) (J. Rosenblatt)
Assisted by Cantor Meilech Kaufman
(Recorded January 17, 1923)
Cantor Josef Rosenblatt
Tenor with Orchestra
E2FL-4492