Part I: Rosh Hashanah

The Birthday of the World

Music and Traditions of the High Holy Days
Sung by The Western Wind and Chorus
Matthew Lazar, guest conductor

Leonard Nimoy, narrator
Narration written by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

Cantors:
Alberto Mizrahi, Jacob Mendelson, Faith Steinsnyder Gurney, Charles Osborne
THE WIND OF THE World

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Cantors:
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The Western Wind:
Phyllis Elaine Clark, Mary Ellen Callahan, sopranos
William Zukof, countertenor
Timothy Leigh Evans, Michael Steinberger, tenors
Elliott Z. Levine, baritone

with
Wilbur Pauley, bass; Alexandra Montano, mezzo soprano

Chorus:
Rachel Rosales, Susan Montgomery, sopranos
Kathy J. Barr, Phyllis Jo Kubey, altos
Stephen Rosser, tenor
Frank Barr, Mark Duer, basses
Boy Alto: Daniel Mendelson
Shofar: Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

Producer: Mark Johnson
Executive Producer: William Zukof

THE WESTERN WIND VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Since 1969, the internationally acclaimed vocal sextet, THE WESTERN WIND, has devoted itself to 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 Europe, the sextet taped early and contemporary American vocal music for the West German National Radio (WDR) at Cologne, and made several triumphant tours of northern Italy, performing Italian Renaissance as well as American music. The group has appeared with the RAI Orchestra and Chorus of Rome at the Rome
and at the state conventions of the Iowa, Illinois and Indiana choral directors.

The Western Wind is especially active in arts education, presenting intensive and innovative programs in choral singing for students in the New York City Public Schools. The Western Wind has also led workshops and master classes throughout the United States, and has worked with many outstanding educational programs including the Lincoln Center Institute, The New York Philharmonic Max Program and Artsconnection. Summer workshops in ensemble singing are held annually at Smith College, The Phoenecia Pathwork Center, and Omega Institute for Holistic Studies.

In addition to its concert tours and educational activities, the group produces 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’Amfiparnaso**, **An Old-Fashioned Christmas** and **The Happy Journey** (Nonesuch Records); **Christmas in the New World** (Musical Heritage); **Birth of the War God** (Laurel); **Satires, Ballads and Bop** (Newport Classics); **The Western Wind Songbook: Volume I, Sacred** (Resmiranda); **The Passover Story, The Chanukkah Story, Mazal Bueno: A Portrait in Song of the Spanish Jews, Blessings and Batey**, featuring music by David Darling, Tania León and Michel Camilo, and **The Western Wind, an (Almost) A Cappella Songbook** (Western Wind Records). The Western Wind can also be heard singing Philip Glass’ music for the films **Koyaanisqatsi** (Antilles Records) and **Candyman**. The Western Wind won the ASCAP-Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music during the 1987–88 Season.
LEONARD NIMOY
(narrator)

LEONARD NIMOY earned the admiration of generations for his portrayal of the Vulcan, Mr. Spock, on Star Trek. He also directed two Star Trek movies as well as the hit film Three Men and a Baby.

In 1991, Nimoy starred in and co-produced Never Forget, portraying a survivor who fought a successful court battle against those who denied that the Holocaust had occurred. He also received an Emmy nomination for his performance in A Woman Called Golda.

In addition to his autobiography, I Am Not Spock (1975), Nimoy has also written three volumes of poetry and recorded ten narrative albums.

MATTHEW LAZAR (guest conductor)

Matthew Lazar is internationally acknowledged as a uniquely gifted conductor, pianist, scholar and teacher whose original and authentic contributions give continuity to the cultural treasure of Jewish choral music. Mr. Lazar is Founder and Director of the Zamir Choral Foundation, the annual North American Jewish Choral Festival & Conference, and the SELAH Vocal Ensemble. He has conducted the Zamir Chorale since 1972 and was artistic director of the Heritage Series of Jewish Music at Merkin Concert Hall in New York. He served on the faculty of The Jewish Theological Seminary for eighteen years. Mr. Lazar is also the Founder and Director of the National Jewish Chorale with whom he appeared at Carnegie Hall in a program celebrating the 25th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, featuring Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel. He is a member of the American planning committee for the Jerusalem 3,000 year commemoration. Mr. Lazar’s most recent contribution to the Jewish cultural community is HaZamir, a Jewish high school choir.

Mr. Lazar is currently appearing throughout the United States with choruses, orchestras and soloists in programs celebrating the contribution of American composers to 20th-century American music.

Cantors:

CHARLES OSBORNE

Cantor Charles David Osborne is a graduate of the Hartt College of Music, where he studied with Hazzan (Cantor) Arthur Koret. He is also a
ALBERTO MIZRAHI  Cantor Alberto Mizrahi has thrilled audiences world-wide in recitals, symphony concerts, and opera. Mizrahi's classically-trained operatic tenor voice and his repertoire spanning nine languages make his performances unique. He has appeared with major orchestras around the world including the New York Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and NDR Symphony, often performing works written especially for him. He has also appeared with the Dave Brubeck Quartet in Brubeck's Gates of Justice. In addition to Jewish repertoire, he has performed the Verdi Requiem and Handel's Messiah.

Alberto Mizrahi was born in Athens, Greece, and came to the United States as a boy. His maternal grandfather was a cantor and his mother was a soprano, but the exigencies of World War II prevented her from having a career. In addition to cantorial repertoire, he has delved deeply into his native Sephardic culture and is a noted interpreter of Ladino songs. He sings cantorial music in the Ashkenazic (Eastern European) tradition in a style that uniquely connects his own authentic Middle Eastern musical identity to the Middle Eastern influences inherent in the Ashkenazic repertoire.

He has given master classes for the Cantors Assembly convention, the London B'nai B'rith Jewish Music Festival, the North American Jewish Choral Festival, and the Cantorial School, Tel Aviv.

Cantor Mizrahi is Hazzan at the Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago.
FAITH STEINSNYDER GURNEY  Cantor Faith Steinsnyder Gurney was introduced to the art of hazzanut while singing in the youth choir of Beth Torah Congregation in North Miami Beach, Florida, under the direction of Cantor Jacob Mendelson. She spent many summers at National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan, and later studied at the School of Music of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. She received a degree in Sacred Music from the School of Sacred Music at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. Upon investiture as Cantor, she served congregations in Pennsylvania and Connecticut, and she is currently the Cantor for the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

Cantor Gurney has taught cantorial repertoire and hazzanut at the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Academy for Jewish Religion in New York City. She was the first woman appointed to teach nusach (melodies and modes) and coach the traditional styles in each of these cantorial schools.

In addition to liturgical/sacred music, Cantor Gurney enjoys singing Yiddish, Hebrew and Ladino art songs, as well as repertoire from American musical theatre, opera and operetta. Cantor Gurney has been heard in concert throughout the United States. She has participated in concerts and services in New Orleans, Toronto, Washington, D.C., Palm Springs, New York City, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Austin, Palm Beach and South Orange, New Jersey. She is honored to have been the first woman to officiate at services at the Liberaal Hoodse Gemeende in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In New York, she has been featured on WQXR’s The Listening Room, has appeared at Merkin Concert Hall, and has performed roles with Amato Opera, Mannes Opera, Brooklyn Conservatory Opera and Opera at the Academy in New York.

JACOB BEN-ZION MENDELSON  Dramatic tenor, Jacob Ben-Zion Mendelson is an international figure in the field of East European cantorial repertoire. Cantor Mendelson grew up in Borough Park, Brooklyn, one of the major residential neighborhoods settled by upwardly mobile Jews who in the early 1900’s had begun to liberate themselves from the teeming ghettos of New York’s lower East Side.

Cantor Mendelson was witness in his boyhood to the dwindling days of the “Golden Age of Hazzanut,” which flourished in America from the early 1900’s to about 1960. His grandfather was a Hassidic rabbi, his uncle was a cantor and his older brother, Solomon Mendelson, was his early mentor and tutor. An assistant professor of liturgical music at the Jewish Theological Seminary Cantors’ Institute, as well as faculty member of the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music and the Academy of Jewish Religion, Cantor Mendelson has taught and served as mentor to a generation of young cantors, including Cantor Gurney, who appears on this recording. Jacob Mendelson is currently Cantor of Temple Israel Center in White Plains, New York.

His son, Daniel Lewis Mendelson, is heard singing the boy alto solo in Kaminsky’s V'al Ydei, which he has sung at his father’s side since 1987.
Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik (author of the narration script) Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik, spiritual leader of The Forest Hills Jewish Center, was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary after completing degree programs at New York University and Yeshiva University.

In addition to his responsibilities at The Forest Hills Jewish Center, which he has served since 1981, Rabbi Skolnik is involved in numerous communal activities. He serves on the Board of Directors of UJA-Federation of Greater New York, as well as chairing its Committee on AIDS. He is the Director of the Jewish Laymen’s Institute, a member of the Board of Trustees of The Solomon Schechter School of Queens, a member of the Rabbinical Assembly’s Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, and a member of the Board of Trustees of The Forest Hills Community House. Rabbi Skolnik has published a number of articles and review essays, lectured extensively throughout the New York area, and has appeared on national radio and television. Included in his writing credits is an earlier collaboration with The Western Wind Vocal Ensemble and Theodore Bikel on THE CHANUKKAH STORY, for which he wrote the script.

Rabbi Skolnik is married to Robin Segal Skolnik, a social worker. They have four children, Hillel, Leora, Talya, and Matan.

Hashanah—the new year. The nature of the celebrations, however, is the very opposite of that which customarily accompanies the beginning of a secular new year. There is no party, no reverie, no intoxication. Rather, from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement—the mood is one of somber, penitential introspection. Both individually and as communities, the focus is on change and self-improvement; the recognition of past wrongdoing, and the resolve to set one’s life on a more positive and Godly path.

Community is essential to the Rosh Hashanah experience; the holiday cannot be celebrated alone. Throughout the world, Jews gather in synagogues to experience the penitential process together. The High Holidays, as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are referred to, are traditionally understood as a sacred time when humanity is judged by the Divine Creator. The very act of penitence itself is predicated on the ability—and willingness—of the individual to recognize wrongdoing, and seek forgiveness. No one can undertake the process for another; the obligation devolves equally upon everyone. And so it is that, in community, the individual finds both the strength and the courage to admit that all is not as it should be. Each congregant enhances the focus of the others, and bolsters his faith in the Creator who is the source of all judgment and compassion.

In the special prayer book for the High Holidays known as the mahzor, Jewish prayers for Rosh Hashanah are most eloquently expressed. The liturgy of the Days of Awe—yet another phrase used to describe these ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—is as
rich and as varied as Jewish historical experience itself. On the surface, the fundamental structure of the liturgy is similar to that of an "ordinary" Sabbath. There are evening, morning, and afternoon services, with Torah portions and prophetic portions appropriate to the day read and chanted. But what sets the main services of Rosh Hashanah apart from those of both Sabbath and festivals are the piyyutim: carefully crafted liturgical poems which, in tight rhyme and meter, express the major themes of the day. For two thousand years, from the earliest days of rabbinic Judaism through the Golden Age of Spain and into the medieval period, the piyyut was the form in which the greatest Hebrew poets expressed their love of and reverence for God. Piyyutim adorn virtually every service of Rosh Hashanah, and the metaphors which they employ are memorable and powerful.

The main services on Rosh Hashanah are those of the morning: the Shacharit (morning) and Musaf (additional) services. Most of the important prayers of the holiday, the major piyyutim, are found in the amida—the silent devotion—of Musaf, and are chanted aloud during the Cantor's repetition of that devotion. They revolve around the sovereignty of God, the merit of past generations and how we might be judged more favorably because of them, and the shofar, whose blasts punctuate the service at predetermined intervals. Though the Rosh Hashanah liturgies of the Jewish communities of the world are certainly not identical, these themes are common, as are many of the prayers. The impulse to seek forgiveness and to cleanse ourselves is universal, and the message of Rosh Hashanah speaks to all people.

—Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

A Word About the Music When Emanuel, a contemporary of Dante and leader of the Jewish community of Rome, rhetorically asked the question "What does music say to the other arts?" his answer, "I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews," speaks to the ancient tradition of music in the life of the Jewish people. And nowhere is music of more importance than in the Jewish worship service.

From the time of the Levites (singers and musicians) of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem until our own time—when services are held in synagogues throughout the world facing Jerusalem—Jewish music has had the power to express hope and fear, prayer and repentance. Whether using chants and tropes (phrase fragments often associated with particular holidays) so authentic and ancient that they are attributed to the days of Sinai, or composed music of the host cultures in which Jews were living, the precenter (prayer leader), choir, and members of the praying community found through music a way to participate in the rhythm and harmony of the universe.

The music of the High Holy Days is filled with the emotions each of us experiences during the Days of Awe, as we contemplate the value of our lives and plead our case before the Creator.

—Matthew Lazar, guest conductor

A NOTE ABOUT THE HEBREW PRONUNCIATION. The Ashkenazic (Eastern European) rather than the modern or Sephardic pronunciation is used for pieces by composers from the Eastern European tradition. Therefore, Hayom Harat Olam is pronounced Hayom Haras Olam.
In deference to those who believe that the name of God should not be uttered outside of the actual worship service, Adonai has been changed to Adomai according to established custom.

NOTES AND TEXTS

Rosh Hashanah Nusach

The traditional nusach or mode for Rosh Hashanah is often hummed at the beginning of the evening service to establish an atmosphere of prayer. This melody is repeated or alluded several times during the Rosh Hashanah liturgy.

Ma Tovu

Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894)

Louis Lewandowski is considered the greatest 19th century composer of Jewish liturgical music. Born in Poland into a poor family, he made his way to Berlin and became a boy chorister (singerl), at the Community Synagogue. His intense desire for musical training and his talent brought him to the attention of a cousin of Felix Mendelssohn who, though no longer a Jew, was still sympathetic to poor Jewish youth. He provided Lewandowski with a thorough musical education. Lewandowski eventually rose to occupy a position that was entirely new in the history of the Synagogue: the office of choirmaster and composer. Before Lewandowski, the musical leader of the synagogue had always been the hazzan (cantor). Lewandowski created a large body of synagogue composition that combined the ancient modes of the traditional cantorial repertoire (hazzanut) with the harmonic language and four-part choral texture of the 19th century. Lewandowski was saturated with Felix Mendelssohn’s art, an influence clearly seen in Ma Tovu. Although originally conceived with organ accompaniment, an innovation in the progressive synagogues of Berlin, the organ part is written in four-part harmony so it can be easily replaced by voices in more conservative congregations where the organ was prohibited. Perhaps the most famous and beloved piece of “classical” synagogue music, Ma Tovu begins the evening service of Rosh Hashanah.

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwelling places, O Israel! In thine abundant love have I come into Thy house, O Lord, and in reverence do I worship Thee in Thy holy sanctuary.

Tik’u

This playful evocation of the shofar was taught to The Western Wind by Cantor Jacob Mendelson. This version was sung in Borough Park, Brooklyn, a teeming middle-class Jewish neighborhood with at least one synagogue on every block. From the 1920’s to the early 1960’s Borough Park was a hot-bed of elaborate cantorial and choral services. Old-timers describe how aficionados of hazzanut would go from temple to temple on Friday nights to sample and compare the art of the various cantors and choirs. The Tik’u for the Rosh Hashanah evening service was usually sung by a male in falsetto and a boy soprano.

Sound the shofar on the new moon, at the time appointed for our festival day.
Shehecheyanu
Meyer Machtenberg (1884–?)
arr: A. Chester

Meyer Machtenberg, a native of Vilna, came to United States when he was seventeen. He was immediately hired by Cantor Kaminsky (the author of V'al Y'dei which is heard on this recording). He became the leading choral director of his time. He prepared and contracted out men's choirs to accompany the great cantors of his era, including Rosenblatt, Sirota, Roitman and Hershman. Machtenberg arranged many of the selections recorded by these cantors. He and his choirs are also featured on many of the archival film recordings created during the 1930's and 40's. Of his original compositions, Shehecheyanu is among the best-loved showpieces for cantor and choir, and remains a staple in today's cantorial repertoire.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast kept us alive, and hast sustained us and enabled us to reach this season.

Adonoy, Adonoy
Max Helfman (1901–1963)

Helfman was born in Radzin, Poland in 1901 and came to the U.S. at the age of eight. His father was a cantor, teacher and a mohel (circumciser). Helfman joined his father's choir at a young age, and also sang in other choirs on New York's lower East Side. He pursued his musical studies at Mannes College of Music in New York and at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. A charismatic composer, conductor, teacher and lecturer, he led the Philharmonic Choral Society, the Bach-Handel Society, the Jewish Music Alliance Chorus in New York, and the Paterson Singing Society.

The bulk of Helfman's career was in synagogue choral conducting and liturgical composition. He replaced Zavel Zilberst as choir director and organist at Temple Israel in Washington Heights, New York, in 1928. He later served as choral director at several synagogues in New York and New Jersey.

In 1945 Helfman became the artistic director of the newly formed Jewish Arts Committee. The purpose of the Jewish Arts Committee was to stimulate and direct
the creative Jewish community in this country, and to make musical contacts with the artistic forces at work in Israel. In 1951, Helfman moved to Los Angeles where he served as music director at the Sinai Temple of Los Angeles and Temple Israel of Hollywood.

From 1944 to 1961, Helfman served as head of the music department at the Brandeis Arts Institute of the Brandeis Youth Foundation in Santa Susana, California. It was there that he influenced a whole new generation of young American composers—including Samuel Adler, Jack Gottlieb, Yehudi Wyner, Charles Davidson and Leonard Bernstein—thus making a significant contribution to American Jewish music.

Because of his talents in combining Nusach (traditional prayer modes and motifs) with modern musical components, his music has been well received by both the Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism. The Adonoy, Adonoy and Va’ani S’filosi are two movements from his Torah service entitled The Holy Ark.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving-kindness and truth

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Va’ani S’filosi
Max Helfman

As for me, may my prayer be unto Thee, O Lord in an acceptable time; O God, in abundance of Thy loving-kindness, answer me in truth of Thy salvation.

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Hineni
Traditional
adapted from Moses J. Silverman (1914–1986)

Cantor Moses J. Silverman was a fifth-generation cantor in his family. A graduate of the Julliard School of Music, he served as president of the Cantors Assembly of America, as a member of the Board of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and as president of the Cantors and Ministers Association of Chicago and the Midwest. For more than thirty years he was the Cantor at The Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago (a position currently held by Cantor Alberto Mizrahi) where he followed the noted music director Harry E. Coopersmith. Silverman was an eloquent exponent of Jewish music and liturgy who was able to blend the old-world, deep-rooted traditional modes with a well-trained modern musical sensibility. His arrangement of Hineni is noteworthy for its accurate transcription of an ancient chant. His version was further adapted and changed for this recording, continuing the oral tradition through the medium of notated music, a typical scenario in Jewish music performance practice.

The Hineni prayer was written by an anonymous cantor in the Middle Ages. It begins the Musaf (additional service). The Cantor dramatically steps forward and delivers a monologue about his role as the shaliach tzibbur, or messenger of the congregation, an awesome responsibility on Rosh Hashanah when the very fate of his congregants hangs in the balance.

Behold, in deep humility
I stand and plead before Thee, God on high;
Great Lord who art enthroned above all praise,
O hearken and give heed unto my prayer.
Though unworthy of my sacred task,
Though imperfect, and filled with awe,
I bow before thy holy presence here,
To beg compassion for my erring people.
O God of Israel's fathers,
Their children's children send me as their voice,
To seek Thy pardon and Thy grace,
To ask Thy mercy, Thy continued love.
Though unworthy of my mission, Lord,
Though I stand not flawless in Thy sight,
Condemn Thou not my people for my faults,
Consider their virtues, Righteous Judge.
Forgive us our iniquities,
And turn our afflictions into joy.
Thou great, exalted God, who hearest prayer,
Hear ours, and bless us all with life and peace.

V'Chol Ma'amínim
Sholom Secunda (1894–1974)

Sholom Secunda was born in Aleksandriya, in the southern Ukraine, and emigrated to the United States in 1908. In New York City he attended Cooper Union, Columbia University, and the Institute of Music and Art. In his early youth he sang as a synagogue chorister and in 1914 produced his first musical play at the Oden Yiddish Theatre. He served as musical director and composer at many Yiddish theaters, as lecturer in various institutions of higher learning, as synagogue choral conductor, and as music critic for the Jewish Daily Forward. Secunda is known for writing Yiddish musical plays and operettas, scores for films, oratorios, chamber music, liturgical works, and folk songs. Especially popular are his songs Bei Mir Bist Du Sheyn, Dos Yiddishe Lied, and Dona, Dona.

God holdeth in his hand the scales of judgement;
And all believe that He is a faithful God.
He redeemeth from death and delivereth from the grave;
And all believe that He is the mighty Redeemer.

—Alphabetical acrostic by Yannai, 7th Century
Shofar
Traditional

The shofar is blown three times during the Amidah (silent devotion) of the Musaf (additional) service. The Rabbi or Cantor intones the names for three different calls: tekiah (a sustained blast), shevaram (a group of three shorter blasts), and teruah (a series of staccato blasts).

Hayom Harat Olam
Herman Wohl (1877–1936)

Herman Wohl was among those hired by Abraham Goldfaden to write music for the plays he produced in the early years of the American Yiddish theatre. Wohl is among the generation of composers whose style created a bridge between the European tradition and the emerging American style of popular music. He spent the early part of his career writing liturgical music for the synagogue and was the choir director for many years with the renowned cantor Yossele Rosenblatt, at Congregation Ohab Zedek on 116th and Lenox Avenue in New York City. This immersion in synagogue music was evident in the Jewish flavor to be found in the music he wrote (in collaboration with Arnold Perlmutter) for popular operas and operettas.

According to Cantor Charles B. Block, Hayom Harat Olam illustrates the close relationship between "Second Avenue," the thriving Yiddish theater of New York in the early decades of this century, and the synagogue service. It was a requisite to have a cantorial number in every Yiddish musical play, to attest to the "orthodox" credentials of the musical performers on the stage despite their involvement in secular entertainment. (The Al Jolson Kol Nidre scene in the movie The Jazz Singer is a perfect example). Hayom Harat Olam was originally composed for the synagogue but owes its popularity to a play, Tyere Fun Lebn. It was sung in a scene by an itinerant cantor and his choir who come into a Jewish home asking to be put up for the night. For many years it was a popular composition at New York's Catskill Mountain "Borscht Belt" resorts.

Hayom Harat Olam
Herman Wohl (1877–1936)

Today is the birthday of the world; this day all the creatures of the universe stand in judgment before Thee as children or as servants. If as children, have pity on us as a father pities his children; if as servants, we call upon Thee to be gracious unto us and merciful in judgment of us, O revered and holy God.

Areshet Seifateinu
Melody by Yossele Rosenblatt (1882–1933)
arr: Elliot Z. Levine

Yoselle Rosenblatt was a Cantor who became a legend in Jewish life. Born in Belaya Tserkov, in Ukraine, young Yoselle gained insight into liturgical music by assisting his father at services in the synagogue. The family later moved to Sadgora, Bukovina, a town known for its Hassidic environment, and there he spent his most formative and impressionable years. Rosenblatt served as cantor and gave concerts in Czernowitz (Chernovtsy), Munkés (Mukachevo), Pressburg (Bratislava), and Maburg. Upon his arrival in the United States in 1912, he accepted a position as Cantor in the First Hungarian Congregation, Ohab Zedek, in New York City. In 1917 he refused an invitation to appear with the Chicago Opera
Company on the grounds that opera was not compatible with traditional Jewish life. Rosenblatt established himself in the concert field, making his Carnegie Hall debut in 1918. In 1920, at the request of RCA, he recorded about eighty selections of liturgical chant and Jewish folk song; he also made recordings for the Edison Company of Vienna and Columbia Records. Rosenblatt sang in a film called The Dream of My People (1933), in which he chanted ancient prayers of longing and yearning for Zion. Several books containing his settings of recitatives and choral compositions have been published; the best known is Tefiloth Josef (1927). He is also known for his choral settings Psalm 113 (1921), dedicated to Warren G. Harding; Psalm 114 (1922); and Uvnucho Yomar (1921). The unusual quality and range of his voice, as well as his piety and idealism, made him world-famous.

May the entreaty of our lips find favor before Thee, O most high and exalted God, who understandeth and heareth, who regardeth and considereth the voice of our shofar blast.

Accept with mercy and favor our proclamation of Thy sovereignty.

V'al Y'dei
Isaac Kaminsky (1865–1943)

Isaac Kaminsky was a cantor and choral director. As a composer he is known chiefly for his recitatives and for his settings of Hanerot Hallalu and V'al Y'dei. No other information is currently available about him, except that he lived in Brooklyn, and gave Meyer Machtenberg his first job in New York when Machtenberg arrived in 1901. Kaminsky's V'al Y'dei is widely performed by congregations all over the country. Available only in manuscript versions, it has gathered variations and embellishments as it was arranged and recopied by choir director after choir director.

And He remembered His covenant for their sake; He relented of His wrath according to the greatness of His mercies.

Go and proclaim to Jerusalem: Thus saith the Lord, "I remember you for the devotion of your youth, the love of your espousals; how you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land unsown.

Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth; and I will establish unto you an everlasting covenant.

Is not Ephraim My beloved son, My beloved child, for even when I speak against him, I remember him with affection. Therefore, My heart yearneth for him; yea, I will surely have compassion upon him," saith the Lord.

B'seyfer Chayim
Eastern European Folk Melody
arr. Elliot Z. Levine

In the book of life remember us with blessing, peace and good sustenance and inscribe us before Thee for a happy life and peace, we and all Thy people, the house of Israel.
Hayom T'amtzeinu
Herman (Hans) Zalis
arr. by Western Wind and Matthew Lazar

Herman (Hans) Zalis was born in Odessa, Russia. As a boy he sang as soloist at the Broder Shul in the choir of the composer and choir director, David Nowakowsky. He studied all aspects of music composition and harmony with Nowakowsky and later continued his studies with Rimsky-Korsakoff. In Russia, he worked as a composer-conductor in the Yiddish theater. When he came to America, he was appointed choir director at Temple Emanu-El of Borough Park; he served in that capacity for fifty years with Cantors Zavel Kwartin, Benjamin Levitt, Charles B. Bloch and David Kusevitsky. Besides composing original works for cantor and choir, he arranged the works of other composers, often revoicing the parts for high and low choirs. True to Zalis' legacy, his Hayom T'amtzeinu was adapted and arranged by The Western Wind and Matthew Lazar.

Today mayest Thou strengthen us.
Today mayest Thou bless us.
Today mayest Thou exalt us.
Today mayest Thou prosper us.

—Program Notes by William Zukof
and Marsha Bryan Edelman

Credits

Produced by Mark Johnson

Recording, mixing, digital editing: Ted Spencer

Tracks produced by William Zukof and Mark Johnson

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Executive Producer: William Zukof

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# The Birthday of the World: Music and Traditions of the High Holy Days

**Part I: Rosh Hashanah**

### Sung by The Western Wind
- Matthew Lazar, guest conductor

### Narrated by Leonard Nimoy

- Narration written by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik
- Cantors: Alberto Mizrahi, Faith Steinsnyder Gurney, Jacob Ben Zion Mendelson, Charles Osborne

### The Western Wind:
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- Wilbur Pauley, bass
- Alexandra Montano, mezzo-soprano

### Chorus:
- Rachel Rosales, Susan Montgomery, sopranos
- Kathy J. Barr, Phyllis Jo Kubey, altos
- Stephen Rosser, tenor
- Frank Barr, Mark Duer, basses
- Boy Alto: Daniel Mendelson
- Shofar: Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

### Performers:
- Producer: Mark Johnson
- Executive Producer: William Zukof

## Track List

1. **Rosh Hashanah Nusach** [0:53]  
   Traditional, arr. Matthew Lazar
2. **Narration** [2:04]
3. **Ma Tovu** [2:54] (Cantor: Osborne)  
   Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894)
   **Tik'ú** [1:06] (Solos: Zukof, Clark)  
   Traditional
4. **Narration** [0:44]
5. **Sheheheyanu** [3:03] (Cantor: Mizrahi)  
   Meyer Machtenberg (1884–?)
6. **Narration** [0:37]
7. **Zochreinu** [1:15]  
   Folk Melody, arr. Elliot Z. Levine
8. **Narration** [0:54]
9. **Adonoy, Adonoy** [4:49] (Cantor: Gurney)  
   Max Helfman (1901–1963)
   **Va'ani S'filosi** [1:17] from *The Holy Ark*, 1950, Transcontinental Music  
   Max Helfman
10. **Narration** [1:15]
11. **Hineni** [10:55] (Solo: Evans; Cantor: Mizrahi)  
   Moses J. Silverman (1914–1986)
   adapted from Moses J. Silverman (1914–1986)
12. **Narration** [0:38]
13. **Ki Keshimcho** [4:47] (Cantor: Osborne)  
   Louis Lewandowski
14. **Narration** [0:23]
15. **V'Chol Ma'amimim** [2:04] (Solos: Zukof, Callahan, Clark)  
   Sholom Secunda (1894–1974)
16. **Narration** [0:56]
17. **Shofar** [0:45]  
   Traditional
   **Hayom Harat Olam** [5:00] (Solo: Callahan; Cantor: Mendelson)  
   Herman Wohl (1877–1936)
18. **Narration** [0:40]
19. **V'al Y'dei** [8:28] (Boy Alto: D. Mendelson; Cantor: Gurney)  
   Isaac Kaminsky (1865–1943)
20. **Narration** [0:36]
21. **B'seyfer Chayim** [1:57]  
   Folk Melody, arr. Elliot Z. Levine
22. **Narration** [0:29]
23. **Hayom T'amteineu** [2:47] (Cantor: Mendelson)  
   Herman Zalis (?–c.1982), arr. Western Wind and Matthew Lazar

To listen to just the music: program the odd-numbered tracks. Total time: 63:21.