COMPOSERS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Ghetto Songs from Warsaw, Vilna, and Terezín

Ervin Schulhoff
Sonata for Violin & Piano

Pavel Haas
Suite for Oboe and Piano

Downtown Music Productions
Mimi Stern-Wolfe
artistic director
Mordekhai Gebirtig (1877-1942), the Yiddish folk poet, was born in Krakow, Poland. Although his family was poor and he had no formal music studies, he taught himself to play the shepherd's flute. Gebirtig had access to many cultural activities, especially through the Jewish working people's cultural circles, which he joined as a youth. He soon began writing poetry and songs, and his first book of poems was published in 1920. He worked in his brother-in-law's furniture store, and served in the Austro-Hungarian army in World War I.

Gebirtig sang many of his songs himself. Many were so popular that they were performed by street musicians throughout Poland. In 1936 his friends published his poetry in a volume entitled Mayne Lider (My Songs). Gebirtig continued to write and compose in the Krakow ghetto after the fall of Poland, but was shot by the Germans on June 4, 1942. Es Brent, written in 1938, was Gebirtig's response to a pogrom in the Polish town of Przytik. A Jew who killed one of his attackers was later condemned at trial.

The Nazis evacuated the walled city of Terezín ("Theresienstadt" in German) in late 1941, and turned it into a transit camp for Jews brought not only from Czechoslovakia, but eventually from all over Europe, until they could be shipped to Poland's death camps. Originally built to house some 6,000 inhabitants, at its peak Terezín had 60,000 Jewish prisoners. Of the nearly 138,000 people sent there between 1941 and 1945, 33,419 died in Terezín, 86,934 were deported (most murdered), and 17,320 were liberated.

Jews began clandestine cultural activities prior to the establishment of concentration camps when various racial laws were passed which excluded them from employment. Jewish musicians were not allowed to perform publicly, nor was music by Jewish composers allowed on the radio.
Once at Terezín and deprived of any semblance of a normal life and contact with the outside world except for bits of news from new prisoners, the Jews began musical performances in secret, beginning with well-known folk songs, and later expanding to all kinds of music. As performances became known to the Nazi authorities, they were at first ignored and later actually supported by them. It was Himmler's idea to turn Terezín into a "model camp" for propaganda purposes. The Nazis even made a film which included performances by the prisoners and invited the Red Cross on at least one occasion.

Musical life in Terezín increased to amazing proportions, embracing solo recitals, chamber music, orchestral performances, opera, oratorio, jazz, and a cabaret, even though the roster of personnel often changed from day to day with transports to death camps taking place at regular intervals. These concerts offered a periodic respite in which both the musicians and the audience could momentarily forget their daily suffering and their forebodings of an unknown fate as thousands of inmates found their names listed for the transports "East," being evacuated with the same punctilious precision as that which had brought them to Terezín in the first place.
Karel Švenk (née Schwenk, 1907-1945) was active in Prague and other Czech towns as actor, director, writer, and composer before the war. One of the prime initiators of Terezín's cultural activities, he created the cabaret, or variety show, becoming Terezín's most popular theatre producer.

On December 28, 1941, the Nazis sanctioned performances in Terezín, reasoning that the prisoners would cause less trouble. These Kameradschaftsabende (evenings of fellowship) then sprang up rapidly in succession. Švenk joined forces with the pianist/conductor Rafael Schächter, who was involved in Terezín's choral activities, and in early 1942 presented the first all-male cabaret, called "The Lost Food Card," for men living in the "Sudeten" barracks. Czech inhabitants were still in the city at this time and the camp's prisoners were forbidden to leave their barracks.

Švenk wrote the text as well as the music, and besides being director and producer, he participated in the performance as an actor. Besides being amusing, the cabaret had a more important mission: to strengthen the morale of the prisoners. The show's success was instantaneous, especially when the final song, the Terezín Hymn, also called the "Terezín March," sung only in Czech, reached the ears of the listeners. Its refrain expressed the cruel present and hope for the future. Švenk incorporated the hymn into all his subsequent cabarets.

Cabarets were easy to assemble, and with small groups the show could move from one attic to another and be performed in modest accommodations for limited audiences. The gates of the barracks eventually opened, and people could attend cultural activities of their own choice, thus enabling the women to see and also participate. Women took part in Švenk's third and most important cabaret – his only Terezín play – "The Last Cyclist," but it was immediately censored after the dress-
rehearsal. Švenk put together several more or less improvised shows before being sent to Auschwitz in September, 1944. About a month later, he was selected to go as a laborer to a factory in Menselwitz near Leipzig. The heavy work, long hours and insufficient food caused a rapid deterioration of his already weakened health and he died in April, 1945. Only six songs from his Terezín output have been preserved. “The Last Cyclist” was performed in Prague following the war.

David Beigelman (1887-1945) was born into a large musical family. A violinist, conductor, composer, and theater critic from Lodz, Poland, he toured Europe and even came to the U.S. as a member of a theater orchestra. In the spring of 1940, the Germans declared part of Lodz a ghetto and moved all Jews and Gypsies to that area. The ghetto became a slave labor camp with more than 75,000 workers.

Beigelman was an active participant in the cultural life of the ghetto, writing orchestra works and songs describing life there, many of which were censored by the authorities and sung in secret. Secret diaries found underground after the war mention Beigelman conducting the first symphonic concert there March 1, 1941, followed by a concert for chorus and orchestra on March 13th. Deported to Auschwitz in 1944, he was then sent to a slave labor camp, where he died of exhaustion in February, 1945.

Tsigaynerlid is a tribute to some of the Gypsies in the Lodz ghetto attempting to drown their sorrows in song and dance. Some 500,000 Gypsies were liquidated during World War II.
Ervin Schulhoff (1894-1942), born in Prague to a wealthy merchant family, studied piano from an early age and started composing as a boy. He received an excellent musical education, with studies in Prague (1902-08), Leipzig with Max Reger and others (1908-10), and Köln (1910-14). He also studied with Debussy for a short time. Awarded the Mendelssohn Prize in 1913 for his piano performances, he won the same prize as a composer following World War I. After serving in the military in the First World War, he spent several years in Germany composing, performing, and collaborating on productions with Paul Klee, Georg Grosz and other leading visual artists.

Returning to Prague in 1923, he taught piano and composition, lectured, and was a staff pianist/composer for various radio stations. As a pianist, he traveled to France, England, and Russia, and was a much sought-after interpreter of modern music. A prolific composer, he enjoyed a great international reputation. Many of his chamber and symphonic works received premieres at contemporary music festivals (Prague, Salzburg, Venice, Geneva, Oxford). His ballet and pantomime were each staged in several different cities, and his opera was performed in Brno.

Popular dance and folk rhythms permeate Schulhoff’s works from the 1920s, the small dance forms and their grotesque caricatures standing in the foreground of his style. This is certainly true of the “Burlesque” movement of the Sonata for Violin & Piano of 1927. The first and fourth movements are impetuous, with sweeping chromatic lines. Harmonies sometimes sound like jazz chords in parallel motion, but are completely individual, breaking away to Eastern European harmonic and rhythmic patterns.
Hoping to protect himself from the Nazis, Schulhoff became a Soviet citizen, but remained in Prague. He took a strong anti-fascist stand and wrote a series of works dedicated to concepts of social reform. Vocal symphonies with solo voice deal with his war experiences and describe the cataclysmic events in Germany. The East Slovakia hunger riot, the Spanish civil war, the threat by the Nazis—all these events affected him and inspired him to write.

Schulhoff was imprisoned for his politics and race soon after the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1939. One of his last compositions, a setting for chorus and orchestra of the *Communist Manifesto*, was smuggled out shortly before he died of typhus in the Wülzburg concentration camp in August, 1942.

“My music is not drowned in dreams. Neither decadent lyricism nor outbursts of hysteria occur in it. It is tough, irreconcilable, uncompromising.”

—Ervin Schulhoff

Martin Rosenberg (d. 1943) conducted a worker’s chorus under the pseudonym of Rosebery d’Arguto in a suburb of Berlin before the war. In 1939, he was arrested as a socialist and a Jew and sent to Sachsenhausen, where he was brutally tortured. He later formed a chorus of 25 Jewish prisoners that carried out their activities in secret in the less guarded barracks for political prisoners.

In 1942, when he discovered that the Jewish prisoners were to be sent to Auschwitz, he wrote the words to *Tsen Brider*, setting them to the melody of the old Yiddish folksong “Yidl mit dem Fidl.” Rosenberg and his chorus died in the gas chambers in 1943. This song was passed down by Alexander Kulisiewicz, a non-Jewish prisoner at Sachsenhausen who survived the war. Rosenberg asked him not to forget “Tsen Brider,” and if he should survive, to sing the song and through it tell the world of the suffering in the camps.
Hirsh Glik (1920-1944) (words) was born in Vilna (Vilnius, Lithuania). His father was a used clothes dealer. Hirshke (his nickname) began writing poetry at the age of 13, and was co-founder of a group of young poets. He had to end his studies prematurely due to his family's poverty, and became an apprentice in a paper business and later worked in a hardware store. When the Germans occupied Vilna in 1941, Glik was caught and sent to prison, then to a camp in a swamp where the prisoners carried turf, a job usually reserved for horses. When the camp closed, he was sent back to the Vilna ghetto, where he worked with the underground movement FPO (United Partisans) and was active in the literary artistic circle. In September, 1943, the Germans sent Glik to the first of several Estonian concentration camps, where most of the prisoners died from appalling conditions. Glik never ceased writing poems. In 1944 he escaped when the Russians were closing in and tried to join the partisans, but disappeared, probably executed by soldiers in the area.

Often deprived of pencil and paper, fellow prisoners memorized his poems and passed them down. Other poems were hidden by friends. Some were found buried in the Vilna ghetto. Most of his works are presumed lost. *Shtil, di nakht iz oysgeshternt*, also known as "Partisanerlid," recounts the heroic deeds of Vitke Kimpner, the female resistance fighter who participated in blowing up a train carrying 200 German soldiers, the first successful diversionary sabotage act of the Jewish partisans of Vilna. *Zog Nit Keynmol*, inspired by news of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, became a widely popular resistance hymn.
Moravian-born Gideon Klein (1919-1945) went to Prague at the age of 11 to take liberal arts courses at the Jirásek Gymnasium along with intensive private studies in piano. In the fall of 1938, he registered at the Charles University to study philosophy and musicology and simultaneously entered the Master School of the Prague Conservatory, graduating in Piano after only one year. His university studies came to an abrupt end on Nov. 17, when the Nazis closed all institutions of higher learning in the occupied Czech territories. During the following year, Klein pursued the study of composition as a private student of Alois Hába and, at the same time concertized as much as the circumstances permitted, establishing himself as a pianist of distinction and appearing under the pseudonym Karel Vránek after the imposition of the race laws in Czechoslovakia in 1939. Since Jews were not allowed to perform in public, they held clandestine concerts among themselves, entering buildings not as couples, but one by one so not to arouse suspicion, often staying overnight, since curfews were in place. Klein often performed at these concerts.

Sent to Terezín in December, 1941, Klein quickly became involved in musical life there. At first, he arranged Czech, Slovak, Hebrew, and even Russian folk songs for Schächter’s ever expanding choral group. After the original all-male ensemble, Schächter formed a women’s chorus, then a mixed choir. In the beginning, the only available “musical instrument” was a pitch pipe. The situation improved when Schächter obtained a broken-down reed organ and a half-broken accordion.
In the beginning, Klein turned his attention to composition. Later on, however, as one, even two broken-down pianos became available, he and most of the other pianists became involved in chamber music, recital accompaniments, operas, oratorios, or other genres. There were no fewer than half a dozen concert pianists who performed frequently in solo recitals and numerous other presentations. Klein was in constant demand as a pianist, arranger and rehearsal accompanist. His exceptional talents, intellect, and charismatic personality affected many of those who knew him.

A number of his pre-war compositions was found some 50 years after the war, and several of his Terezín works were saved by his older sister, Elisa Kleinová, who was a professor of musicology in Prague. Klein died in the camp at Fürstengrube around January 27, 1945. **Wiegenlied** is one of Klein’s numerous arrangements of well-known songs, probably made in response to requests from individual singers. His accompaniment juxtaposes considerable melodic movement itself, underscoring the more gentle motion of the warm and expressive melody.

**Pavel Haas** (1899-1944), the first-born son of a well-to-do businessman, was born in the Moravian capital of Brno. He enrolled in the Music School of the Philharmonic Society in his early teens, when he also began his first attempts at composition. Drafted into the Austrian army in 1917, he never saw combat and was stationed in his hometown. At the end of the war, he resumed his musical studies at the newly established State Conservatory, where in 1920 he joined the class of Leoš Janáček at the Master School. Influenced by Janáček’s enthusiasm for Moravian folk songs and by contemporaries of other nationalities, Haas wrote songs, chamber music, and choral and orchestral works. He also wrote incidental music for dramatic productions at the Provincial Theatre in Brno, as well as
film scores. (His younger brother Hugo pursued a successful career as a movie actor, first in Czechoslovakia and later in Hollywood, where he managed to emigrate.) Although a well-recognized and well-respected composer, Haas supplemented his income by working in his father’s shoe store.

Some of Haas’ most important compositions stem from his experience of personal and national tragedy. At the time of his birth, Moravia was part of the Hapsburg Empire. The newly independent Czechoslovakia came into being in October, 1918, after 300 years of Hapsburg oppression. The strongly patriotic Czech hymn of St. Wenceslaus resonated in Haas when the Nazis came to power. Some of the words from the hymn are, “Let us not perish, us and our descendants, Saint Wenceslaus!” The St. Wenceslaus theme emerges from the entire Suite for Oboe and Piano, written in 1939, as well as Haas’ unfinished symphony, on which he worked in the ensuing two years. “Suite for Oboe and Piano” was originally written as a vocal suite, but fear of discovery caused Haas to destroy the provocative text and to replace the voice with oboe. Written between July 18 and October 26, 1939, the work records the composer’s reactions to the daily events of the beginning of war.

The first movement moves from the depression over the Nazi occupation and Haas’ own entrapment to the balmy effect of the medieval hymn to St. Wenceslaus. In the second movement, the same hymn takes on a fighting spirit as towards the end, it assumes the rhythm of the Hussite chorale, “Yea warriors of the Lord.” The Nazi order to ring bells in celebration of a victory sounds defiantly at the
end of this movement. The third movement opens with the St. Wenceslaus hymn again providing the thematic material, which develops into an apotheosis of his faith in the final victory of the oppressed nation.

Haas was sent to Terezín in 1941, arriving alone, having formally divorced his wife, saving her, their young daughter, and Hugo's child — now in his wife's care — from a concentration camp. Arriving ill and depressed, the miserable conditions there further affected his severe depressions, resulting in total indifference to the very busy musical life of Terezín. Gideon Klein could not reconcile himself to seeing an artist of Haas' caliber not participating in the musical activities. So, one day, to wake him from his lethargy, Klein put in front of him several sheets of manuscript paper, on which he himself drew the musical staff, and urged Haas to stop wasting time. And indeed, Haas composed several pieces during his stay in Terezín, although only three of them have been preserved. One of them, Study for string orchestra, was immortalized when a performance, in the presence of the composer, was included in the Nazi propaganda film, Der Führer Schenkt den Jüden eine Stadt (Hitler gives the Jews a Town). Haas died in Auschwitz in October, 1944.

Misha Veksler (1907-1943), a composer and pianist, conducted the Jewish theatre orchestra in the Vilna ghetto and composed many popular ghetto songs. A hunchback crippled by polio, he had to continually hide from the Nazis, who sought out those with handicaps for immediate extermination. Leyb Rozenthal (1916-1945) (words) wrote many songs during his years in the ghetto and is the author of a number of plays for revue theatres. Yisrolik tells the story of a child peddler. Written in the Vilna ghetto, it was first performed in January, 1942. Veksler, Rozenthal, and Rozenthal's sister, all active in the cultural life of the ghet-
to, participated in the first performance. When the Vilna ghetto was liquidated, Veksler was deported and killed at Ponar. Rozenthal died at the Dutmergen death camp.

Child Peddlers in the Ghettos: There were thousands of child peddlers in the Vilna and Warsaw ghettos. They provided a vital link with the outside, sneaking in and out by way of sewer pipes, climbing over fences, slipping past guards. They brought back food and other items from outside the ghetto walls, often bribing guards and officials with stolen goods. Once outside, they joined the many non-Jewish child peddlers on the streets. They were also messengers for the resistance. Most were eventually caught and shot.

Ilse Weber (1903-1944) was primarily a poet, writer of children's books, and producer of programs for Czech Radio in Prague. Weber and her husband saved the life of their oldest son when they sent him to Sweden on a Kindertransport prior to their own deportation to the Terezín concentration camp in 1942. At Terezín, Weber worked as a nurse in charge of the children's ward. She can be found in a drawing by Malva Schalek, dressed in her nurse's uniform and accompanying herself on a guitar while singing for several of her colleagues. When her husband was summoned for transport to the East in the fall of 1944, she volunteered to accompany him with her young son Tommy. Her wish not to break up the family resulted in the execution of Ilse and her son in Auschwitz, while her husband survived her by some 30 years. Wie gala, a lullaby of utmost simplicity, was perhaps sung
Ilse Weber and son Tommy, murdered as a “final caress” to accompany her young charges on their final journey. It provides just the right musical ambience for its deeply felt words.

Carlo Sigmund Taube (1897-1944), born in Galicia, was a virtuoso pianist who studied for several years with Busoni in Vienna, but to support himself, played in cafes and night clubs, first in Vienna and later in Brno and Prague. Taube, his wife and their child arrived at Terezín in December, 1941. In Terezín, Taube led concerts of semiclasical music, very much in the style of the “spa” orchestras popular in prewar Europe, and also gave ambitious piano concerts, probably overly-ambitious, according to some critics in the crowd. He composed a number of works in Terezín, but only one survives, the song *Ein jüdisches Kind*, composed November 4, 1942, set to a text by his wife, Erika. This short but moving work has some Hebraic elements in its melodic writing, while its simple but effective harmonies are reminiscent of what may have been Taube’s piano style in the clubs. Both the poem and music are a touching tribute to their own Jewish child. The young Taube accompanied his parents to Auschwitz in October, 1944, where they perished.
1. S'Brent briderlekh! (It's burning, brothers!)
Mordekhai Gebirtig, poem and melody. Arr. by Lazar Weiner

S'brent, briderlekh, s'brent!
Oy, undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent!
Beyze vintn mit yirgozn,
Raysn, brekhn un tseblozn,
Un di shlekhte vintn hudjen,
Alts arum, shoyn brent!

Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh,
Mit farleygte hendt.
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh,
Vi undzer shtetl brent!

S'brent, briderlekh, s'brent!
Di hilf iz nor in aykh aleyn gevendt!
Oyb dos shtetl iz aykh tayer,
Nemt di keylim, lesht dos fayer!
Lesht mit ayer eygn blut,
Bavayzt vos ir nor kent!

Kukt nit, brider, ot azoy tsu,
Mit farleygte hendt.
Kukt nit brider, lesht dos fayer,
Vayl undzer shtetl brent!

It's burning, brothers, it's aflame!
Our little, poor, beloved town's aflame!
Brutal winds, in fury growing,
Keep on tearing, breaking, blowing,
While the furious winds are wailing,
Everything's aflame!

And with folded arms you watch it,
As if you were lame.
And with folded arms you watch it,
While our town's aflame!

It's burning, brothers, it's aflame!
And you alone must help, in God's name!
If you love [your] town, don't tire,
[Let us rise and] quench the fire!
Quench it, if you must, with blood,
Show [you still have strength!]

Do not watch with folded arms there,
As if you were lame.
Do not watch, but quench it, brother,
For our town's aflame!
Everything goes, if one wants,
Who drowns the echo of the spring storm,
Who was given laugh into his crib,
Who must not weep without cause,
Who knows love and is loved,
Be this or that,
In short, who likes to live in this world,
He will certainly find some reason
To join us in a song.

Everything goes, if one wants,
united we hold our hands
In defiance of cruel times
we have humor in our hearts.
Always moving
here and there / And permitted
to write only in thirty words.

Hey, life begins tomorrow
and the time is near
To pack our bundle
and go back home.
Everything goes, if one wants,
united we hold our hands, And on the
ruins of the ghetto we will laugh.
[Hebrew]  Im nirtsë nitgaber, yad b’ yad v’ lev echad,  
              Gam bizman kashe hatschok od belibënu.  
              Mi makom l’makom, mi-yom l’yom, tsrichim limdod,  
              Rak shloshim milim mutar lanu lichtov.  

              Ach yavo hayom, chevraya, asher bo nëtsë ledror;  
              Na’aroz et chafasënu v’habaita nachazor.  
              Im nirtsë nitgaber, yad b’ yad v’ lev echad,  
              Al churvot haghetto yachad od nitschak.

[English]  We will conquer and survive  
          All the cruelty in our land,  
          With the laughter in our hearts  
          We’re hand in hand.  
          Days will come, days will go,  
          Always moving, restless, proud.  
          We can’t write with only  
          Thirty words allowed.  

          Wait! for we will see anew  
          A dawn must rise to lift the heart.  
          The time will come to pack our bags  
          And homeward joyfully depart.  
          We will conquer and survive  
          All the cruelty in our land.  
          We will laugh on ghetto ruins  
          Hand in hand.
3. Tsigaynerlid (Gypsy Song)
David Beigelman, words and tune. Piano arr. by Mimi Stern-Wolfe

Finster di nakht, vi koyln shvarts. Dark is the night, black as the coal,
Nor trakht un trakh, I sit and brood,
un s’klapt mayn harts. my heartbeats toll.
Mir tsigayner lebn vi keyner, We are Gypsies and live like no others,
Mir laydn noyt, genug koym ojf broyt. No bread to eat, unlike our brothers.

Dzum, dzum, dzum... Dzum, dzum, dzum...
Mir flien arum vi di tshaykes. Dzum... Like seagulls we fly near and far. Dzum...
Mir shpiln ojf di balalaykes. We’re strumming our Gypsy guitar.

Nit vu men togt, nit vu men nakht; /A nowhere to live, nothing to eat,
yeder zikh plogt, nor kh’tarakht un trakh. Nothing but struggle, even defeat.
Mir tsigayner lebn vi keyner, We are Gypsies and live like no others,
Mir laydn noyt, genug koym ojf broyt. No bread to eat, unlike our brothers.

8. Tsen Brider (Ten Brothers)
Martin Rosenberg. Piano arr. by Mordechai Sheinkman

Bom bom bom bom, Lilay, lilay lilay, Bom bom bom bom, Lilay, lilay lilay,
Tsen brider zenen mir geven We were ten brothers
Hobn mir gehandlt mit vayn. whose business was wine.
Eyner iz geshtorbhn, Zenen mir One died, And there were nine.
9. Shtil, di Nakht iz Oysgesherntn
(The Quiet Night is Full of Stars)

Hirsh Glik, words. Piano arr. by Mimi Stern-Wolfe

Shtil, di nakht iz oysgesherntn, Quiet night so full of stars,
Un der frost hot shtark gebrent. The frost was biting cold.
Tsi gedenkstu vi ikh hob dikh gelernt Do you remember how I taught you
Halt'n a shpayer in di hent? How to hold a gun in your hand?
A moyd, a peltsl un a beret, 
Un halt in hant fest a nagan.
A moyd mit a sametenen ponim, 
Hit op dem soynes karavan.

A girl in sheepskin and beret, 
In her hand she tightly held a gun.
A girl with a velvet face, 
Watched the enemy's caravan.

Getsilt, geshosn un getrofn! 
Hot ir kleyninker pistoyl.
An oyto, a fulinkn mit vofn 
Farhaltn hot zi mit eyn koyl.

She aimed, she shot, and she hit 
her mark With her little pistol.
A truck loaded with weapons 
Was held with her one shot.

Far tog fun vald aroysgekrokh, 
Mit shney-girlandn oyl di hor.
Gemutikt fun kleyninkn nitsokhn 
Far undzer nayem, frayen dor.

At dawn she crawled from the woods, 
Garlands of snow in her hair.
Strengthened by her little victory 
For our new free generation.

10. Zog Nit Keyn Mol (Never Say)
Hirsh Glik, words, to music adapted from a melody by Pokras. Piano arr. MSW

Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.
Vail kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: Mir zaynen do!

Never say that you are on your final way,
Though lead gray skies blot out the blue of day.
The hour will come at last for which we all long,
A drumbeat for our steps saying: "We live on!"
Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney,
Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey,
Un vu gefaln s'iz a shprits fun undzer blut,
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure undzer mut.

From green lands of palms to white lands of snow,
We come bearing our hurt and our pain,
And wherever there is a spurt of our blood,
There will sprout our courage, our rebirth.

S'vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,
Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynt,
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun un dem kayor,
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.

The morning sun will gild our today,
And our yesterday will fade with our foes,
Yet, if the sun delays in its scheduled rise,
This song must go as password from generation to generation.

Dos lid geshrhibn iz mit blut un nit mit blay, S'iz nit kayn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray, Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent,
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!

This song is written with blood and not with lead,
It's not the song that birds sing freely,
This one has a people midst collapsing walls,
This song, sung with grenades in our hands.
11. Wiegenlied (Lullaby)
Gideon Klein, arranger. (Terezín, March 6, 1943)
Shalom Charitonov, melody. Emanuel Ha-Russi, words

Schav b'ni, schav beem'nucha,
   al nah tivkeh marah.
Al yadcha yoshevet imcha,
   shomeret mikol.

   Lie down, my son, lie down and sleep,
   Do not weep bitterly.
   Your mother sits by you
   And guards you from all harm.

Mi yaleyl,
Mi yaleyl b'ruach? Hatan.
Haruach,
haruach noshevet sham.

   What is howling?
   What howls in the wind? The jackal.
   The wind,
   The wind is blowing outside.

Schav b'ni,
  Schav beem'nucha,
   numa, numa sham.

   Lie down, my son,
   Lie down and sleep,
   Rest quietly there.

Laila, laila, laila tzol,
   ya'uz maher meod.
Asur, asur, asur l'hitatzel,
   machar tsarich la'avod.

   Night, night, shaded night,
   Passes very fast.
   You must not, must not, must not linger,
   for tomorrow we must work.

Machar yetse aba lacharosh,
  b'telem, b'telem yeleych ha'av.
Ach, ata b'ni hakatan,
   numa, numa schav.

   Tomorrow father goes out to plough,
   Father will walk in the furrows.
   But you, my little son,
   Lie down, lie down and sleep.
15. Yisrolik

Misha Veksler, music. Lev Rozenthal, words. Piano improv. by Mimi Stern-Wolfe based on piano arr. by Mordechai Sheinkman

Nu koyft zhe papirosn, Nu koyft zhe sakharin.
Gevorn iz haynt skhoyre bilik vert.
A lebn far a groshn, A prute-a fardinst–
Fun geto-hendler hot ir dokh gehert.

Kh’heys Yisrolik, Ikh bin dos kind fun geto.
Kh’heys Yisrolik, A hefkerdiker yung.
Khotsh farblibn, gole-neto,
Derlang ikh alts nokh, A svishtshe un a zung!

So, come and buy some cigarettes, Some candies and some cakes.
These goods were never cheaper than today.
My life is worth a penny, That’s all I ever make.
This ghetto here is where I earn my pay.

I’m called Yisrolik, Your kid from the ghetto.
I’m called Yisrolik, I’m tough and I am strong.
Though I’m left here, in this ghetto, I can give you a whistle and a song!

A mantl on a kragn, Takhtoynim fun a zak;
Keloshn hob ikh, s’feln nor di shikh.
Un ver es vet nor vagn, Tsu lakhn; oy, a sakh,
Dem vel ikh nokh vayzn ver bin ikh! /Kh’heys Yisrolik...
A coat without a collar, Pants made from a sack;
I have galoshes but I’m out of shoes.
Whoever starts complaining, Whoever starts to laugh,
You just be careful, I’ll show you who I am!
I’m called Yisrolik...

Nit meynt mikh hot geborn, Di hefkerdike gas.
Bay tate-mame oykh geven a kind.
Kh’hob beydn ongevorn, Nit meynt es iz a shpas,
Kh’bin geblibn vi in feld der vint.

Kh’heys Yisrolik, Nor ven keyner zet nit,
Vish ikh shtil zikh. Fun oyg arop a trer.
Nor fun mayn troyer, Beser az men redt nit,
Tsu vos dermonen? Un makhn s’harts zikh shver.

Don’t think that I was born here, This miserable street.
I had my mother and my father too.
But now I have no family, Don’t think it is a joke,
Wand’ring ‘round like winds and Gypsies do.

I’m called Yisrolik, And when no one sees me,
Secretly, I wipe away a tear. I’ve had troubles,
Let’s not talk about it, Why remember?
It makes me feel so sad.
16. Wiegala (Cradle Song)
Ilse Weber. Piano improvisation by Mimi Stern-Wolfe

Wiegala, wiegala, weier,
Der Wind spielt auf der Leier.
Er spielt so süß im grünen Ried,
Die Nachktigall, die singt ihr Lied.
Wiegala, wiegala, weier,
Der Wind spielt auf der Leier.

Wiegala, wiegala, werne,
Der Mond ist die Laterne.
Er steht am dunklen Himmelszelt,
Und schaut hernieder auf die Welt.
Wiegala, wiegala, werne,
Der Mond ist die Laterne.

Wiegala, wiegala, willen,
Wie ist die Welt so stille.
Es stört kein Laut die süsse Ruh,
Schlaf, mein Kindchen, schlaf auch du.
Wiegala, wiegala, willen,
Wie ist die Welt so stille.

Rock, cradle, rock.
The wind is playing the lyre.
The wind is playing the lyre.
The nightingale sings her song.
The moon is the lantern.
The moon is the lantern.

Rock, cradle, rock.
The wind is playing the lyre.
The wind is playing the lyre.
The nightingale sings her song.
The moon is the lantern.
The moon is the lantern.

Rock, cradle, rock.
How still the world is.
No sound disturbs this sweet calm.
Sleep, my dearest child, sleep,
Rock, cradle, rock.
How still the world is.
17. Ein jüdisches Kind (A Jewish Child)
Music by Carlo Sigmund Taube. Words by Erika Taube

Du bist ein Kind wie all die Vielen
Wie auf der ganzen Erde sind;
Wie all die anderen Gespielen,
Und doch bist du so ander Kind.

You are a child like all others
All over the world; / Like all playmates, /
Yet you’re different from them,
my sweet child.

Du bist ein Kind den Heimat fehlt,
in allen Städten bist du fremd.
So lang dich nicht das Wort beseelt
Heimat du, Dein ist ungehemmt.

You lack a homeland, / In every city
you’ll feel like a stranger, my child.
But as long as the word “Heimat” (the
country where you were born and
raised) does not represent your soul,
You are free, unfettered.

18. Reprise of Number 10


Founded in 1979, Downtown Music Productions and its performing ensemble, the Downtown Chamber & Opera Players, has presented the works of hundreds of composers and has commissioned operas, chamber and vocal music, and theatrical and dance works. DMP has presented a host of orchestral and opera performances as well as smaller works, performing in New York City's concert halls (Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, Town Hall, Merkin, Weill, the Y), and at Hebrew Union College, the Middle Collegiate Church, Vineyard Theater, Greenwich House and Greenwich Music School. DMP's socially-oriented programs have included 10 annual Benson AIDS Concerts, Mus-Ecology programs, Women Composers Concerts, Children's Concerts, War and Peace, and a Holocaust series.

Mimi Stern-Wolfe, pianist and conductor, is artistic director and founder of Downtown Music Productions. A graduate of Queens College, with a Master of Music in Piano and Conducting from the New England Conservatory, she also worked with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and with pianists Ray Lev, Cecile Ruef, and Leonid Hambro. She was formerly a conductor and vocal coach at the Lake George Opera Festival and the Aspen Music Festival. In recognition of her work with Downtown Music Productions, Ms. Stern-Wolfe received the Laurel Leaf award for "fostering American music," two ASCAP-Chamber Music America Awards for "adventuresome programming," and the Mayor's Special Arts Award in Music for her "exceptional contribution to the arts and multicultural life of New York City."
In 1986, Mimi presented a series of concerts entitled "Jewish Musical Currents," and in 1989, began a series of "Composers of the Holocaust" concerts, bringing to light the music of Terezín and Eastern European composers. The concerts "Ervin Schulhoff Re-Discovered" and "Lost and Found" were presented at Merkin Hall as part of her efforts to introduce Schulhoff's complete chamber and piano works to the public. Ms. Stern-Wolfe is a member of Board of Directors of the American Society for Jewish Music and a performer/consultant for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Her performances and music research have culminated in this CD, her first recording.

Mezzo-soprano Isabelle Ganz, Affiliate Artist in Voice at The University of Houston, holds the MDA degree in Voice and Music Literature from the Eastman School of Music, where she was a student of the late Jan De Gaetani. She has an extensive discography, and has been a soloist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Seattle and Portland (Maine) Symphonies, and the Slovak Radio Orchestra. Ms. Ganz was recently the recipient of a Fulbright grant to teach at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy of Music and Dance and to conduct research in Sephardic Music at Hebrew University. Earlier, under a National Endowment for the Arts Solo Recitalist grant, she performed concerts of contemporary music at universities and conservatories throughout the United States. Her New York-based Sephardic Music ensemble, Alhambra, has recorded three CDs and performs internationally. Dr. Ganz has been a cantorial soloist for synagogues in the USA, Canada and Germany.
Brooklyn-born baritone Robert Paul Abelson, Cantor at Temple Israel in New York City, is a graduate of the School of Sacred Music of the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion. He has been a member of the New York City Opera and has sung with the Seattle Opera, St. Paul Opera, and the Goldowsky Opera Theatre. He appeared in the role of Gimpel in 92nd Street Y performance of that opera. A specialist in Yiddish Art Song, Mr. Abelson has worked under the guidance of Lazar Weiner, performing works of neglected Jewish composers in addition to Mr. Weiner's own inspiring compositions.

Marshall Coid, violinist, is also a countertenor, composer, and actor. As a soloist, he has appeared in Lincoln Center's Great Performers series, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, and at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the United Nations, Spoleto Festival, MOMA, and Lincoln Center Composers Showcase. His operatic credits include creating the title role for his opera to Ilsa Gilbert's libretto, "The Bundle Man," in DMP's World Premiere performance. Mr. Coid's numerous television appearances include "Fame," "Guiding Light," "Another World," and "The Kennedy Center Honors." He was the countertenor and violin soloist in the "Live From Lincoln Center" broadcast of Twelfth Night and in Ken-
nedy Center’s tenth anniversary production of Bernstein’s “Mass” broadcast on PBS television. In addition to his numerous theatrical scores, Mr. Coid’s concert works have been premiered by various American orchestras and ensembles. As a violinist, he performs with New York’s Ensemble for Early Music and the Queen’s Chamber Band.

Oboist Humbert Lucarelli, cited by The New York Times as “America’s leading oboe recitalist,” has appeared extensively as soloist with internationally known orchestras and chamber music groups throughout the United States, South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Among the many recordings to his credit is the “Oboe Concerto” written for him by John Corigliano. Mr. Lucarelli is the recipient of a Solo Recitalist Fellowship, Consortium Commissioning and Music Recording Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. He is Professor of Oboe at The Hartt School in West Hartford, Connecticut.

Choral Singers: Ms. Ganz and Mr. Abelson are joined by Trudy Wodinsky, soprano; Jessica Kligman, mezzo-soprano; and Dan Schreibman, tenor.

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RECORDING PRODUCTION

Recording Musical Producer: Marnie Hall, Producer and Executive Director, Leonarda Productions. **Recorded by David Hancock** (Schulhoff, Abelson songs, and group songs) and **Marnie Hall** (Ganz songs and Haas) at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in New York City (Hancock) and SUNY Purchase (State University of New York) (M. Hall). Digital Audio Editing and Pre-mastering: Marnie Hall.


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Drawn in Buchenwald
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