"A Distinctive Jewish Art:"
A.W. Binder and the Creation of a Jewish Musical Idiom for the American Reform Tradition

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This thesis is an exploration of A.W. Binder's philosophy about the need for a "Jewish sound" in Jewish music. A.W. Binder's contributions to Jewish music represent how larger revolutionary changes within the greater context of post-Enlightenment Europe manifested themselves in American Jewish music. The intention of this thesis is to show how Binder's many influences attributed to the formation of his own concept of Jewish music and how this perception of Jewish music became manifest in his attempt to create a "distinctive Jewish art."

I explore Binder's approach to Jewish music by studying Binder's own essays on the subject, characteristics of Binder's compositions, as well as the works of other writers and composers who have shown an interest in Binder's work and his insights on Jewish music. The thesis is made up of an introductory chapter with a biographical account of Binder in order to situate him within Jewish history, as well as the larger historical context. The body of the paper is made up of three chapters. In Chapter One of the thesis, I explore Binder's historical context, and therefore his major influences, by looking at the state of Jewish music in America prior to Binder, as well as the innovative strides being made in the field of music in Europe, both in general Western music and in the Jewish musical idiom. Chapter Two is a study of Binder's understanding of Jewish music and his approach to the composition of music for this particular idiom. The third, and final, chapter of this thesis is an exploration of Binder's goals and achievements in his contribution to the creation of a "distinctive Jewish art," as well as a broader discussion of the philosophical ideas behind the need for an American Jewish musical idiom.

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Introduction

Synagogue composer Abraham Wolf Binder (1895-1966) devoted his professional life to contributing to the Jewish people through music. He made great strides in reviving and preserving Jewish music for American Jews because he believed that "our synagogue music must not be allowed to stagnate or to deteriorate, but must be constantly raised to higher levels of pure religious art."[1] The beginning of Binder's career came at a time of great change both in the history of Western music and in the American Jewish community. Binder was influenced by the changes he saw, and moved to incorporate musical innovation into synagogue music. For example, as European musicologists began to record and study the music of ethnic groups, bringing traditional folk music into the consciousness of the modern *folk*, Binder attempted as well to share the traditional roots of Jewish music with the American Jewish community. He used his knowledge of Jewish music history and his influence as a well-respected composer in the field of Jewish music to develop a Jewish musical idiom for the twentieth century. It is my intention in this thesis to explore A.W. Binder's philosophy about the need for a "Jewish sound" in Jewish music by looking at the greater context of post-Enlightenment Europe and its effect on Jewish music. A.W. Binder will be a primary example of how these larger revolutionary changes manifested themselves in Jewish music.

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[1] A.W. Binder, "Changing Values in Synagogue Music," *Bulletin of the Jewish Music Forum* (December 1941), found in Irene Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music: Collected Writings of A.W. Binder* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), 84.

I begin with a biographical account of Binder in order to situate him within Jewish history, as well as the larger historical context. A.W. Binder was born into an Orthodox family in New York City on January 9, 1895. His father served as *baal tefillah* (prayer leader) in a synagogue on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and by the age of four, Binder had already started singing in his father's High Holy Day choir. From the ages of seven to fourteen, Binder sang in the choir of Cantor Abraham Frachtenberg from Galatz, Roumania. "In Europe, Frachtenberg had been a *meshorer* (choir-singer) with Yeruchon Hakoton, a famous cantor in Berditchev...These early years were decisive for Binder in that he acquired a taste for the great traditional music of Europe, and an appreciation of the skills of a trained and sensitive musician."[2] Binder's formal music education took place at the Settlement Music School, beginning in 1906, where he studied piano, organ, and harmony.

From 1911 to 1917, Binder held positions as choir director and organist first at Temple Beth El in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and then at Temple Adath Israel in the Bronx. In 1916, the Hadassah organization commissioned Binder to compose and arrange Palestinian folk songs for a choral ensemble and to develop a choir for that purpose. The Hadassah Choral Union had its first performance on June 3, 1917. Later that year, the executive director of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA in New York approached Binder and invited him to organize a music department. Binder established a number of music programs for the 92nd Street "Y,"

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[2] Irene Heskes, "Biographical Portrait of Abraham Wolf Binder," *Studies in Jewish Music,* 15.

including a choral society, a children's chorus, and ultimately, an orchestral organization.[3]

Over the next few years, Binder worked as music director for the Jewish Center Congregation, under Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, and then at Temple Emanu-El in New York, simultaneously working toward his degree. He received his Bachelor of Music from the New York College of Music in 1920. During this time, he also composed hymns to be used for Reform congregational singing, including "Come, O Sabbath Day," (see Appendix One) which became popular throughout American Reform synagogues with the 1932 revision of the Reform *Union Hymnal,* to be discussed further below.

In 1921, Binder began an auspicious relationship with the influential Rabbi Stephen S. Wise (1874-1949) who attended one of Binder's choral performances at the "Y." Wise had emigrated to New York as a child and received both a Jewish and secular education. He was ordained as a rabbi in the new Jewish Theological Seminary and went on to become a Reform rabbi. An active Zionist, Wise attended the Second Zionist Congress in 1898 and in 1914, when Louis Brandeis headed the American Zionist movement, Wise became his key lieutenant. Two years later, he became Chairperson of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist

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[3] "In time, the 92nd Street YM-YWHA became a showcase music school which introduced many new concepts into music education, such as family teams for musical instruction, as well as the active study and programming of fine musical selections of particular Jewish relevance. At the time of Binder's retirement in 1966, the music school had a student enrollment of more than six-hundred, and a carefully picked faculty of over fifty musicians." Ibid., 18.

Affairs and was instrumental in influencing President Woodrow Wilson to support the Balfour Declaration.

When Wise formed the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City in 1921, a non-denominational institution for the education of American Rabbis, he invited Binder onto the faculty as an instructor of Jewish music. "There, for the first time in America, Jewish music was made a required subject of study for Reform rabbinical students. This was one of Wise's significant innovations. He sought to make the modern rabbi better educated in the totality of Judaism."[4] Soon after the establishment of the Jewish Institute of Religion, Wise formed the Free Synagogue in New York City and hired Binder as music director. Binder and Wise remained in close contact as colleagues from their meeting in 1921 until Wise's death in 1949.

Both Binder and Wise regarded music as an important part of the synagogue service, and Wise, therefore, encouraged Binder in his musical endeavors. For many years, Binder had felt that synagogue music in Reform congregations had lost its Jewish character. Much of the American synagogue music of the day was in a Protestant hymn style or was being composed by non-Jews, such as Sigmund Schlesinger, who had little or no knowledge of the traditional sound of Jewish music, and therefore, followed the classical style of European composers. Binder supported a return to the more indigenous aspects of Jewish music, such as *nusach ha-tefillah*, the traditional prayer modes, as well as the chanting,

[4] Ibid, 21.

or cantillation, of Torah.

With Wise's encouragement, Binder explored the musical possibilities for Reform congregational worship. In 1928, he published his first Shabbat service, *Hibbat Shabbat*. *Rinnat Shabbat* followed in 1935, then in 1940, Binder completed *Kabbalat Shabbat*, written in response to a need for new music to supplement the Reform prayer book. Some years later Binder wrote,

> I consider my most important contribution to synagogue music to by my association with the return to the *nusach ha-tefillah*, which is our rich musical tradition in the synagogue, and my efforts to purify it and perpetuate it. I have endeavored to use it skillfully and tastefully in all the services, not only for what it has meant to our forefathers and to the religious services of the ages past, but also significantly, for what it can do for the synagogue services of today and into the future.[5]

Binder wrote a number of other services to be used for other times during the Jewish year using traditional melodies for the appropriate holiday, including Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and the Three Festivals of Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot.

In 1924, Binder made his first trip to Palestine where he collected songs of the *halutzim*, or pioneers. Given Rabbi Wise's interest in the pursuit of Zionism, it is not surprising that Binder received much support in his research of the folk tradition, which allowed him to spend time lecturing on Palestinian music throughout the United States. Binder recognized the value of this Jewish folk tradition and arranged much of this music for publication, where it gained popularity within religious schools. His arrangements included solo songs, including a collection

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[5] Found in Ibid, 23-24.

entitled *Shire Chalutzim: Pioneer Songs of Israel* (1942), as well as works for mixed choir, such as Four Israeli Songs (1942). Binder also published a number of his own original compositions based on this folk music.

Throughout his life, Binder published many other works including dramatic pieces, choral arrangements of both Yiddish and secular American folk songs, art music, music for children, and instrumental suites.[6] One of his greatest achievements, however, was not a single composition, but rather his revision of the Reform *Union Hymnal,* published in 1932. When the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) proposed a revision of the *Union Hymnal,* Rabbi Wise suggested the appointment of Binder as editor for the project.

> As music editor, he rearranged previous materials from the first two editions of the *Hymnal;* he contributed many new settings for the liturgical texts, and invited some outstanding Jewish musicians to make similar original contributions. Some of these new hymns were based musically upon traditional *nusach,* adapting these time-honored prayer melodies and holiday tunes to the newer Reform texts of the various services. Those new creative combinations proved spiritually appropriate and of lasting success.[7]

The new Hymnal had much more music than the 1914 edition, and was published in three separate volumes: Hymns: *Songs and Prayers for Jewish Worship; Musical Services for Sabbath, Festivals, and Special Occasions;* and

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[6] For a complete list of Binder's work, see "Bibliography of Works by A.W. Binder." Found in *Studies in Jewish Music,* Irene Heskes, ed., (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), 311-329. Heskes adds in regard to the list, "This list was originally prepared by Lewis Appleton in August 1964, as a special program resource for the 21st annual Jewish Music Festival. It was subsequently included in the tribute manual: *The Life and Works of A.W. Binder,* published by the National Jewish Music Council of the National Jewish Welfare Board, and edited by Irene Heskes. Additions have been made to complete the list." (Ibid., 311).

[7] Heskes, "Biographical Portrait," 26.

Services for the Religious School. Binder's 1932 edition was reprinted in 1957 with few changes, and remained in widespread use until the great liturgical changes that came with the publication of the new Reform prayer book *Gates of Prayer* (1975).

Binder spent his entire professional life on a mission to revitalize and sustain Jewish music and he wrote articles and lectured throughout his life on the need for Jewish music. He was influential in organizing the Society for the Advancement of Jewish Liturgical Music (1946). He also taught at the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music from its founding in 1948 until his death, training future Reform Cantors. Binder recognized the importance of the cantor as musical teacher, for the cantor is generally the only one in a congregation who is trained in the modes and melodies of the Jewish tradition. No one else has formal education in *nusach*, cantillation, Jewish choral music, and many other aspects of the vast tradition. Binder states that "the cantor is the mainstay musically of our synagogue service. He should be the musical specialist in the synagogue."[8] It is through the cantor that the congregation will receive its Jewish musical training.

Binder believed that American Jews did not have a "distinctive Jewish art" and he strove, in his many roles, to educate the Jewish public on what is Jewish about Jewish music, and why there is a need for a "Jewish sound" in the synagogue. Binder's relationship with Rabbi Wise provided him with the means to be able to contribute to the world of Jewish music, both as editor of the *Union Hymnal* and as professor of

[8] Ibid, 86.

music at the Jewish Institute of Religion. At the non-denominational Jewish Institute of Religion, Binder could explore the traditional musical roots of Judaism without being tethered by limitations of the existing Reform repertoire.

Binder's own understanding of Jewish music derived from a combination of his traditional Jewish upbringing, his exposure to Western music, and the scholarly work being done in the fields of ethnic and folk music. Binder believed that "[w]ithout a distinctive Jewish art we are not a nation; we cannot speak of a complete culture, nor can we call ourselves a civilization."[9] The intention of this thesis is to show how Binder's many influences attributed to the formation of his own concept of Jewish music and how this perception of Jewish music became manifest in his attempt to create a "distinctive Jewish art." I intend to explore Binder's approach to Jewish music by studying Binder's own essays on the subject, characteristics of Binder's compositions, as well as the works of other writers and composers who have shown an interest in Binder's work and his insights on Jewish music.

In Chapter One of this thesis, I will explore Binder's historical context, and therefore his major influences, by looking at the state of Jewish music in America prior to Binder, as well as the innovative strides being made in the field of music in Europe, both in general Western music and in the Jewish musical idiom. Chapter Two is a study of Binder's

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[9] A.W. Binder, "The Neglect and Need of Jewish Music," *The Jewish Center* (September 1944), found in Irene Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music: Collected Writings of A.W. Binder* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), 90.

understanding of Jewish music and his approach to the composition of music for this particular idiom. The third, and final, chapter of this thesis is an exploration of Binder's goals and achievements in his contribution to the creation of a "distinctive Jewish art," as well as a broader discussion of the philosophical ideas behind the need for an American Jewish musical idiom.

Chapter One

Born in 1895, A.W. Binder entered Jewish history at a time when Jews had more freedom and opportunity than ever before. The European Enlightenment (circa 1775) emancipated the Jews, bringing them out of ghettos and into the public institutions of countries all over Western Europe. Education in philosophy, the sciences, and the arts led to innovation in all sorts of practices, including religious ritual. An exploration of the historical period prior to Binder demonstrates that his goal of achieving a "distinctive Jewish art" came out of a time of great innovation in music, especially in the *folk* idiom, which highlighted the importance of ethnic music, or music of a particular group.

In Germany, Jews living in the larger metropolitan areas broke away from traditional forms of worship and practice, developing a new Reform ideological approach to Judaism. The early Reformers brought about great changes in Jewish liturgical music as well. Newly exposed to the worlds of European art, literature, and music, Jewish culture in Western and Central Europe took on a new life. Composers of synagogue music in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were influenced greatly by the music that surrounded them. Adapting to Western paradigms, synagogue composers followed the musical models they heard in both the concert halls and churches of Europe. The preferred style of music in the German Protestant churches was the prevalent congregational hymn. Therefore, like the music found in Protestant churches, the synagogue music in Western Europe during this

time emphasized order and structure, casting off, for the most part, the frenzied style of the pre-modern synagogue experience described by one observer as "a confused clamor, and riotous noise."[10]

In the new liberal synagogues of Central Europe, new models of worship replaced the perceived disorder and confusion of synagogue prayer. In 1810, Israel Jacobson (1768-1828), a wealthy merchant, established the first Reform Temple in Europe in Seesen (Westphalia). This initial move away from tradition included a number of radical changes, particularly in the musical style of the services and the use of the vernacular. Jacobson did away with the office of the Cantor, or *chazzan*, and chose to lead services himself by reading, rather than chanting, the liturgical texts. He installed an organ, and he set Hebrew and German texts to Protestant hymns to be sung in his worship services.[11]

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[10] Geoffrey Goldberg, "Jewish Liturgical Music in the Wake of Nineteenth-Century Reform," *Sacred Sound and Social Change*, Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet R. Walton, eds., (University of Notre Dame Press: 1992), 60.

[11] A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1929), reprint, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 235 (page citations are to the reprint edition). Another community, the New Israelite Temple Association in Hamburg explains the changes made in worship in their 1817 constitution: "Since public worship has for some time been neglected by so many, because of ever decreasing knowledge of the language in which alone it has until now been conducted, and also because of many other shortcomings which have crept in at the same time—the undersigned, convinced of the necessity to restore public worship to its deserving dignity and importance, have joined together to follow the example of several Israelite congregations, especially the one also in Berlin. They plan to arrange in this city also, for themselves as well as others who think as they do, a dignified and well-ordered ritual according to which the worship service shall be conducted on the Sabbath and holy days and on other solemn occasions, and which shall be observed in their own temple, to be erected specially for this purpose. Specifically, there shall be introduced at such services a German sermon, and choral singing to the accompaniment of an organ. "The New Israelite

Hymn singing spread throughout the burgeoning Reform communities in Europe. The hymns and other pieces of music for these early Reform congregations were often written by Gentile composers, and did not observe the traditional liturgical modes. It was also common to hear other styles of music in synagogue that conformed to the rules of the classical style, often quoting directly from operas, and other foreign sources. Twentieth-century synagogue composer Herbert Fromm (1905-1995) explains that this happened due to "lack of interest on the part of Jewish composers."[12] While there may have been other factors involved, Fromm makes an important point, adding that "the musical poverty of the Reform movement in its beginnings is astounding when compared with the strong impulses that led to so many important changes in worship."[13]

However, the need for musical creativity did not go unnoticed for long. The public demanded the return of the *chazzan* and at the rabbinic conference of 1845 in Frankfurt, the rabbis present decided that not only was the organ permissible on Shabbat, "but also advisable, and that making music by playing instruments on Sabbaths and holidays in homes should be recommended from a spiritual-religious standpoint."[14] The engagement of a cantor or a temple musician became more common than

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Temple Association: Constitution of the Hamburg Temple (December 11, 1817)," *The Jew in the Modern World*, Paul R. Mendez-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 145.

[12] Herbert Fromm, "Jewish Hymnology," found in Fromm, *On Jewish music: a composer's view*, (New York: Bloch, 1978), 20. The article was originally published in the proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the American Conference of Cantors, June 15-18, 1959.

[13] Ibid., 21.

[14] Idelsohn, 242.

not in the larger cities (including Seesen, whose congregation ultimately engaged a cantor, or "precentor" in 1833).[15] Experimenting with the novelty of the organ, these temple musicians composed grand organ and choral works for the synagogues of large cities such as Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna. While some of the music from the early nineteenth century continued to conform to the classical style, other musicians attempted to create music which emphasized a more traditional approach to the synagogue sound, integrating old melodies with modern instrumentation and Western harmony.

Salomon Sulżer (1804-1890) served as Cantor for the Reform temple in Vienna. He disagreed with certain leaders of reform who felt that the synagogue service needed to break completely with tradition in order to be palatable to its congregants. His interest was in a "restoration" of the synagogue service through a "beautifying" of synagogue music. Sulzer, whose knowledge, and perhaps appreciation, of secular music far outweighed that of traditional Jewish music, was frank in his opinion that the "old tunes and singing modes" of the synagogue "should be improved...and adjusted according to the rules of art."[16] Sulzer's aim was to bridge the old with the new. The Jewish musical themes that were used by Sulzer were often harmonized using the rules of Western harmony. Some other synagogue composers followed this model, including Samuel Naumbourg (1815-1880) and Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894).

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[15] Irene Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music: Its History, Traditions, and Culture,* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 182.
[16] Found in Idelsohn, 249.

In the United States, there were enough liberal Jewish congregations to warrant the establishment in 1873 of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1819-1900). Structured prayer singing gained popularity within these congregation, whether or not the temple had a cantor. In 1889, Wise "started the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), and that organization set up a music committee in order to commission and publish volumes of American hymnology and Jewish holiday songsters."[17] The CCAR approached Alois Kaiser (1840-1908), synagogue composer for Congregation Ohev Sholom in Baltimore, to organize a hymnal to be used as a supplement to the Reform *Union Prayerbook*. First published in 1897, the CCAR's *Union Hymnal* would go through subsequent editions, including the 1932 edition, edited by A.W. Binder.

The hymn was not the only musical style in use among the synagogue composers in America. William Sparger (1850-1903), Cantor of Temple Emanu-El in New York City, collaborated with both Kaiser and his own choral director at Emanu-El, Max Spicker (1858-1912), to produce more musically elaborate pieces. His collaborative work with Kaiser, *A Collection of Principal Melodies of the Synagogue,*[18] included some Protestant-influenced hymns, but other compositions in the collection showed "a growing influence in America of Askenazic liturgical

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[17] Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 184.
[18] *A Collection of Principal Melodies of the Synagogue* (Chicago: T. Rubovitz Company, 1893).

customary usage (minhag), though in a more stylized manner."[19] Edward Stark (1856-1918), who spent twenty years as cantor in San Francisco, published four volumes of liturgical music between 1909 and 1913. His father had trained with Sulzer as a boy in Vienna, and Stark's own compositions reflected a knowledge of traditional synagogue chant from Central Europe.[20]

Some synagogue composers, however, made more of a break with tradition. Sigmund Schlesinger (1835-1906), a non-Jewish composer from Germany, served as organist and choral director for Congregation Sharey Shomayim in Mobile, Alabama from 1863-1903. He collected, arranged and compiled a number of services for Shabbat, Festivals, and the High Holy Days which were use regularly in Reform congregations well into the twentieth century. According to Irene Heskes, his compositions were "skillfully prepared, but of a protestant quality with operatic-classic elements, and...omitted almost all traditional synagogue chant motifs."[21] In general, however, regardless of the religion of the composer, the synagogue music of the early Reform congregations of America observed the rules of Western harmony and often reflected the musical styles found in the European Protestant churches.

The turn of the century brought many changes to both Europe and America. World Wars I and II encroached on almost all aspects of life. Given music's nature as a form of expression, it is not surprising that the

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[19] Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 187.
[20] Ibid., 189-190.
[21] Ibid., 187.

musical innovations from this period reflect the intensity of the time and the emotional impact of the human suffering, political tensions and economic hardships. Right before World War I, the musical world began to break free from the harmonic norms that had ruled Western classical music for centuries. One of the most influential composers of this period was Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), who led the late Romantic German composers into the yet-unexplored regions of musical possibility. He devised a twelve-tone system of musical theory and, in many of his works, abandoned the tonal center,[22] breaking away from the traditional idea of how music is supposed to sound.

As some twentieth century composers pushed outward to explore the far reaches of musical expression, other composers turned to a different form of musical experimentation, incorporating non-Western music and traditional folk music into their compositions. The interest in folk music developed in the nineteenth century as European countries searched for a separate identity from surrounding countries and communities. "The search for an independent, native voice—one important aspect of nationalism—was keenest in England, France, the United States, Russia, and the countries of Eastern Europe, where the

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[22] Grout explains that, "*Atonal* as currently used refers to music which is not based on the harmonic and melodic relationships revolving around a key center that characterize most music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The term is no longer applied to music built on *serial* principles, such as on a twelve-tone row. From 1908 to 1923 Schoenberg wrote 'atonal' music in the sense that it is not bound by the traditional tonalities. After 1923 he wrote music based on twelve-tone rows. Twelve –tone music, however, need not be atonal; it may observe a tonal center" Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A history of western music*, 6th ed., (New York: Norton, 2001), 733.

dominance of German music was felt as a threat to home-grown musical creativity."[23] In addition to folk music, this nationalistic approach also emphasized the exploration of literary traditions, folklore, patriotism, and identity.

In the twentieth century, advances in technology made recordings possible, eliminating the tendency to lose the essence of foreign music through transcription into Western notation. These "exotic" styles offered composers new exciting areas for creativity, including foreign instruments and unusual modal scales, intervals, and rhythmic patterns. The unveiling of the folk tradition led to the new discipline of ethnomusicology and to a joining of the musical world with the people, or the *folk*.

> As the gap widened between the "new music" and the responsiveness of listeners, special efforts were made throughout the interwar period to bring contemporary music closer to ordinary people. Leading composers were invited to provide background music for films, theater, and dance. *Gebrauchsmusik* (workaday music), for use by school groups of other amateurs, was cultivated in Germany, and similar projects arose elsewhere, such as the "proletarian" music in the Soviet republics. Hungary, under the leadership of the composer Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967), sought to make music serve the people and set up an educational program based on folksong, a method that later spread to other countries, especially the United States.[24]

Another Hungarian composer, Bela Bartok (1881-1945), also made great contributions to folk music, publishing "nearly two-thousand traditional tunes, chiefly from Hungary, Romania, Croatia, and Yugoslavia."[25] He

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[23] Ibid., 666.
[24] Ibid., 693.
[25] Ibid., 696.

also published books and articles on folk music, and original compositions incorporating folk melodies.

Interest in the folk idiom and its role in creating a national identity spread to the United States where composers such as Charles Ives (1874-1954) and Aaron Copland (1900-1990) integrated folksongs, hymns, and patriotic musical themes into their compositions. A familiar example of this is Copland's 1944 composition *Appalachian Spring*, in which the composer quotes the Shaker hymn *Tis a Gift to be Simple*.

The move toward providing musical expression for a national identity did not escape the Jewish world. In Russia, Jewish composers Joel Engel (1868-1927), Solomon Rosowsky (1878-1962), and Lazare Saminsky (1882-1959) organized the St. Petersburg Society for the Jewish Folk Music which functioned from 1908-1918. Among the other European musicologists actively collecting folk melodies at this time was Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882-1938), considered the "father of Jewish music research." As a young man, Idelsohn studied synagogue music, singing in the synagogue choir and training privately in the cantorial arts. He continued his musical education at Stern Conservatory in Berlin and the Leipzig Conservatory. "Idelsohn's dual background of Eastern cantorial tradition and Western musicological discipline would play an important role in his personal odyssey from sacred singer to ethnomusicologist."[26]

In 1906, while working as a cantor in Bavaria, Idelsohn decided to move to Jerusalem where he was convinced that he could most seriously

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[26] Arbie Orenstein, "Introduction to the Dover Edition," found in Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, xi.

pursue his interest in Jewish liturgical music. By 1907, he had already published an article on the Yemenite Jews and their music, and in 1910, with the help of the Ezra organization, he formed an Institute of Jewish Music.[27] Idelsohn ultimately settled in the United States in 1921, and became Professor of Liturgy and Jewish Music at the Hebrew Union College[28] in Cincinnati in 1924. Idelsohn's contributions to the world of Jewish music include his ten-volume *Thesaurus of Hebrew-Oriental Melodies* (1914-1932),[29] *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (1929), *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (1932), field recordings, and close to 200 books and articles.

Idelsohn's works were published during the time Binder was compiling music for the 1932 *Union Hymnal*. Binder's move to choose music that demonstrated more of a "Jewish sound" was a product of both his own exposure to the world of traditional Jewish music, and to the scholarly viewpoint of Idelsohn's ground-breaking works on the development of Jewish music and its indigenous characteristics, such as *nusach* and cantillation. When Binder entered the world of Jewish music, he found an American Reform culture which had adopted a Protestant style of worship, and music practically devoid of the Jewish musical modes. Under the influence of Idelsohn and other important figures of

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[27] For more information on Idelsohn's activities in Palestine, see Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 14-18.

[28] Isaac Mayer Wise founded Hebrew Union College in 1875 to train Reform Rabbis in America.

[29] Published in ten volumes with commentary in German, 1914-1932 (vols. 1-5, Jerusalem, Berlin, Vienna: Benjamin Harz; vols. 6-10, Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister). Several volumes have also been published in Hebrew (vols. 1-5) and English (vols. 1, 2, 6-10).

the time who brought innovative changes to Jewish music, Binder formed his own understanding of Jewish music. In the next section of this thesis, the author will discuss Binder's perception of Jewish music and his approach to composing music for Judaism in the modern era.

Chapter Two

In his essay, "Changing Values in Synagogue Music,"[30] Binder explains that an emphasis on assimilation in Western Europe was the reason for the lack of Jewish spirit in the music of "the great classicists and pioneers of synagogue choral music--Sulzer, Lewandowski, and Naumbourg."[31] Binder asserts that "their congregants were taught not to want those 'Oriental modes and melodies,' meaning the less tonal and more modal sounds of traditional Eastern European *nusach*, but rather tunes in the style of the purely European chorales and folk songs."[32] He regards Sulzer's attempt to join the Jewish melodies with Western harmony as having "snuffed out their very life and destroyed their Jewish character."[33]

According to A.Z. Idelsohn, Salomon Sulzer "did not recognize the Jewish musical inheritance as an echo of the living Jewish soul. To him it was merely a body of song that had somehow become national and as such was sacred to the Jew."[34] Binder agrees with Idelsohn that Sulzer's music, and the music of his contemporaries in Western Europe, lack a certain Jewish character which represents the soul of the Jewish people. Binder is even less supportive of the music that had become the staple in

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[30] Binder, "Changing Values in Synagogue Music," *Bulletin of the Jewish Music Forum* (December 1941), found in Heskes, *Studies in Jewish Music*, 79-84.
[31] Ibid., 80.
[32] Ibid., 80.
[33] Ibid., 80.
[34] Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 251.

the American synagogues. He says that the music of Schlesinger, and music like his, is "anti-liturgical."[35] He points out that many of these composers' melodies are taken directly from the Italian opera. Binder disapproves of the use of foreign music in the synagogue service and asks, "Why should such incongruities be permitted when our own musical heritage is so rich?"[36]

One aspect that distinguishes Binder's compositions from the general body of Jewish music of his time is his use of "*nusach ha-tefillah*," the traditional Jewish liturgical modes for the worship services. Binder was very vocal in his belief that *nusach* should be re-incorporated into synagogue music, and he wrote a number of essays on the matter. His studies of other composers of music for the Reform synagogue, such as Sulzer and Lewandowski, who wrote for the early Reform synagogues in Europe, and later composers such as Schlesinger, Kitziger,[37] and Stark, led him to the opinion that their compositions lack a certain Jewish feeling. According to Binder, Jewish music should "exude the Jewish spirit,"[38] and using the traditional modes of our Jewish ancestors is a way of achieving

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[35] Binder, "Changing Values," 81.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Federick Emil Kitziger (1844-1903), was a non-Jewish synagogue choral director and organist for the Judah Touro Synagogue in New Orleans. For more information on Kitziger, see John H. Baron, "Frederick Emil Kitziger of New Orleans: A Nineteenth-century Composer of Synagogue Music," *Musica Judaica* 5, no. 1 (1982-83): 20-33.
[38] A.W. Binder, "The Spirit of the Sabbath Eve Service," found in Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music*, 115. Published in January 1951, as part of the *Summary of Proceedings* for the Second Annual Institute on Jewish Liturgical Music held June 12-14, 1949 in New York City, by the Society for the Advancement of Jewish Liturgical Music, in cooperation with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

this. Binder asserts that "if this musical tradition is wrong or absent, a service loses its sacred and traditional spirit. The sacred spirit of our people and its prayers are enshrined in our *nusach ha-tefillah*."[39]

Binder's attitude toward the Jewish musical heritage and his belief that it embodies the Jewish soul led him to compose music which he hoped would help to bring the "Jewish spirit" back into the synagogue. He lists himself among a group of his contemporaries, among them Ernest Bloch, Isadore Freed, Heinrich Schalit, and Herbert Fromm: American synagogue composers who share his desire to create music using Jewish musical characteristics, albeit in a modern musical form. Binder credits these composers with integrating *nusach ha-tefillah* in their melodies and using musical rhythms that coincide with the rhythm of the Hebrew language.

When putting together his edition of the *Union Hymnal* in 1932, Binder did not jettison the earlier collections of hymns which reflected the Reform worship style of Europe, including hymns by Ludwig Van Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn, Joseph Haydn, and Arthur Sullivan. Rather, he supplemented the earlier hymnal with a greater variety of melodies which he perceived as having more of a Jewish character, such as works by Heinrich Schalit, who Binder credited above with the incorporation of *nusach ha-tefillah*.

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[39] A. W. Binder, "New Trends in Synagogue Music," The Journal of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (January 1955), found in Heskes, ed. *Studies in Jewish music*, 231.

Another one of the composers whose work Binder incorporated into the 1932 hymnal was David Nowakowsky (1848-1921), choirmaster and composer at the Brody Synagogue in Odessa, Russia. Like the centers of Jewish reform in "enlightened" Germany, the Jews of Odessa were highly acculturated. Known for its liberal atmosphere, Odessa was a center for Zionist activity as well as a home to many Jewish intellectuals, such as poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, and writers Ahad Ha'am and Sholem Aleichem.[40]

Nowakowsky spent his childhood as a choirboy in Berditchev, where he studied both Western music theory and cantorial music (*hazzanut*). His dual background helped him later in life as he "developed the technique of weaving themes from traditional *hazzanut* into his polyphonic compositions, a technique that would become a hallmark of his style."[41] Nowakowsky's music, while making use of chromatic harmony and other techniques of Romantic music, often includes melodies from the traditional mode of the Eastern European synagogue service. The familiar melodies within his compositions are often composed simply for the *hazzan*, while the choir sections introduce more sophisticated harmonic moments, designed to please the music devotees of Odessa's social elite. (See Appendix Two for an example of Binder's arrangement of a piece by Nowakowsky.)

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[40] Emanuel Rubin, "The Music of David Nowakowsky (1848-1921): A New Voice from Old Odessa, *Musica Judaica*, vol. XVI, (2001-2002), 21-52.
[41] Ibid., 30.

In 1928, Binder wrote that Nowakowsky was "the greatest composer of music for the synagogue...He was able to express the Jewish soul in harmonies that were truly Jewish."[42] Binder's statement, while ambiguous in its definition of "truly Jewish" harmonies, displays Binder's bias for Nowakowsky's sound: a blend of German technique, Russian flavor, and traditional Russian-Jewish synagogue melodies. Binder's own upbringing in a more traditionally Jewish setting most certainly attributed to his prejudice, and Binder's discovery of Nowakowsky's music paved the way for his own musical experiments combining traditional *hazzanut* with Western and modal harmony. Binder credits Nowakowsky's music with "a deep sense of *nusach ha-tefillah* and a conscious striving toward a Jewish harmonic idiom."[43] It is apparent from Binder's writings and compositions that he envisioned himself on this journey as well toward a unified "Jewish harmonic idiom." As mentioned earlier, Binder cites his own greatest contribution to synagogue music to be his incorporation of *nusach ha-tefillah*, but his projects, such as the *Union Hymnal* and the publication of his book *Biblical Chant* (1959), also point toward an attempt to aid in the standardization of an American Reform musical tradition.

In his essay, "V'shomru: A Century of Musical Interpretations," Binder describes various arrangements of the liturgical text, and weaves throughout his analyses his ideas about the inherent Jewishness of music that follows the rules of traditional *nusach*, the necessity to continue the

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[42] A.W. Binder, "A Forgotten Master," *The Jewish Tribune*, no. 7:11, 1928, found in Emanuel Rubin, "The Music of David Nowakowsky," 50.
[43] A.W. Binder, "Jewish Music: An Encyclopedic Survey," in Heskes, ed. *Studies in Jewish Music*, 129.

Jewish musical tradition, and of Jewish music as the expression of the Jewish soul. In the survey, Binder praises those composers whose pieces have sensitivity to the traditional *nusach* and motifs. He also advocates the integration of choral and congregational pieces, citing this as an ideal to reach toward: when they "will each have their full and active share in public worship."[44] Binder elaborates on this topic in another essay, "How Congregations Can Be Made To Sing," where it becomes clear that Binder's motivation to empower the congregational voice is for a spiritual purpose: "By teaching our congregations the right kind of synagogue music, and by having it sung properly, we may look forward to more enjoyment of it by our children, and generally a greater spirit of devotion in our synagogue."[45]

Binder's prolific writings on the matters of synagogue music display his attitudes about such topics as *nusach*, cantillation, choral music, folk music, congregational singing, and the general "neglect and need of Jewish music."[46] Binder is not against new music in the synagogue, but he promotes adherence to the general rules of *nusach*. He supports the creation of new music which echoes the traditions of the past, for example, Shabbat music composed according to the correct mode so that it will create a restful mood for Shabbat, or the use of the High

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[44] A.W. Binder, "V'shomru: A Century of Musical Interpretations," from Israel Abrahams Memorial Volume, Vienna, 1927, found in Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music*, 56.
[45] A.W. Binder, "How Congregations Can Be Made to Sing," Published in the annual Bulletin, for the Jewish Music Forum (Decamber 1943), found in Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music*, 87.
[46] A.W. Binder, "The Neglect and Need," *The Jewish Center* (September 1944), found in Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music*, 88.

Holy Day musical themes in order to invoke a sense of recollection and awe on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. He also suggests use of cantillation in compositions as a way to draw on the traditions of our ancestors. For example, in 1940, Binder published a *Kabbalat Shabbat* service which included two versions of the Friday night *Kiddush*: the first is an arrangement of Lewandowski's *Kiddush*, the second is Binder's own composition which is, according to his notes, "based on the Cantillation mode of the Pentateuch."[47] His arrangement of the Kiddush text includes a quote of the trop sign *shalshelet*, as well as other phrases that hint at *tipcha* and *t'veer* (See notes at the bottom of the second page of Appendix Three).

Explicit in Binder's writings is his understanding of the Jewish modes as representative of certain moods, feelings, and messages. In his essay, "The Spirit of the Sabbath Eve Service," Binder explains the tradition of breaking the Friday evening service into its two sections, *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Ma'ariv*, in order to describe the two different musical modes used in the Friday evening service, *Adonay Malach* and *Magen Avot*. Binder describes the traditional views of the purposes for these two modes. Foe example, Binder describes the major mode, *Adonay Malach*, as "majestic" and says that it "signifies Israel as the 'Prince of God.'"[48] Binder attributes this mode with "help[ing] the Jew to extricate himself

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[47] A.W. Binder. *Kabbalat Shabbat*, Transcontinental Music Press, 1940, 37.
[48] A.W. Binder, "The Spirit of the Sabbath Eve Service," published in January 1951,as part of the *Summary of Proceedings* for the Second Annual Institute on Jewish Liturgical Music held June 12-14, 1949 in New York City, found in Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music*, 114.

from the mire of ghetto life and to don his Sabbath attire...[in order to] receive his special Sabbath soul."[49]

Binder's belief in the inherent Jewishness of certain sounds leads him to make use of them in his own compositions. An analysis of one of Binder's settings of the *Hashkivenu* prayer shows how the composer's own attitudes toward the Jewish musical tradition discussed above manifest themselves in his own compositions (See Appendix Four). *Hashkivenu* is recited before the *amidah* (the central "standing prayer" of the worship service) and is often a composed piece rather than *davened*, or chanted, in simple *nusach*. This setting of *Hashkivenu* is a cantorial recitative, meant to be sung completely by the cantor or *shaliach tzibbur*. Binder opens the composition in d minor with a simple chant over unmeasured chords in the bass clef. The cantor is meant to sing this opening section "slowly and expressively," intoning the request for God to "lay us down to sleep in peace and raise us up again to life." Binder makes use of word painting by changing the simple chant to a higher flowing sequence representing the "*sukkah*," or shelter, of peace.

The next line of text from "*v'saknenu*" through "*l'ma'an shemecha*" may be translated as "set us aright with good counsel from before Your Presence." During this section, at the second intonation of "*b'etsa tovah milfanecha*," Binder introduces a change in the mode briefly moving into "a" *Ahavah Rabbah*, a minor mode that is thought of as having a "Jewish" sound because it is characterized by an augmented second between the second and third notes of the scale, giving the mode a very Middle

[49] Ibid.

Eastern character. In this particular setting, the augmented second is between the b-flat and c-sharp. Binder's use of *Ahavah Rabbah* for this section highlights the connection of God's Presence and the "traditional" sound of Jewish music.

At *"v'hoshienu"* ("save us"), Binder takes the musical line back to the original key of d minor and uses word painting through an agitated rising line which calls out to God to "save us!" Binder's musical moves in this section are seemingly modal, switching in and out of the minor to hint at the possibly more "Jewish " sound of *Ahavah Rabbah*, but interestingly, Binder harmonizes the closing of the section with a V-I cadence, taking away from its modality.

In the second half of the piece, Binder uses some moves which are characteristic of *Hashkivenu* compositions: he modulates up a fourth to g minor for *"v'hagen ba'adenu,"* and he creates a call and response between the vocal line and the accompaniment during the intonation of the evils humans are exposed to (*"oyev," "dever,"* etc.). Binder makes an unusual move, however, for *"uv'tzayl k'nafecha."* Considering Binder's use of word painting earlier in the piece, one might assume that the text, which means "in the shadow of Your wings," would be set in a way that it expresses a sense of safety and comfort. Instead, the short section, meant to be sung *fortissimo*, climbs a fast octave to cry out to God to "shelter us." This moment in the piece is rather robust and could be interpreted as out of character for the moment. Surprisingly, though, Binder is able to bring the listener back into the feeling of the text when he repeats the call to "shelter us" with a *"dolce"* moment and a temporary move to g *Ahavah*

Rabbah. The contrast within this one little section of the music highlights the move into the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode, emphasizing its "Jewish" sound as well as the feeling of uncertainty that the musical and textual plea leaves with the listener.

Binder closes the piece by returning both to the original key of d minor and to the opening simple chant style. It is clear from this composition that Binder chose to highlight certain things: the contrast between the regular minor mode and *Ahavah Rabbah*, the expression one can pull from the text by matching it with musical expression (word painting), and the use of traditional musical moves associated with this portion of the liturgy. He does not complete the text in his composition, but rather probably assumed that the *chatimah* of the prayer would be sung in the traditional *nusach*. Going with this assumption, it would make sense that he finish the text so simply because it would flow right into the Friday evening musical motifs such as this *chatimah* section from Cantor Adolph Katchko (See Appendix Five).

Binder thinks it is imperative that we not forsake our musical heritage, and he takes issue with "those who advocate the disregard of our musical tradition."[50] He strongly advises that

> musical laymen, rabbis, and cantors should take full advantage of the synagogue music literature which has recently been composed by our contemporary generation of Jewish composers[51]...whose ideals have been, without exception, to elevate and to dignify the music of our houses of worship. They aim to bring into their music

[50] A.W. Binder, "The Spirit of the Sabbath Eve Service," 114.
[51] Binder, here, is talking about the composers mentioned earlier, such as Bloch, Freed, Schalit, Fromm, and himself.

> that Jewish spirit which is found in the ancient modes and melodies.[52]

Binder does not wish to alienate young Jews who may connect with a more secular style of music, or who, in a society of global exposure, may have very sophisticated musical tastes. Binder supports modern art music in the synagogue as long as it attempts to incorporate Jewish characteristics, and, as mentioned earlier, he certainly supports the incorporation of Jewish folk melody in modern synagogue compositions. He published a number of collections of folk music including *Pioneer Songs of Israel* (1942)[53] and *Jewish Folk Songs in the Hasidic Style* (1963).[54]

Binder's interest in the Jewish folk idiom is not surprising given his knowledge of, and exposure to, the musical works coming out of Russia. The Jewish community of composers in Russia, influenced strongly by the nationalistic music of composers such as Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) and the turn toward compiling folk melodies, founded the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music in order to collect Yiddish folk melodies and arrange them for public performance. Binder himself acknowledges this group of composers as the developers of Jewish art music "seeking to evolve a truly Jewish musical style."[55] The St.

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[52] A.W. Binder, "Changing Values," 83.
[53] *Shire Chalutzim (Pioneer Songs of Israel)*, Compiled and arranged by A.W. Binder, (New York : E.B. Marks Music, 1942).
[54] *Jewish Folk Songs in Hasidic Style*, Compiled and arranged by A. W. Binder, (New York: Mills Music, 1963).
[55] A.W. Binder, "Jewish Music: An Encyclopedic Study," found in Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music*, 181. This article originally appeared in the publication, *The Jewish People: Past and Present*, volume III. It was published in 1952 by Jewish Encyclopedic Handbooks—Central Yiddish Culture Organization (CYCO), in New York.

Petersburg Society only lasted from 1908-1918, but soon after its disbanding, a number of these composers moved to the United States where they continued to write and to influence contemporary Jewish American composers, such as Lazar Weiner, Jacob Weinberg, and A.W. Binder who wrote Jewish art music based on traditional folk melodies. Lazar Weiner (1897-1982), for example, published numerous arrangements of popular Yiddish folk songs such as *"Yidn Zingen: Ani Mamin"* and *"Unter Dayne Vayse Shtern."*[56]

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 further deepened many Jewish composers' desire to create a new Jewish music idiom that incorporated Israeli folk melodies. In 1949, Binder wrote a memorial service for Rabbi Stephen S. Wise entitled "Requiem-Yizkor." In a note at the beginning of the work, Binder explains:

> The idea to compose this composition came to me when my friend Dr. Stephen S. Wise, passed away on April 19, 1949. He was always very fond of music and always was moved when he heard Jewish music well rendered. I have constructed the text for this "Requiem-Yizkor" out of the requiem texts extant in Jewish liturgy. The musical idiom throughout the work is Jewish. The Antiphon (Psalm 16) is set to the traditional chant used for the Book of Psalms and the Memorial Prayer is also according to musical tradition. In view of Dr. Wise's strong Zionist inclinations, I chose the text from Isaiah 66, for the final chorus, ending with "and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." To carry out this idea I have also made use of an Israeli folk song of Bucharian origin in this section of the work.[57]

Binder consistently made a conscious effort to expose Jewish listeners to music with Jewish characteristics. Binder's use of an Israeli folk melody in

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[56] Lazar Weiner, *14 Yiddish Art Songs*, (New York: Transcontinental Music Press, 1980).

[57] A. W. Binder, *Requiem-Yizkor: Memorial Service*, (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1949).

the final piece of the Memorial Service shows his vision of the wide range of uses for the folk music of both Eastern European Jewry and the newer Palestinian folk tradition (See Appendix Six).[58] As Jewish folk melodies moved into America, they became popular not just in synagogues and religious schools, but in the newly established Jewish camps as well, strengthening the bond between the American Jewish youth and Israel. In 1949, Max Helfman compiled and arranged *Israeli Songs*, as a part of the Brandeis Camp Institute Music Series.[59]

It is apparent that Binder's musical goals were deeply tied to his understanding of Jewish music. For Binder, music that is true to a Jewish musical tradition encompasses the Jewish soul. It is apparent from his statements about Jewish music that the most important aspects of Jewish music to Binder are those aspects that are indigenous to Jewish music: *nusach ha-tefillah*, cantillation, as well as a folk tradition. Through Idelsohn's work compiling many different Jewish melodies from around the world, Binder understood that the details of this music may change based on the location of a Jewish community. Even though Binder tends to show a bias for the Eastern European *nusach* traditions, his attempt to contribute to a new American Jewish musical idiom was all-inclusive, taking melodies from different Jewish communities.

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[58] See Appendix Six for the opening page of the final chorus of *Requiem Yizkor*. The vocal line contains the melody of Bucharian origin which is then quoted repeatedly throughout the composition.

[59] Max Helfman, *Israeli Songs*, (New York: Brandeis Youth Foundation, 1949).

In the next section of the paper, I will explore the philosophical ideas behind the early twentieth-century desire to create a Jewish musical idiom in America.

Chapter Three: Conclusions

In 1944, at the height of his career, Binder clearly states the underlying goal of his life's work as moving toward the creation of a "distinctive Jewish art," explaining that without one "we are not a nation...nor can we call ourselves a civilization."[60] Devoted to the Jewish community, Binder spent his life in the many roles of composer, teacher, and advocate for change, all the while, aiming toward bringing a Jewish spirit to his work. He aimed to educate the Jewish community on the musical possibilities within the synagogue as well as for secular Jewish life, and to help people make a connection to the spirit of Jewish worship. His many musical services, which make use of *nusach ha-tefillah*, his art music, and his introduction of Jewish folk melodies into choral works for children and adult synagogue choirs, all helped to broaden and enhance American Jewish music, simultaneously wedding a modern sound with a connection to the past. This was his vision: a Jewish musical idiom that reflected the Jewish past as well as the present; a "distinctive Jewish art" that represented the Jews of modernity. While Binder's understanding of Jewish music remains the focus of the paper, it is worthwhile to take into account the significant general philosophical understanding of this period regarding the role music plays for the listener, as well as recent theories on the value and role of "tradition."

Although he was respected within the musical world, most of Binder's own compositions have not withstood the test of time and are not

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[60] A.W. Binder, "The Neglect and Need," 90.

often heard in performance. Ultimately, the contributions he made in his role as educator had the most enduring effect. At the Jewish Institute of Religion, which later joined with the Hebrew Union College, Binder taught modern rabbis and cantors about the essence of Jewish music, stressing its importance to the Jewish community. He brought a knowledge of cantillation to the greater community, through the publication of his book *Biblical Chant*. He also lectured throughout the country on the necessity of a "distinctive Jewish art," suggesting the importance of developing "cultural expression among [the Jewish] people."[61]

A.W. Binder's contributions to American synagogue music are vast, but Binder was only one of many figures who attempted to aid in the creation of an American musical idiom. As editor of the *Union Hymnal*, Binder became a redactor, digging through the vast repertoire of Jewish music to include that which he believed would be most beneficial for the Jewish community to be exposed to. His inclusion of certain composers such as Nowakowsky and Schalit show his preference toward composers working to use traditional *nusach* in a modern context. As editor, Binder was able to become an advocate for these composers.

Binder's desire for the community to have a "distinctive Jewish art" came from a few integral influences in Binder's life. His early years under the guidance of his father and Frachtenburg served to give engender in Binder a respect for the tradition of Eastern European *hazzanut*. Idelsohn's

[61] Binder, "Neglect and Need," 92.

scholarly work in *nusach*, folk melody, and Jewish music history brought Binder's attention to the vastness of the Jewish musical tradition and gave him a vocabulary and sources for his own work. Idelsohn was not a composer himself, but Binder was able to take Idelsohn's work and apply it to his own compositions. The compilations of folk music coming out of Russia through the St. Petersburg Folk Music Society, and the artistic renditions of this folk tradition, also gave Binder new areas to focus on in his compositions. His own art music and arrangements of folk melodies were greatly influenced by the works of Joel Engel and others.

Binder became, for the history of Jewish music, a synthesizer of tradition, taking the works of scholars, composers, teachers, and the Jewish people itself, and forming a basis for a new musical tradition: a tradition that was idiomatic of America itself. Jewish music through the twentieth century became, like the United States, a melting pot of tradition.

The question that remains to be addressed is why it became so important to create a distinctly Jewish sound for the American synagogue. One reason, perhaps, is the common belief in the innate power of music to express something greater than the music itself. Binder believed that Jewish music embodied the Jewish soul. Synagogue composer Herbert Fromm, a contemporary of Binder's wrote that he, similar to Binder, attempted in his compositions "to capture...the pride and majesty of a

faith which, as an indestructible substance, survived the tortures of history."[62]

The concept of expression through music is not a new idea. Discussions regarding the expressiveness of music have spanned millennia, from the Greek philosophers through modernity.[63] In Binder's period, an influential American philosopher was Susanne Langer who suggested that "[b]ecause the forms of human feeling are much more congruent with musical forms than with the forms of language, music can reveal the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach."[64] The push toward a "Jewish sound" in synagogue music seems to reflect this understanding that the music itself may reveal the emotion behind the expression of faith and, therefore, aid in the spiritual connection congregants ideally experience during worship, as well as engender a sense of community with a connection to its ancestral past. Another Jewish composer, Geneva-born Ernest Bloch (1880-1959), whose work *Avodat HaKodesh* was influential throughout the twentieth century, wrote, "I aspire to write Jewish music because racial feeling is a quality of all great music which must be an essential expression of the people as well as the individual."[65]

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[62] Ibid., 52.

[63] A recent publication deals with the topic through a collection of essays. *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, edited by Patrick N. Justin and John A. Slodoba., (Oxford University Press, 2001).

[64] Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, (Harvard University Press, 1942), Reprint (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), 199 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

[65] Ernest Bloch, found in Irene Heskes, "Bloch, Milhaud, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco," *Passport to Jewish Music*, 285.

An example of this may be found in Binder's description of the *Magen Avot* mode. *Magen Avot*, one of the two main musical modes for the Friday evening, or *Ma'ariv*, service, is akin to the natural minor scale. However, as with much of *nusach*, the mode of a prayer is usually identified more by its phrase patterns than by the actual notes in a scale. Therefore, notes may be deliberately altered (flatted or raised) in order to stress a word or musical moment within the musical phrase. Common options in the *Magen Avot* mode are a raised seventh in the ascending scale, or a flatted second in the descending scale. Both characteristic moves help to stress the tonic.

Binder explains that the *Magen Avot* mode "is very old, and according to A.Z. Idelsohn, 'is the deepest expression of the Jewish soul, and will live as long as the Jewish people lives.' Its purpose is to create for the Jew the spirit of Sabbath rest and peace."[66] The Idelsohn quotation, however, is unaccounted for, and a look in his book *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development* provides a different, less emotional description of the mode. Idelsohn observes that the mode shares many similarities with an Arabic mode *Bayat-Huseini*, and also seems to be derived from the modes for the cantillation of Prophets and the Pentateuch.[67] Certainly, *Magen Avot*'s relation to Haftarah cantillation would lend it a "Jewish sound," but, equally, its similarity to an Arabic mode would make it a more general semitic sound.

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[66] A.W. Binder, "The Spirit of the Sabbath Eve Service," 114. The quotation from Idelsohn has no citation and this author did not find the quotation in Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music.*
[67] A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 84.

This detail, however, does not play into Binder's connection to the mode. For him, *Magen Avot* (and probably *Ahavah Rabbah* as well, with its minor structure and augmented second between the second and third degrees of the scale) is a symbol of the Jewish soul. This is not surprising given his more traditional upbringing. Binder's early exposure to the synagogue modes, under the guidance of his father, and later his mentor Cantor Frachtenberg, could have paved the way for his emotional connection.[68]

It is this "Jewish sound" that Binder aimed to bring back to synagogue worship. In many ways, Binder's long-standing relationship with Rabbi Stephen S. Wise turned out to be an important relationship for the future of Reform Jewish music. Wise, because of the respect he had for the composer and his ideas regarding Jewish music, used his own authority to place Binder in positions where he could change the face of American Jewish music through education, such as in his role as professor at the non-denominational Jewish Institute of Religion where Binder became an influence not only for Reform rabbis, but for American Judaism and Jewish music in general. As editor of the *Union Hymnal*, another job that Wise suggested be given to Binder, Binder was able to reach a wide audience of Jews. In a way, the *Union Hymnal* may be seen as a symbol for

[68] Another example of Jewish music as a symbol is "Hava Nagila." The song, blending the Israeli *hora* and Eastern European melody, made the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode so popular that it has become a musical symbol of the Jewish people worldwide. The song itself, however, has only been in existence since the 1920s. Probably performed at the majority of Jewish weddings in America, "Hava Nagila" has become a traditional melody for American Jews.

the Reform institution, being sponsored and overseen by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Binder used this opportunity to put a "traditional Jewish sound" into a structure that was already accepted by Reform congregations, thereby making Jewish music more relevant to the lives of modern American Jews, as well as making the Reform *Union Hymnal* more relevant to Jewish music.

Binder's knowledge of music and his interest and respect for the breadth of Jewish music made him a strong candidate for the role of editor of the *Union Hymnal* as well as the many other positions he held during his lifetime. Binder's authority in these roles allowed him the ability to disseminate his views on Jewish music and to make decisions on the future of Jewish music in America.

In *The Invention of Tradition,* Eric Hobsbawm explains that "inventing tradition... is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition."[69] More than any individual composition he wrote, Binder's work within the world of Jewish music, such as the *Union Hymnal* and his development of the music program at the 92nd Street Y, contributed to the foundation of the American Jewish musical idiom. The American tradition is constantly changing and broadening, but Binder's contributions mark a move in the direction of a formalized American

[69] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambrindge University Press, 1983), 4.

Jewish musical tradition based on Jewish music of the past, or of Jewish origin, rather than from secular or foreign sources.

In the nineteenth century, at the beginning of the history of Reform Judaism, it was preferred for the liturgical music to sound like that of the Protestant neighbors. Formal hymn singing was seen as dignified and befitting the worship setting. However, as Hobsbawm points out, "Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented."[70] Liberal Judaism found a home in America, but with the changes in social atmosphere giving way to growing interest in the historical past of the folk, the Protestant style of worship lost its novelty, and a need for a more innovative style of music became apparent. While for some, the more innovative, the better. For others, like Binder, a return to a Jewish style, and therefore a return to the expression of the Jewish spirit, was the priority in synagogue composition. Binder and his major influences, namely David Nowakowsky, Ernest Bloch, and the composers of the St. Petersburg Folk Music Society all took an approach which aimed to wed Jewish musical traditions with modern Western music. Therefore, it is due to Binder's own understanding of Jewish music that he chose to include composers such as Nowakowsky in his edition of the *Union Hymnal*, a book, which because of its authoritative connection with the Central Conference of American Rabbis, made its way into Reform congregations throughout the country.

[70] Ibid., 8.

Hobsbawm's description of "invention," lends an interesting perspective to the understanding of the significance of Binder's role as editor of the *Union Hymnal*. Hobsbawm states:

> The element of invention is particularly clear here, since the history which became part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of nation, state or movement is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so.[71]

In most of his works, and in the *Union Hymnal* as well, Binder did not publish "traditional" Jewish music, but rather a twentieth century American version of Jewish music. The music that Binder put out for the Jewish community was music for a movement which had finally moved past its infancy stage and was ready to move past the initial break from tradition. The authority backing Binder, through the personal, professional, and philosophical support of Rabbi Wise, the work of the St. Petersburg Folk Music Society, as well as the scholarly approach of A.Z. Idelsohn, served to give Binder the foundation with which to build a Jewish musical idiom, nuanced by his own personal history and beliefs. His writings, while coming from the most sincere of sources, express only, in many cases, his opinion. With his position of authority, however, Binder's opinion had the power to make great changes in tradition. Hobsbawm speaks of "tradition as a marker of authority," but in Binder's situation, tradition and authority work in a cycle. Binder was able to give his music authority by citing tradition, but his own authority allowed him to create tradition.

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[71] Ibid., 13.

Dissatisfied with the state of synagogue music, Binder explored the works of Jewish musicologists and combined his findings with his own beliefs to attempt to bring the "Jewish spirit" back into synagogue music. American synagogue music, continuing the intensity of Reform Judaism's initial break from tradition, was moving farther away from its defining characteristics. Without the history or memory of *nusach ha-tefillah* or of a *folk* tradition, Binder saw how Jewish music in America lacked the foundation to support the continuation of a Jewish identity in America. He realized he needed to act in order to reinstate a Jewish sound within the synagogue. He saw a necessity to reverse a degeneration of the musical tradition before it became completely lost.

Binder, through his relationship with Rabbi Wise and the leading institutions of the Reform movement, was able to use his authority to give "tradition" back to the Jewish people. He used the foundation given to him in order to build a "distinctive Jewish art." This thesis demonstrates that the tradition which Binder helped to bring into the Reform synagogue is actually of his own creation: a melding of his own influences and beliefs about the nature of music with regard to the spirit of the Jewish people.

Binder's crusade for Jewish music was in keeping with the Reform ideology of his day. Early twentieth century Reform leaders, connecting to the words of the Biblical prophets, supported a prophetic Judaism based on social justice. Binder, likewise, used his authority to give to the Jewish public that which he felt would be his greatest contribution: giving a new life to the traditions of our Jewish ancestors, so that they may be valued by generations to come.

Interestingly, Binder's contributions to the world of Jewish music also exemplify the central, defining aspects of Reform Judaism today: its dynamic nature and insistence on making informed decisions about religious practice. The trend over the last seventy-five years within the Reform movement has been a gradual move back toward traditional Judaism, constantly evaluating the place for tradition in a modern (now post-modern) lifestyle, and finding new ways to adapt Judaism to modernity. Binder's work during the first half of the twentieth century came at the beginning of "reform" of the Reform movement, and he was truly one of its most influential advocates, helping to change the face of Reform worship.

Ties to the past, while living in the present has been a marker of Judaism since its beginning. Many have said that the Jewish religion is *Torah*, or teaching. For millennia, Jews have looked back to *Torah* as a guide for innovation. The turn to an American Jewish musical idiom with connections to the past is a turn back toward this tradition of using past teaching as a guide. Music has been part of this tradition since the time of the Temple in Jerusalem. The nature of this music has gone through many changes as Jews spread out into the Diaspora, but always with an eye, or ear, on the voices of the past. Binder, supporting a "distinctive Jewish art" in America helped to turn the voices of the Jewish past into a "Jewish music" for the present: a Jewish musical idiom for each generation to build upon as the American Jewish tradition continues to develop. As a summary of his own beliefs on "The Changing Values of Synagogue

Music," Binder states: "In our modern synagogue, we should look back to the glories of the past, and onward to new glories for the future."[72]

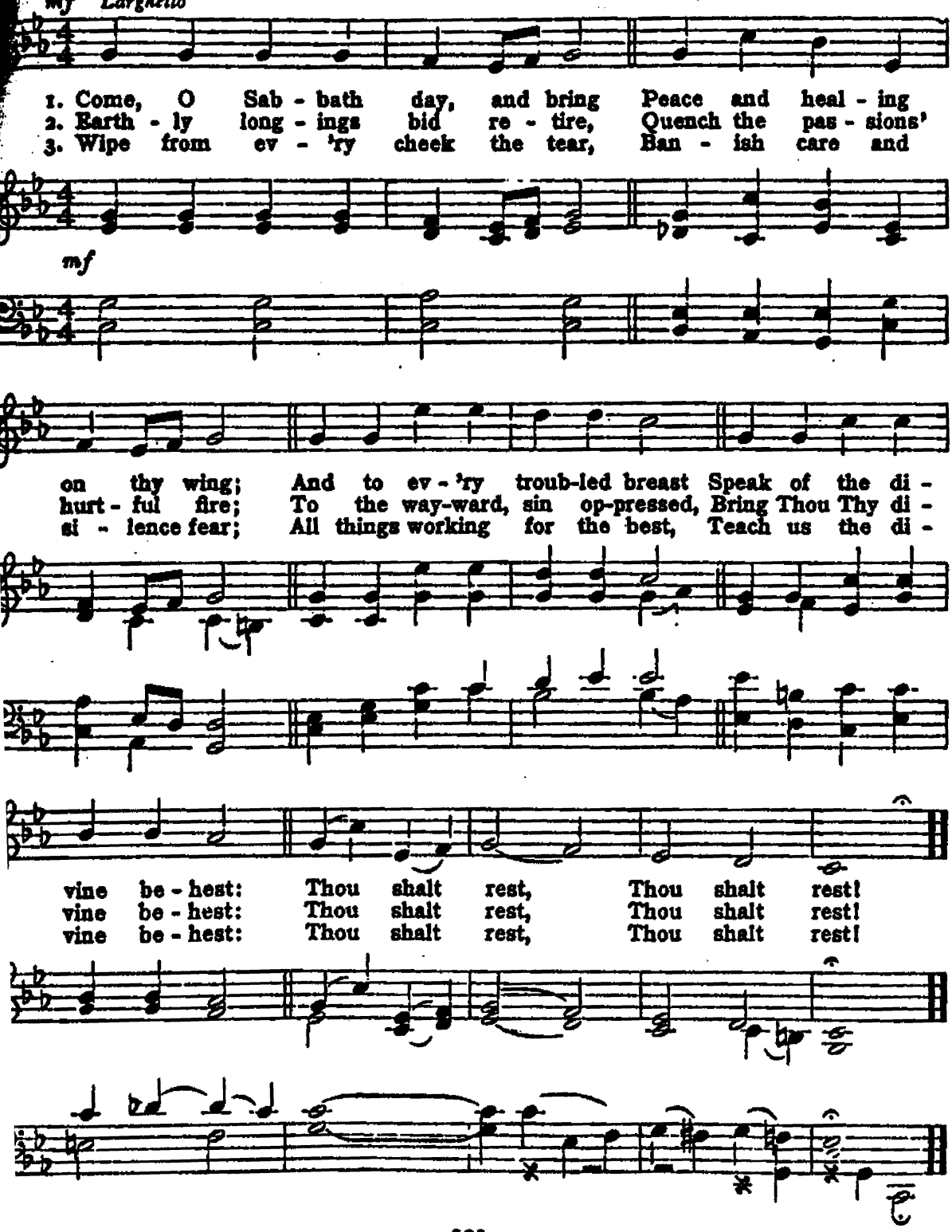
[72] A.W. Binder, "Changing Values," Irene Heskes, ed., *Studies in Jewish Music*, 84.

Appendix One

Sabbath

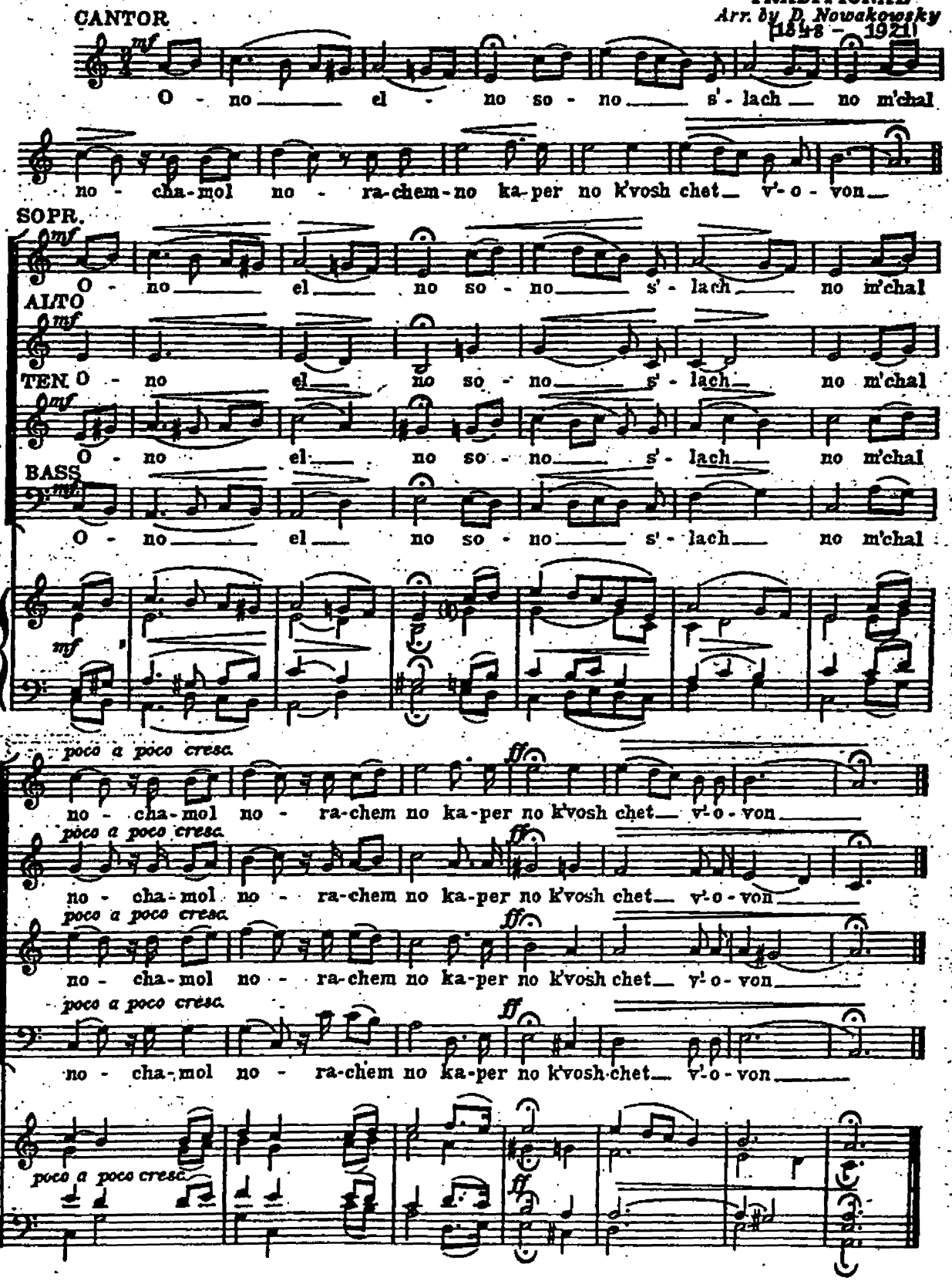
Come, O Sabbath Day

Gustav Gottheil — A. W. Binder



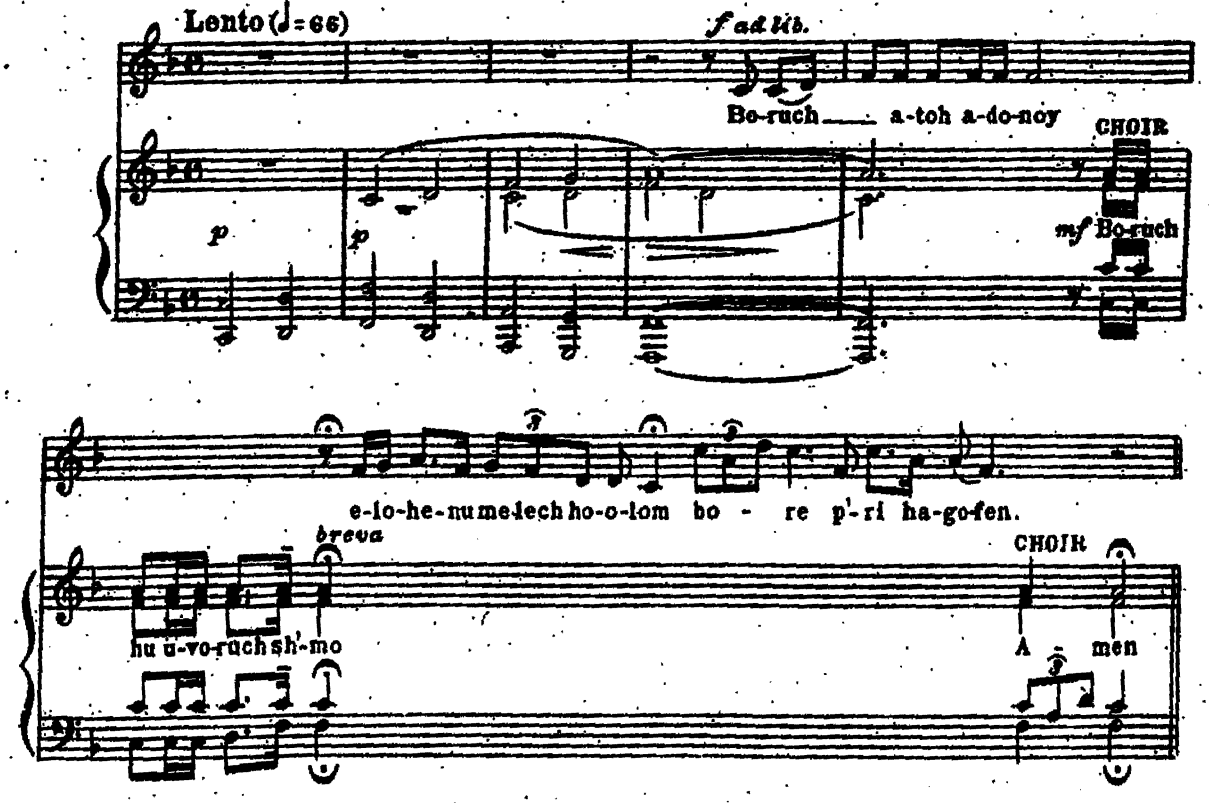
ONO EL NO

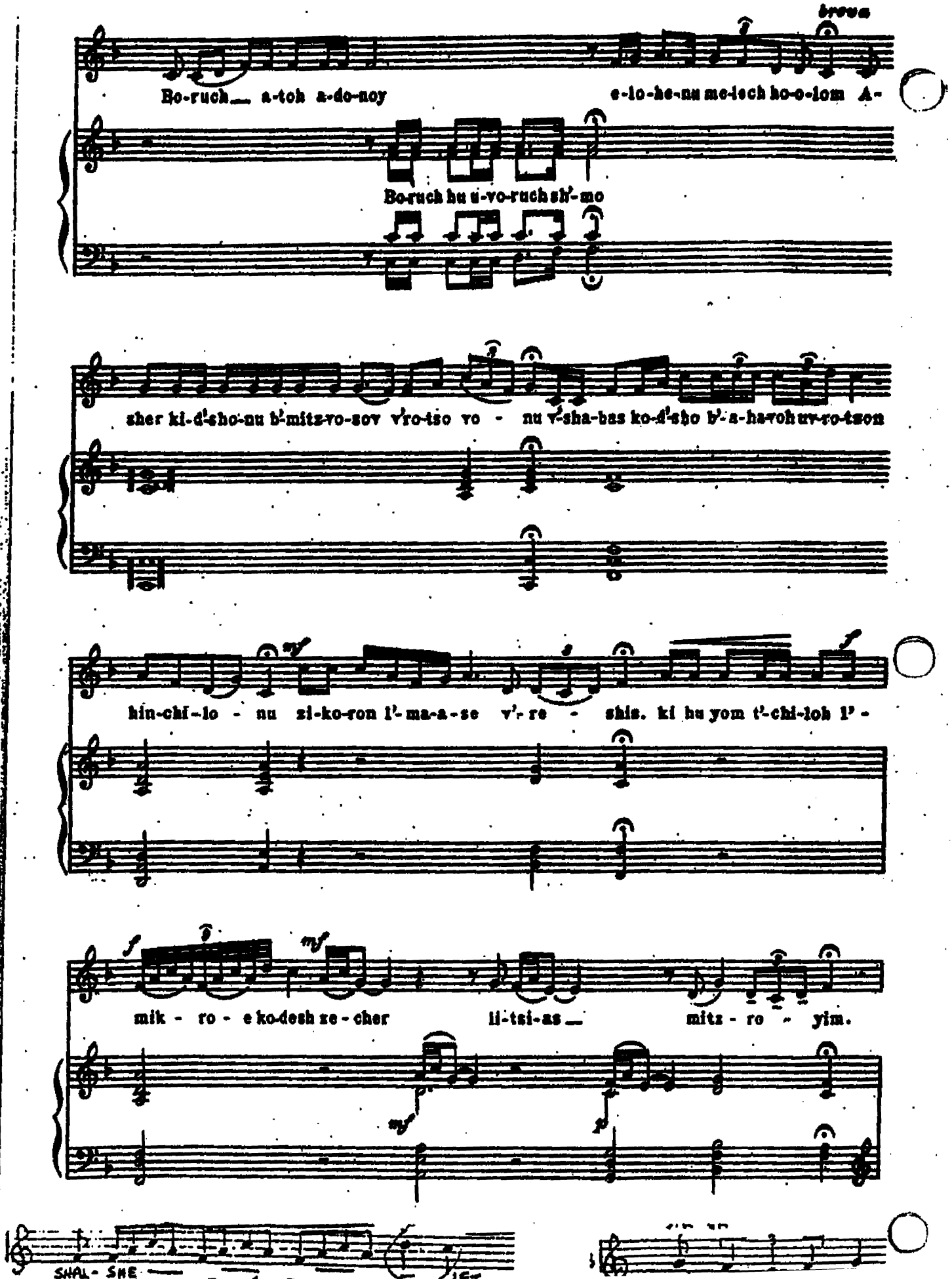
TRADITIONAL
Arr. by D. Nowakowsky
[1848 – 1921]

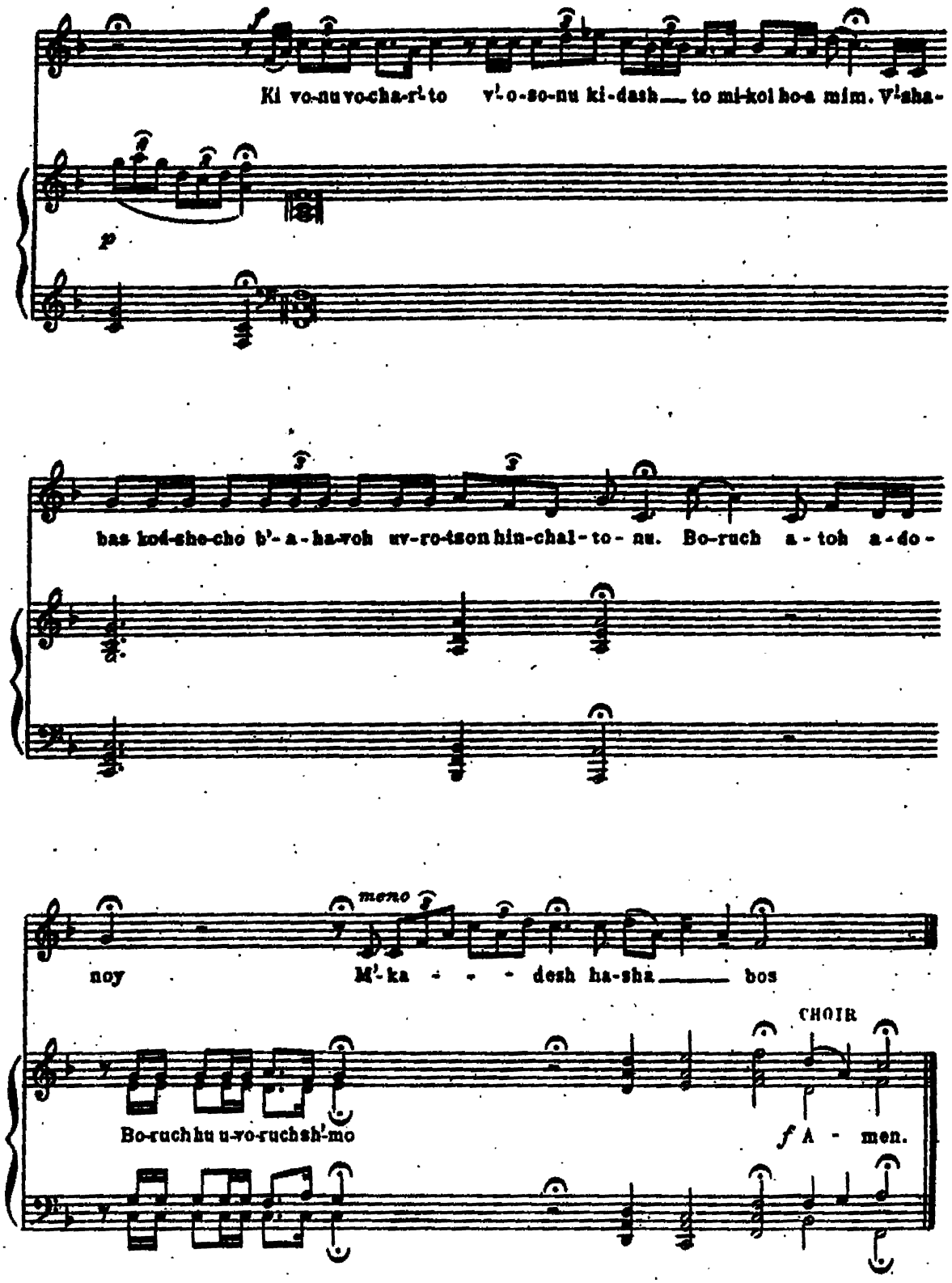


9. KIDDUSH-II

Based on Cantillation mode of the Pentateuch




trova
Bo-ruch_ a-toh a-do-noy e-lo-he-nu me-lech ho-o-lom A-
Bo-ruch hu u-vo-ruch sh'-mo
sher ki-d'sho-nu b'-mitz-vo-sov v'ro-tso vo - nu v'-sha-bas ko-d'sho b'-a-ha-voh uv-ro-tson
hin-chí-lo - nu zi-ko-ron l'-ma-a-se v'- re - shis. ki hu yom t'-chi-loh l'-
mik - ro - e ko-desh ze - cher li-tsi-as_ mitz - ro - yim.
SHAL- SHE


Ki vo-nu vo-cha-ri-to v'-o-so-nu ki-dash to mi-kol ho-a mim. V'sha-
p
bas kod-she-cho b'-a-ha-voh uv-ro-tson hin-chal-to-nu. Bo-ruch a-toh a-do-
meno
noy M'-ka - - - desh ha-sha bos
CHOIR
Bo-ruch hu u-vo-ruch sh'-mo
f A - men.

Recitative – *slowly and expressively*

A. W. BINI

D minor

p Hash-ki-ve-nu a-do-noy e-lo-he-nu l'-shə-lom v'-ha-a'mi-de-nu mal-ke-nu l'cha-yi

p

cresc. *breva* *mf*

ros o - le - nu su-kas sh'-lo - me - cho v'-sak-ne-nu b'-e-tso

cresc. *p*

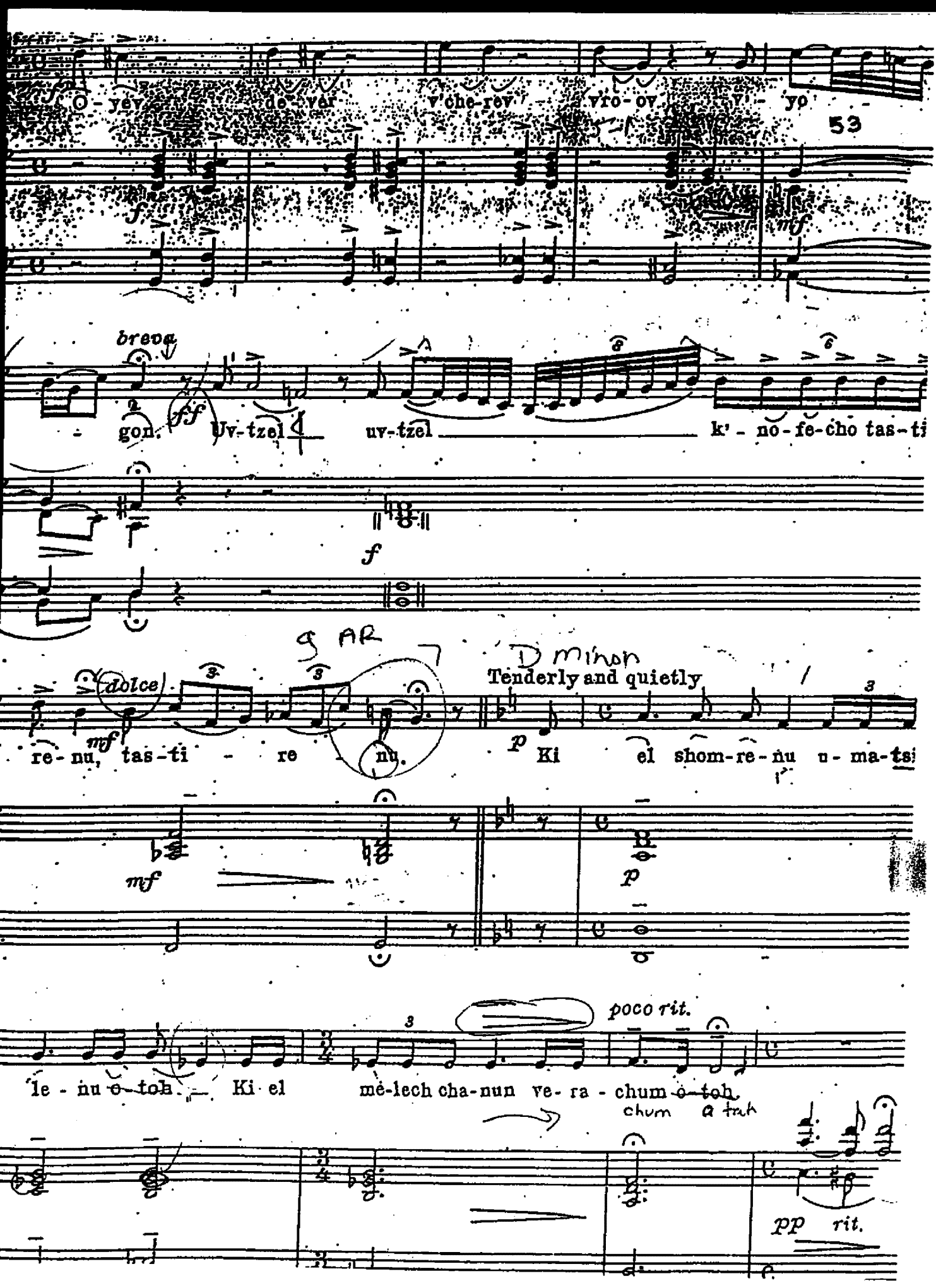
breva

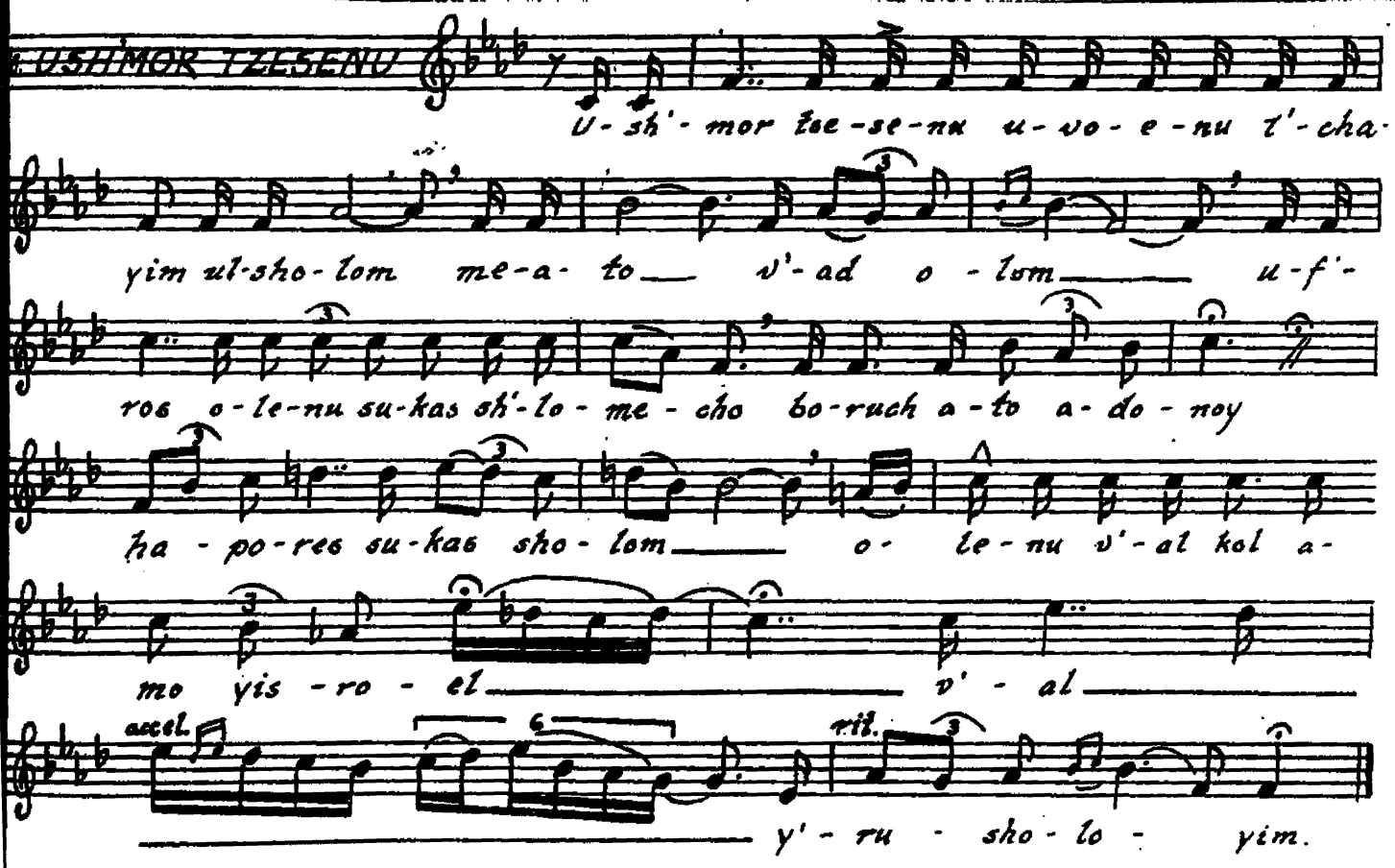
vo b'-e-tso to-vdh mil-fd - nē - chd v'-ho - shi-e - nu l-ma-an-she-me -

Animated

cantabile *mf* V'-ho - gen ba-a-de- nu v'-ho-ser me-o - le -

p *mf*

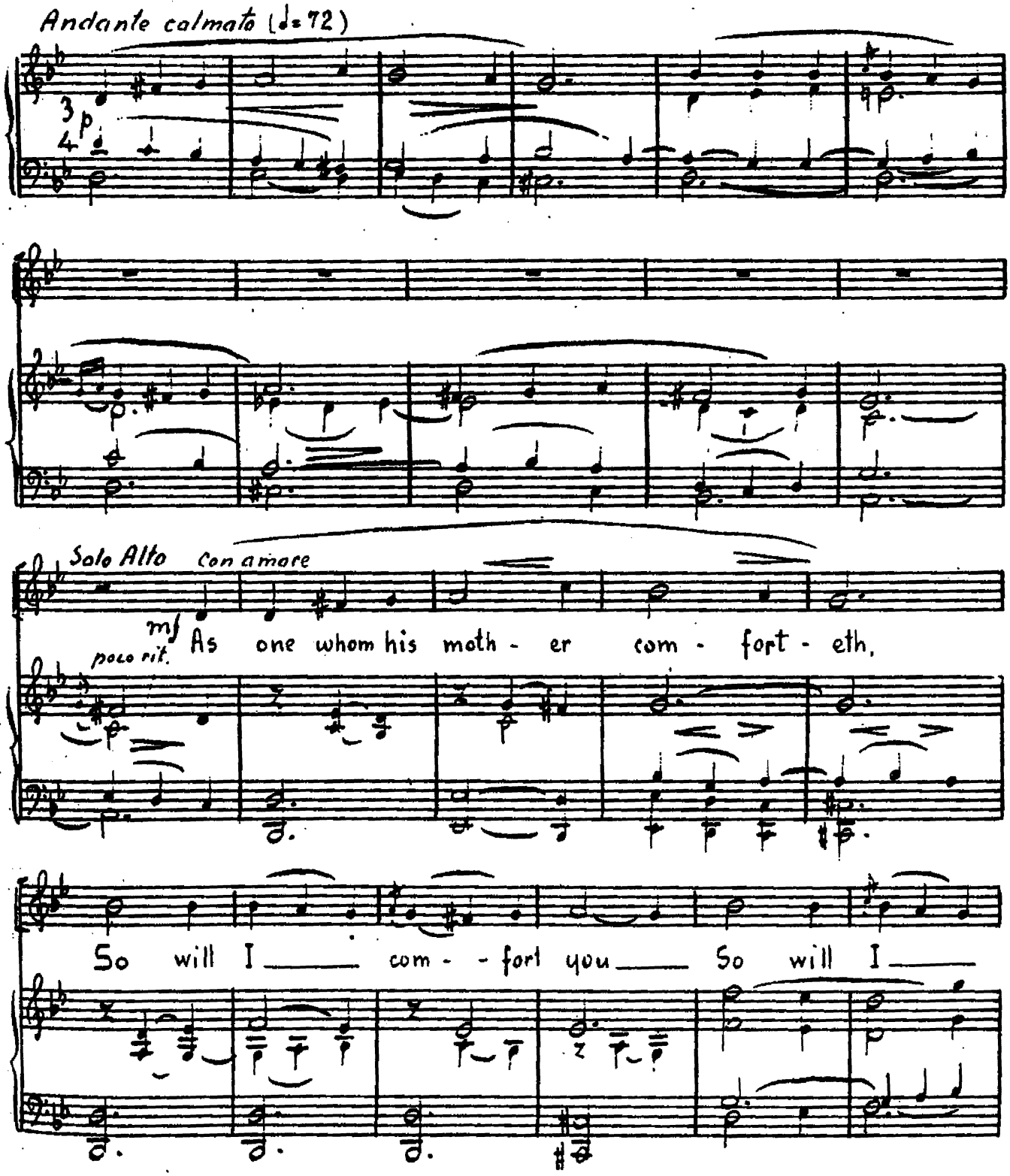

53
O - yev de ver v'che-rov v'ro-ov y' - yo
breve
gon. Uv-tzel uv-tzel k' - no-fe-cho tas-ti
f
9 AR
D minor
dolce
Tenderly and quietly
re-nu, tas-ti - re - nu. Ki el shom-re-nu u-ma-tsi
mf
p
poco rit.
le - nu o - toh. Ki el mé-lech cha-nun ve-ra - chum o - toh.
chum a toh
pp rit.


V'SHOMRU TZEISENU
U-sh'-mor tse-se-nu u-vo-e-nu t'-cha-
yim ul-sho-lom me-a-to v'-ad o-lom u-f'-
ros o-le-nu su-kas sh'-lo-me-cho bo-ruch a-to a-do-noy
ha-po-res su-kas sho-lom o-le-nu v'-al kol a-
mo yis-ro-el v'-al
accel.
rit.
y'-ru-sho-lo-yim.

6. As One Whom His Mother Comforteth

Chorus, Cantor and Alto Soli

Based on a Bucharian melody.



Appendices

Appendix One

A.W. Binder, "Come, O Sabbath Day," *Union Hymnal,* Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1932.

Appendix Two

David Nowakowsky, "Ono El No," *Cantorial Anthology,* vol. II, ed. Gershon Ephros, New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1975.

Appendix Three

A.W. Binder, "Kiddush," *Kabbalat Shabbat,* Transcontinental Music Publications, 1940, 37.

Appendix Four

A.W. Binder, "Hashkivenu," *Friday Evening Service.* New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1943.

Appendix Five

Adolph Katchko, "Ush'mor Tzesenu," *A Thesaurus of Cantorial Liturgy,* Volume One. New York: Sacred Music Press [1952] 1986.

Appendix Six

A.W. Binder, "As One Whom His Mother Comforteth," *Requiem-Yizkor: Memorial Service.* New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1949.

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