

How Practical Is the Practice of the Practicum?

by Jack Gottlieb

*(Talk to the student body of the School of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR and attendees,
following the Practicum of Jack Gottlieb's music)*

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Of course I am indebted to the School of Sacred Music for celebrating my 70th birthday year the best way a composer could want: a recital of one's own music. Especially here, where those of you previously unfamiliar with my output, might now be persuaded to peruse and pursue my catalog for yourselves. Let's hope. My heartfelt thanks to Cantor Goldstein and Joyce Rosenzweig for scheduling this happy event; we journey back a long time. Adyna and Kim, we may only go back a few months, but your devotion to my work promises an enduring collaboration. I extend my sincerest gratitude to you, and to indispensable Alan Sever, to the choir and octet in all their glory, and to the players, Judith, Brian and Alison. And I am genuinely moved by the rewarding response of colleagues, friends and family who are generously sharing this festive gathering with me.

You probably noticed that, with a couple of exceptions, all the music on the program dates from the 1970s. (Hard to believe the time has gone by so incredibly fast.) It was during that decade when I was most active in synagogue music, first as a music director at a large Reform temple in St. Louis and then here on the staff of the college for three years. In these surroundings, I find it impossible not to reflect back on those days, and, in particular, to recall luminaries of the faculty and staff no longer with us. What a colorful cast of characters they were. How I wish you could have benefitted from their wisdom and example. Some of the names you may only know from the photographic displays on the fifth floor. I'm thinking of the baseball-loving Bible scholar, Harry Orlinsky, who had one of the sunniest dispositions of anyone I've ever known; and Dr. I. Edward Kiev, Phil Miller's eminent predecessor as librarian; and the all-caring, oh-so dedicated registrar, Freyda Ingber.

In great measure, this practicum has been a tribute to them and, even more personal, to other dear souls on the SSM faculty who supported my early endeavors: the gentle Barash brothers, Morris and Jack [Baras]; the genial hazzanim: Israel Alter, Ben Belfer, Norman Belink and Walter Davidson; the genteel Judith Eisenstein and that supreme gentleman-cantor: unassuming, compassionate Arthur Wolfson. (I fondly remember Arthur's loving wife, Anne. Theirs was a model partnership, if ever there was one.)

Others on the SSM staff were, shall we say, less than patient personages. I'm thinking of the proud Hazzan Moshe Ganchoff and composers Fred Piket and Lazar Weiner, crusty and feisty. Most of all, that fractious, cantankerous Doctor, my ally and master teacher, Eric Werner. Always irascible and forever irreplaceable. (His wife Elizabeth also was formidable.) I often think of Eric in the most unexpected ways; and I give a silent prayer of thanksgiving for having had the good fortune to drink at his well.

Today I feel the presence of all these *menshlich* wonderful beings, warts and all, as if we're in a big group embrace. Their good works live after them. In those days of

yesteryear, the School was housed in a cramped facility not designed for higher education needs. Practicum sessions were much more modest affairs. There were no fancy printed programs or ensembles. The normal format was solo voice, usually with Jack Baras at the keyboard. Nothing else. Cantorial students were often accepted straight out of high school, with minimal musical training. Some had never seen an opera or had been to a symphonic concert. I ran a series of a half-dozen annual Sunday concerts, open to the public, called *Musica Hebraica*, and which covered a wide range of repertoire, ancient to modern. They were, I'm pleased to say, most successful; but you would never have known it if you relied on the students, since - except for those in which they participated - they rarely, if ever, attended. That always was a bone of contention; but the student plea back then was that they needed Sunday afternoons to chill out (whatever the expression was in those days). I'd like to believe that more of you would be in the audience if these *Musica Hebraica* concerts were still being held; but given the fact that some of you are swamped with out-of-state travel for weekend pulpits and have other jobs to make ends meet, I would not count on it.

Over the last 30 years, selections from those concerts have become more and more rarely heard in present-day synagogue services or programs. As the guidelines for matriculation have been raised and as the School has kept its faith with the entire panoply of our Jewish music heritage, there has been a corresponding turning away from the kind of music I have written. Today the chasm is wider than ever. I find that to be a stunning enigma: more experienced students being exposed to and trained in the full history of *hazzanut*, but less implementation of that knowledge out in the field. What a sad state of affairs.

Are practica then to be regarded as only as a form of theoretical exercise? If I were to give a title to my talk, it would be "How practical is the practice of the practicum?" Of course the verb form "to practice" is built into the psyche of musicians; but the noun form, as in a doctor's or lawyer's "practice," is what I'd like to examine. How much of the content heard here at school is actually presented in a synagogue context?

You are still learning how to become cantors, how to appear on the pulpit, how to be effective *sh'lichei tsibur*. But, as if you don't already know it, you will find that your biggest selling job will be to elicit your rabbi's endorsement and enthusiasm. It may be necessary for you to convert him or her to your cause. Your best ally is your rabbi who needs not only to be your supporter, but your defender.

But why wait until then? That process should be taking place here and now on West 4th Street. So I'd like to propose one way the practicum experience could be rolled over into the communal sanctuary. Since my day, the most exciting thing to have happened to the School is the opportunity for cantorial students to spend their first year (of the five total, now) with their rabbinic counterparts in Y'rushalayim, getting to know each other, especially on a social level, from the get-go. Yet I must ask an age-old question: why are there so few course offerings in music, if any, in the rabbinic school when both groups return to New York? I have never understood this. Yes, I know the excuse: not enough time; the plates are too full; and Rabbinic students do have an elective course in cantillation, but that's it. This is unacceptable.

I cannot say it strongly enough. Synagogue music is at a crossroads, and if the two schools do not cross each other tracks starting—yesterday, redemption of the past will be irretrievable. In earlier times, students in Cincinnati had classes with Eric Werner, and in New York, A.W. Binder taught courses in Jewish music history. It made an enormous difference. Rabbinic candidates discovered there was life after NFTY, after the bonding experiences of summer camps; and when they became full-fledged rabbis, the insights they had gained from this exposure paid off. I know that some of your rabbinic colleagues do attend practica, especially when a friend is scheduled to perform; but that is simply not enough. Is it too much to ask, as a start, that they be obliged to attend practica, friends or not, if only once a month? I am told that Cantorial students are expected to attend the Thursday sermon and participate in the discussion afterwards. Rabbinic students, on the other hand, are encouraged to attend practica. Note the word difference? One is expected, the other is encouraged. Do I detect a double standard?

All right, you reject this approach. There are alternatives. I can envision a competitive process where a committee of students and faculty would award full-scale public concert venues to a mix of deserving practica. Or why not try to integrate portions of already prepared practica into one of your outreach programs? Something, anything to plant the seeds in congregations out there. Let's hear you shout slogans from the rooftops:

You can't grow it, if you don't sow it!

If you don't use it, you lose it!

It's not a sign of the spirit if you can't hear it!

You may not draw large crowds, but even a *minyan* of interested worshipers would benefit from the commentary on what is being performed.

If (as I suspect) it is impracticable for you to do it, then it behooves the ACC to take up the banner, to raise consciousness levels and become evangelists. I have heard from more than one cantor about how their core beliefs have been shaken. They are frustrated, fearful and in turmoil. How could they not be when requests that come in from congregations to fill a cantor position, ask specifically: "Don't send me a beautiful voice or a great musical talent. We need a song-leader." While it is true that some cantors—especially those of who experienced the youth movements of the last twenty years—welcome confirmation of the road you have already taken, others—generally older—worry how long they can maintain their artistic integrity and remain cantors. A team of ACC zealots devoted to the Golden Age of American Reform Synagogue Music should become trail blazers and make it their mission to enlighten laymen and women nationwide, not in the context of services, but as part of on-going adult and/or teen-age educational series or web-sites or newsletters—some type of teaching mechanism.

No doubt about it, these desirable goals require selflessness and diligence. This is not the place to spell out details, but it can be done. When I was on staff, with some doing I was able to arrange field trips. Admittedly those were designed more for purposes of learning than for teaching. We went to the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, where we discovered that the most recent music offered was by Salomone Rossi. We traveled to a *farbrengn*

in Brooklyn, where the women were relegated to the balcony and the rest of us were swallowed up in a Black Sea of Hassidim.

So now you reject that educational proposal also. So what is left? The most radical idea of all: the actual use of practica music programs in real live services! Ah me, another pipe dream? Before we go any further, and so that I can satisfy myself that I'm not completely *meshuga*, I'd like to know (1) how many of you have ever replicated your complete or partial practicum in an actual synagogue service or (2) if you only did one or two pieces. If you don't mind, may I see a show of hands:

(1) Full or partial repeat?

(2) One or two pieces?

[As might be expected, more hands went up for No. 2 than for No. 1]

In order to understand where I'm coming from, you need to know a bit about my musical background. Although I played clarinet from grade through secondary school, I taught myself how to play the piano only in my last years of high school. If it had been the other way around, I would have been introduced much sooner to the music of The Three B's: Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. In my case, however (and it had nothing to do with the clarinet), the three B's I was first introduced to were Bloch, Ben-Haim and Boscovich. This was because at that time I was introduced to the Brandeis Camp Institute, where I fell under the spell of a pied piper, my mentor and 'Sweet Singer of Israel,' the one and only transcendent Max Helfman.

I became Max's assistant for several years and joined him at the Arts Institute of Brandeis, based in California and designed for college-age students in the performing and plastic arts. (I commend Max's Shabbat "Brandeis Service" to you, if you can find a copy.) The Brandeis plan was to live in a kibbutz-like environment and instill Zionist values into impressionable late teen-agers. It was at Brandeis that I met and studied with the likes of composers Julius Chajes, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Heinrich Schalit, Eric Zeisel, Erwin Jospe and that colorful Einsteinian specialist in Lithuanian cantillation, Solomon Rosowsky. It was a stunning array of major European Jewish music leaders, not one American-born figure among them.

Now when one is 18, 19 and is surrounded by gung-ho Israeli folk-songs with pumped up Helfman harmonies and stirring, traditional shabbat *nussakh*, it is bound to leave a lasting impression. Does this sound familiar? This was my summer camp experience, and although we had comradely campfire *kumsitz*, folk-songs were regarded as *milchig* (nourishing, but light fare) and worship music was *fleishig* (meaty, weighty). Never, never were they combined. You don't mix meat with dairy.

My fellow campers included embryo Cantors George Weinflash, Shelly Merel, Ray Smolover and budding composers Yehudi Wyner, Charles Davidson and Gershon Kingsley. Jazz services, later written by both Chuck and Gershon (among others) tried to accomplish what happens in any nascent nationalist movement. Theirs were worthy explorations of a potential American *nussakh*, but the results were very much of their

time. They have not worn well because the musical language is dated. The musical idioms feel tacked on, not organic, intrinsic.

There is a lesson to be learned in this. A successful American *nussakh* incorporates jazzy syncopations and blues inflections, a distillation that is not a pale imitation of real jazz. You can apply that rule to any other popular genre. An American *nussakh* keeps melismas down to a minimum, and is sensitive to the meaning of text. It does not distort syntax; Hebrew conjunctions such as “v-“ and articles like “ha” are not stressed and stretched out of proportion. An American *nussakh* is predisposed to avoid so-called orientalisms. But at the same time it recognizes the European past with its time-honored principles, modes which pass from generation to generation and are transformed, but not replaced.

In synagogue music, melody is first and foremost. Everything else is secondary. After melody comes harmony followed by rhythm and, lastly, by counterpoint. To the extent that the current crop of synagogue song is fixated on melody, it maintains an allegiance to our heritage. Although melody reigns absolute, a differentiation needs to be made between songwriting and composing. At times they are one and the same, but not always. Great songwriters include Irving Berlin, Paul McCartney and Joni Mitchell: all masters of the fusion between word and melody, but with lesser concern for the trappings. This is why a Berlin tune can be sung in a hundred different arrangements. On the other hand, the accompaniment vamps in a Stephen Sondheim song are ingrained. Take them away and the song is vitiated. Each of his works is a gestalt, a totality, and this is what makes him more than a songwriter; he is a composer.

Apply this distinction to today's synagogue music, and we find that songwriters have superseded composers; and usually the songwriter is the singer, the salesperson. There is an honorable precedent for this. Cantors of the past also invented their own melodies, mostly, of course, within the parameters of *nussakh*. However, unlike songwriters, composers generally tend to be less public figures as singer-performers and they are more proprietary about their works. They do not appreciate having their settings fiddled with. They believe they have a responsibility to the full musical package, not just the melodic ribbon on top. At the risk of making a sweeping generalization, I would dare to say that composing takes more time and preparation than songwriting, which means that compositions take more preparation for performance, to say nothing of money, and inevitably this has to require more preparation on the part of the listener. By the way, I honestly believe *HaShem* does not mind people being paid to make great music.

The music of my predecessors: Helfman, Freed, Fromm and company and that of my contemporary colleagues has tried, not always successfully, to find a happy medium between songwriting and composing. But these are less leisurely times, with a hurry up mentality. Technological advances have been extraordinary for everyone, including composers who are besieged left and right. I presume all of you are aware of the Napster thieves (I call it Kidnapster) who claim that recorded music should be free to all; and to hell with copyright protection and the livelihood of writers. Let's face it: composers get a raw deal. There are famous artists whose fee for one concert is more than most

composers make over the course of their entire careers. That's the lopsided nature of the beast.

If nothing else, I plead with you, when and where possible, in temple bulletins, service menus, and the like, always credit the composer along with biographical data. It's an on-going educating process. And while I'm at it, let me also make a plea about photo-copying. I don't have to remind you that it's a no-no to duplicate copyrighted music; we all have done it. But since The New York Public Library allows stuff to be copied, I believe it's okay to make single copies of copyrighted music for study purposes; and it's okay to make copies of material that is out of print or truly impossible to find. But it is not okay to make copies that would otherwise deprive composers, however indirectly, of royalties— to buy, for example, one copy and then reproduce it for a choral ensemble. Try to apply a general rule: if you are making money from a gig of any nature, think twice about what, if anything, is going to trickle back down to the writers. Enough said.

I hold in my hand one of the latest developments in so-called musical progress. This is called CD sheet music, and it allows one to browse through and then download any of the complete songs of Schubert (all 598 on one CD!). Or any opera or piano sonata or orchestra score—whatever. Right now, all that is being readied for distribution is in the public domain, but soon I and others will have to decide if this is a better way to market our catalogs.

I was privileged to be part of Leonard Bernstein's team for his pioneering Young People's Concerts of over 50 telecasts, a series that inspired many youngsters to make a life in music. What is the state of music education in 2000? Well, here are two examples. Students at a Connecticut college¹ who have violated a campus ban on alcohol can choose between clean-up services or going to the opera in Hartford. Imagine, opera being regarded as punishment! Out of 90 bad students, 30 preferred to clean-up.

Schools in Colorado have devised a chastisement directed at teen-agers who play loud music in a public place. It is called Immersion Aversion Therapy in which kids are locked in a room and are subjected to listening to a loud recording of Beethoven's 5th Symphony for one hour because (and I am quoting) "they hate that kind of music."² Someone once observed that "the secret of eternal youth is arrested development." Bernstein's first telecast was on Beethoven's Fifth. Both of them must be turning over in their graves.

Apparently there also is an aversion these days to the time-tested, honored works of our Jewish musical past. Rabbi Eric Yoffie has asked us to discard or, at the least, underrate this heritage and to replace it with some kind of "touchy-feely, B'nai Jeshunery." How apropos it is that his critical UAHC Biennial speech to the faithful last December took place at Disney World. Both the speech and the Disney ethic share the same goals: to promote entertainment, reach the widest possible customer (or congregant) by boosting musical veneer at the expense of musical depth.

I am flummoxed by Rabbi Yoffie's comment that (and I quote) "music enables overly-intellectual Jews to rest their minds and open their hearts." Is Yoffie referring to some Jewish intellectuals or to all Jews? To those with medium intellect or those not smart enough? To me, it sounds very much like the old description of Broadway musicals as escapist entertainment for the tired businessman. And how it distorts the purity of music's power. Yoffie and his adherents would have music function as a kind of jacuzzi, to let it wash over us and relax our poor weary brains.

Many is the time I have heard the tired platitude that "a service is not a concert" or "I may not understand it, but I know what I like." So when Yoffie makes the claim that "music of prayer has become what it was never meant to be: a spectator sport," I say that he, like so many others, does not know how to listen to music properly probably because he does not know how to read it or only has slight ability. If you are uneducated about how music is put together, if you do not appreciate it in a historical, sociological context and if you respond to music only on a gut level, you are missing both the meaning and overestimating the feeling. You are devaluating the expression – what music is trying to communicate—as well as the impression—that is, how it is interpreted by the listener. You settle for surface (emotion) over substance (intellect). As a composer, I strive for a balance between the two.

In the United States, intellectualism is more than ever suspect—regarded as effete, not as red-blooded Americanism. Nominate a brainy presidential candidate like Adlai Stevenson or Eugene McCarthy and you are asking for a loser. You can share a brewski with Bush, but Gore is a bore. Computer nerds can't be sports jocks. No Sondheim show has ever recuperated its costs the first time around, if ever; but until recently, Andrew Lloyd Weber was raking in a cool million a day. The crowd that goes crazy over Ricky Martin or Brittany Spears knows nothing about Aaron Copland or Igor Stravinsky because secondary schools, with some notable exceptions, do not teach music as they did when I was in high school. For heaven's sake, teen-agers are still learning how to read! (Incidentally, I thought the group In Sync gave an extraordinary rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner at the World Series.) And, let's face it, Adolph Katchko is no Shlomo Carlebach in the hearts of their countrymen and women.

Now I have no desire to engage in a debate about the merits of congregational singing versus professional performance. Nor do I wish to bandy about easy labels by branding the current harvest of tunes as banal or generic. Quite the contrary, they often succeed as easy-going listening and singing, attractive, fresh, even inventive. The service of B'nai Jeshurun, the popular conservative synagogue, is considered to be the model for the so-called new revolution. There up on New York's west side, come Friday evening, it's standing room only. Mainly a crowd of 30-somethings (very few white-hairs) who sing, dance, clap with fervor, sway and pray in Hebrew. Silent meditation followed by buzzing with one's neighbor in an ad hoc discussion on a topic provided by the rabbi. It's warm, inviting, friendly.

The music? Tasteful accompaniments for cello, guitar and mandolin (some percussion) begun in duet by the rabbi and cantor, the congregation then joining in on *all of it*, mostly

a sung-through service. Eclectic stuff: a Sephardic psalm-tune, an Ashkenazic hymn, standard responses of Sulzer and Lewandowski. Lots of repetition, soft, then loud, slow, then fast, very much in the vein of Hassidic wordless *nigunim* that supposedly generate *ruach*, a kind of transfiguration. Actually, little of it is brand-new, although there also are tunes of more recent vintage, some pedestrian, some quite lovely.

This is a glowing report, so why am I uneasy? For one thing, because one size does not fit all. What works at B'nai Jeshurun does not necessarily serve the needs elsewhere (not every congregation is made up of 30-somethings.) But more problematic than this, there's no provision for the likes of the solo and choral music you heard today, if for no other reason than to provide welcome contrast. And that's why some of us view the situation with alarm. Nevertheless, I maintain that both the formal and informal kinds of musicality can co-exist. You might call it a struggle that fluctuates between catering to the widest constituency, the LCD (the Lowest Common Denominator) and one that appeals to the HUN (the Highest Uncommon Numerator). But that would be stepping into a minefield for one person's LCD is another's HUN.

Although there's no time to go into it now, you may not aware that songs of Berlin, Arlen, Gershwin and company were permeated by Jewish music idioms and have become American standards. Today it's the other way around: popular American music idioms from the days of Peter, Paul and Mary and The Carpenters have become Jewish conventions. There is no question that Jewish music has had a venerable history of borrowing secular tunes, or parts of them, and in the process, converting them for worship use. But this is not the same—hear me carefully—as music written *in the style of* secular models. One is specific and can be pinpointed as to its sources; the other is diffuse and can only be depicted as vaguely familiar stuff. Its supporters find it appealing because it sounds like X, Y or Z; but its critics, to be blunt, regard it as a dumbing-down of musical values.

We are talking here about the survival of enduring music versus trendy music. If the act of composing is only to be regarded as a skill—like driving a car—and not as a highly disciplined, cultivated art with its own internal laws (what we call it theory), then we are lost. When Yoffie says “that Jews will return to their sanctuaries [I wasn't aware they had left] when we offer them music that is vibrant, spiritual and community-building, music that speaks directly to their soul” what he is asking for is instant gratification. But music of significance does not necessarily work that way. It gives up its secrets slowly, by increments that allow you to respond emotionally, spiritually and intellectually a bit differently each time you hear it. That's what keeps it alive and vital.

Note that Yoffie does not say music and words; the burden of proof is always on the musician. I have seen lead-sheet music for some of the more fashionable present-day settings, where the source of the text is listed as “lyrics.” This is indicative of a certain mind set. Lyrics is a word associated with pop or show music; it is utterly inappropriate as a classification for sacred words.

Don't you find it ironic that the summer camp music Yoffie proposes as vital to the survival of services is not specifically taught in your classes? I'll you why: it is so simple-minded it does not require any instruction. But, but—one cannot argue with success, and I am well aware that I am only one little voice crying in the wilderness. Those of you on the Synagogue 2000 track are as passionately committed to the current trend as I am troubled by it. I pray that it is not too late to find a way to accommodate both *minhags*, both ideologies, so that they can thrive side by side.

Before I conclude, I would like to make an announcement which I know will please those of you familiar with my activities. On the last page of today's program you will have read that my book "Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced American Popular Music" has been in search of a publisher. It has been a long time a-coming, but I am happy to tell you that as of this past week, it has found one. There are still hurdles to overcome, but I have a commitment from Northeastern University Press in Boston. I mention it mainly because I will be looking for a computer savvy research assistant to fill in some gaps. It's a paying job; and if anyone is interested, please speak to me later. *[Happily, after making this announcement, I found someone.]*

So many challenges ahead for all of us. For those of you in agreement with my take on the current scene, let this not be a case of preaching to the converted; but one of preaching to the committed. Get out there and do something about it. Somewhere, for example, there has got to be a fearless congregation that will dare commission and promote annual new services or parts of services as the Park Avenue Synagogue once did under Hazzan David Putterman. Thanks to Putterman, the first American style synagogue setting, as far as I know, was the "Kiddush" by Kurt Weill. Think of the public relations mileage to be gained from persuading Steve Reich or Steve Sondheim and, yes, even Stevie Wonder to write one for this century. (That's no joke. Putterman also commissioned a venerable mid-20th century Black composer: William Grant Still.)

The clock is ticking and it is time to rise up and affirm that no more shall the bland lead the bland! The golden age of the Reform repertoire is hemorrhaging and something imperative must be done to stanch the bleeding. I appeal especially to adherents of Synagogue 2000, and ask that you peer into the future. What will your heritage be when you are my age? Which works which you now hold in esteem will be the crown jewels of mid-21st century synagogue music? Which of the Top Ten, now popular, will still be resonating in 2050?

I wish all of you great success and may you be blessed with deepest fulfillment in the professions that have chosen you as much as you have chosen them. To everyone else who is so important to my life, I am grateful that you are here to share this time with me and my music. And to Adyna, Kim, Joyce, Alan, Izzy, again I offer you a heartfelt *todah rabah*. Yea verily, let's do it again—and soon.

(It would be appreciated that reproductions of this talk, in part or in whole, be cleared with the author via e-mail at Theophi@ix.com.netcom.)

Random Bits:

[If B'nai Jeshurun is the contemporary model everyone seems to be trying to emulate, then why not set up another model in the so-called old style; and do it with conviction and passion. Is it so hard a thing to accomplish? Not if you believe in the broad spectrum of Jewish history! Not if you have a rabbi and a board that will tread where angels fear not go.]

[It is not enough to say: "I like it or it does not speak to me." And if indeed those "East European melodies" (which Yoffie concedes are) "soaring and rich but difficult to sing," he is setting up a straw man because as you well know those "East European melodies were not intended to be congregational in the first place, and in the second place, he is saying in essence that all the *nussakh* courses you take are for curiosity knowledge more than anything else.]

[Once in while we would come up with an irreverent parody such as the one from the Greek film "Never on Sunday":

L'cha -- dodi, etc. likrat kala,

L'cha – dodi, etc. p'nei shabat n'kab'la]

[This is not only endemic to Judaism. I recently was talking to a friend who is on a search committee for a new minister at his church, a Presbyterian one. He is an accomplished composer and was very impressed by a candidate and was all set to nominate her until he heard her rave about the virtues of guitars, etc. You fill in the blanks.]

Why is music made the whipping boy? Why not change the text of the amidah and give us hip-hop prayer?]

[student pianists from the NYU music department. Why can't there be inter-departmental sharing? I know for a fact that there is reciprocity between JTS and Columbia. I see lots of yarmulkas and tzitzis at the Columbia gym.]

If this is unfeasible, then perhaps can decide on a combination of practica programs and choose those who would go out on a monthly or bi-monthly basis into the greater New York area and beyond. Are there no more Musica Hebraica type concerts?

Programs of practica contents.

Not uttered 'til now in a public forum (i.e. the school) because there is too much intimidation?

Believe me, a tribute that demands so much serious effort and energy, makes for indelible memories.

[look at lists] Not much, alas.

not only turning his back on time-proven works, he is calling no less for , and he shows his naivete by.

We are told that if congregants are diverted from main line melody: too busy, too much counterpoint -- whatever, a composer is then bringing more attention to him or herself than to the liturgy. Out of that emerges the tried and true bromide

Yea verily, I say unto you: *carpe diem*, seize the moment and proclaim "The Emperor has no clothes!" And if that falls on deaf ears, try: *Hamelekh ayn lo mal bush!* You want it in Ladino? *El rey no tiene ropas!* Or as we say back in the old country: *Di kaiser hot nit keyn kleyder!*

[There are skills and there are skills. A talmudic scholar is on a different plain of accomplishment than an observant layman.]

[One can understand conversational Hebrew without being able to read the language; but can one fully comprehend Israel's national poet, Yehuda Amichai, if only read in translation?]

If only we composers of synagogue music had an organization like the ACC to uphold and fight for our rights that strives to be a non-verbal communication of the spirit.

less public figures as singers

We not only do not stop to smell the roses, but we don't slow down and listen to our inner music.

Absent-minded professors are ivory tower or