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SEEING THROUGH OPERA GLASSES:
Israeli Opera as a Lens into Israeli History, Culture, and Ideology

Todd A. Kipnis

This study shows how Israeli opera is a microcosm of Israeli history, culture, Zionism and ideology, both in the history of opera in Israel in general, and in specific original Israeli operas. The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter looks at the history of the creation of opera in Israel through the present, and shows that the establishment of opera in Israel and its evolution into the successful, internationally renowned New Israeli Opera Company is a reflection of the changing ideology and culture of Israel. Chapter two focuses on some of the common musical trends of musical compositions during the *Yishuv* period, particularly from the 1920s through the establishment of the state of Israel, as these musical trends are found in the operas written during this period, and coincide with the ideology of the society in Palestine during that time period. Chapters 3 and 4 look in depth at the first two original Israeli operas, *The Pioneers*, by Jacob Weinberg, written in 1924, and *Dan Hashomer*, by Marc Lavry and Max Brod, which was premiered in 1945. By looking at the historical background upon which these operas are based and at the libretti and music of the operas, this study shows how both of these operas focus on themes relevant to the society and culture in Palestine during the *Yishuv*. Chapter five, the conclusion, looks briefly at some of the Israeli operas that have been written since the establishment of the state of Israel. It shows that Israeli operas have continued and are still today reflecting themes relevant to Israeli society and culture. Thus, Israeli opera continues today to be a microcosm of Israeli society. The materials used for this thesis include books, articles, websites, opera scores and a manuscript of the piano-vocal score of the opera, *Dan Hashomer*.

SEEING THROUGH OPERA GLASSES:

Israeli Opera as a Lens into Israeli History, Culture, and Ideology

Todd A. Kipnis

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
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School of Sacred Music
New York, NY

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Advisor: Dr. Mark Kligman

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INTRODUCTION

One very effective way of learning about the history of a country or area is through their music, as music often reflects the landscape and culture of the area. This is particularly apparent in the land of Israel. Israeli art music strives to create a national music for the land of Israel, helping to form a national identity and culture. This can be seen in the history of opera in Israel. Whereas most national opera companies have tried to acquire its inspiration and music from already existing traditional folk culture and music, opera was established in Palestine[1] in order to help create genuine folk music for Palestine, which did not yet exist. To the founders of opera in Palestine, opera was seen as a means of fulfilling the national dream of the *Yishuv*. The establishment of opera in Israel has been a long and bumpy process, and has included high points, difficulties, failures, and ultimately success. This study will show that not only is opera a stimulating form of entertainment, but it is also an excellent venue in which to illustrate political views and history. Thus, it can serve as an educational tool, and political arena, as well as entertainment.

Throughout the history of opera all over the world, composers and librettists have often turned towards worldly events, the human condition and the social realities of life, and opera has been used often to express political and moral views. Israel Eliraz, an opera librettist, gives his perspective on opera, when he writes that opera needs to address present events, unafraid to face actual social or political aspects of life, and to voice

[1] In this study, Palestine will be used to refer to the land of Israel before it became a state.

opinions.[2] This is the same perspective which European composers, such as Giacomo Puccini, used in their operas.

Through various means this study will show how Israeli opera is a microcosm of Israeli history, culture, Zionism and ideology, both in the history of opera in Israel in general, and in specific original Israeli operas. This will be achieved in a variety of ways. The first chapter will look at the history of the creation of opera in Israel through the present, which will show that the establishment of opera in Israel and its evolution into the successful, internationally renowned New Israeli Opera Company is a reflection of the changing ideology and culture of Israel. Thus, just as the pioneers and Zionists of the *Yishuv* wanted to create a unique society very different from the culture that Jews were a part of in the Diaspora, the initial vision for opera in Palestine was to create a unique form of opera on par with the European model, but indigenous to Palestine.

Chapter two will focus on some of the common musical trends of musical compositions during the *Yishuv* period, particularly from the 1920s through the establishment of the state of Israel, as these musical trends are found in the operas written during this period, and coincide with the ideology of the society in Palestine during that time period. Many composers during that time strove to create a unique musical style endemic to the land of Palestine. Among the most prevalent of the musical trends was the rejection of the music of Eastern Europe as being unsuited for the new society being created in Palestine, and a move away from some common Western musical conventions. In doing so, many of these composers turned to the musical sounds of the Middle East for their inspiration, often trying to create a synthesis between East and West. This parallels

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[2] Israel Eliraz, "A Librettist's Reflections on Opera in Our Times," *IMI News* 2 (1995): 5-6.

the ideological trend of Zionists during that time of painting the Diaspora in a negative light and rejecting the culture of the Diaspora, in order to create a new unique life in Palestine.

Chapters 3 and 4 will look in depth at the first two original Israeli operas, *The Pioneers*, by Jacob Weinberg, written in 1924, and *Dan Hashomer*, by Marc Lavry and Max Brod, which was premiered in 1945. Both of these operas focus on themes relevant to the society and culture in Palestine during the *Yishuv*. In addition to the libretti, the common musical trends discussed above are prevalent in the music of these operas. In these two operas, both composers set the music of the Diaspora in an Eastern European style and the music of Palestine in a style that incorporates Eastern Oriental elements mixed with Western musical techniques. Through distinguishing between the music of the Diaspora and the music of Palestine, Weinberg and Lavry made statements about what they felt constituted Israeli music and what did not.

The conclusion will look briefly at some of the Israeli operas that have been written since the establishment of the state of Israel. It will show that Israeli operas have continued and are still today reflecting themes relevant to Israeli society and culture. Thus, Israeli opera continues today to be a microcosm of Israeli society.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF ISRAELI OPERA FROM INCEPTION TO PRESENT

> It would be the sacred duty of the Jewish intellectuals, who would be entrusted with the task of laying the foundations for new cultural life in the Land of Israel, to commence with the creation of the cultural national centre which would nourish all nationally educated world Jewry. . . . The cultural revival of the Land of Israel would retain a place of honour for the Arts, and especially for the theatre, . . . It must be as valuable to us as the Wagnerian theatre in Bayreuth is to the Germans and La Scala in Milan to the Italians.[1]

This quote is the vision of Mordechai Golinkin stated in 1917, in a pamphlet called, *The Temple of the Arts*.[2] Opera in Israel began in 1923, with the immigration of Golinkin, an established conductor from Russia and supporter of Zionism, to Palestine. Before his arrival, he had a vision of creating an opera center in Palestine where popular world operas could be performed in Hebrew translation, along with original Jewish works on Jewish themes.[3] Golinkin wanted the opera company to have the same nationalistic aspects for Palestine, as in other countries. This complements the Zionist idea of collective identity, and nationalistic goals. Golinkin felt that a theatre like this could not be established in the Diaspora, where Jews faced harsh conditions, but only in Palestine. He envisioned that this theatre would be a model for all other following Jewish theatres in Palestine and the Diaspora. Thus, his vision went hand in hand with Israel's vision of being the representative of the Jewish people, and the inferior nature of the Diaspora. The opera company in Israel was to be a national institution. He wanted opera in Israel to

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[1] Found in Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 66.

[2] Ibid. 66.

[3] Shabtai Ben-Aroyo, "Pioneers of the Opera in Eretz Israel," *IMI News* 2 (1995): 9.

be a new form of opera, on par with the European model, but endemic to the land of Palestine. He felt that this was possible because the influences of the European theatre have no roots in Palestine. Golinkin also envisioned that the artistic center, which he planned on building along side the opera company, would attract young musicians from the Diaspora to study and to do research on Jewish music. Therefore, he hoped that his artistic vision would support the *Yishuv's* desire to bring all Jews to the land.[4]

Opera in Palestine was seen as a means to help promote Zionist ideology. By insisting that all the operas be performed in Hebrew, they hoped that opera would help promote the use of Hebrew in Palestine.[5] Golinkin understood the importance of joining forces with the movement in Palestine to revive the Hebrew language in order to unify the people in Palestine. Columnist, Moshe Freidman wrote about the rationale for establishing an opera company in Palestine. He said that Palestine needs to create a national music, which he felt did not exist yet. There was nothing that could be called Hebraic music. He felt that opera would play an important part in creating a national music, and Jewish history would provide a vast amount of material for librettos for operas. Friedman thought that opera would spark future national folk music. The poet, Chaim Nachman Bialik, expressed this same idea when he wrote, "We must continue to cultivate our Zionist nigun in the Land of Israel, and its cornerstone would be the opera."[6]

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[4] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 65-66.

[5] Ben-Aroyo, "Pioneers of the Opera," 9.

[6] Found in Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 68.

Bialik wanted to combine traditional Judaism with a secular Jewish national movement, and felt that opera was an important part of bringing the national dream to fruition.[7]

Golinkin did not realize how impoverished Palestine was, so he had to drop his concept of an entire artistic center, and focus solely on opera.[8] He raised funds for the fulfillment of his dream, with the help of the famous bass opera singer, Fyodor Chaliapin, who gave a benefit performance. Despite the small population in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Golinkin decided to establish the opera company there.[9] On July 28, 1923, the Palestine Opera debuted with a performance of *La Traviata* in Hebrew. It took place at the Eden Cinema on Lillienbaum Street in Tel Aviv, at the Zion Hall in Jerusalem, and at the Coliseum Cinema in Haifa. The performance was a great success, and opera became a reality in Palestine.[10] Gershon Hanokh wrote about the performance, "The West may be decaying, but until it does, what charm and exaltation is kept for all of us in the concept-symbol 'Opera-Hebrew Opera'."[11] Columnist, Itamar Ben Avi, linked the performance to his dream of achieving a national Hebrew culture.[12]

The constant use of Hebrew faced some issues. First of all, throughout the 1920's, in the immigrant society in Palestine, there were more Jewish immigrants than Jews born in Palestine. Although many of the immigrants were able to speak daily Hebrew, they could not necessarily understand Hebrew sung as an opera. Another

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[7] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 67-69.

[8] Ibid. 69-70.

[9] Ben-Aroyo, "Pioneers of the Opera," 9.

[10] www.operaheb.co.il/nio/history/index.html, 11 May 2005.

[11] Found in Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 70.

[12] Ibid. 70-71.

problem was that the Hebrew was archaic and had distorted syntax, because the Hebrew translations did not come from the context of live, modern, Hebrew usage. The use of Hebrew in the operas faced harsh criticism. One critic harshly said about one opera "Was it in Hebrew? I doubt it. . . . In vain did the translator indicate on the title-page 'do not reproduce or use without permission from the author.' In my view no use of the present translation should be allowed even with the permission of the translator."[13] The use of Hebrew made rehearsals difficult, since many of the singers hardly spoke Hebrew. However, by continuing to use Hebrew, Golinkin was able to gain the support of political and literary leaders.[14]

The unstable position of the Palestine Opera was shown during their production of *La Juive*. The British Commissioner James Campbell put a ban on the production of this opera, because Cardinal Bruno was portrayed in the opera as evil. Because the Palestine Opera had invested all of its funds in this production, Golinkin knew that the ban would ruin the opera company, so he compromised and agreed to rename the opera *Rachel* when produced in Jerusalem. However, Golinkin's compromise caused great problems for the Palestine Opera. Golinkin was perceived as betraying the honor of Palestine by compromising. The columnist, Yitzhac Lufbahn attacked the Palestine Opera saying that they did not fight the attack of the British Commissioner and instead tried to save money. Lufbahn said, "If the Opera cannot protect its honour and has no respect for feelings of the public, we would show no interest whatsoever in it and in its productions."[15] While

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[13] Found in Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 72.

[14] Ibid. 72.

[15] Found in Ibid. 74.

this did not end up hurting the opera company too much, it did reveal the precarious nature of the opera company, which had to deal with the politics of the country.[16]

The Palestine Opera began during the years of vast immigration from 1924-1926. Thus, the opera had a large size audience. However, in their third season, economic depression caused emigration from Palestine to increase, and eventually in 1929, it caused the collapse of the opera company.[17] However, in the 1930's when the capital brought in by the German immigrants helped improve the economy, Golinkin tried to revive the Palestine Opera. In 1936, the Palestine Opera produced *The Barber of Seville* during the worst days of the Arab revolt. The production was used to represent the Jewish strong will, and people began to admire Golinkin's persistence. However, people began to lose confidence in the opera company, and one reviewer said that the Palestine Opera is a substitute until there is a real opera company in Palestine. Despite this, Golinkin still persisted, and in 1940, at the outbreak of the war, launched a revival of *La Juive*, which shows the suffering of Jews. Thus, people really connected with this opera at that time.[18]

The immigration from Central Europe enhanced the operatic venture in Palestine.[19] In 1941, the Palestine Folk Opera was established. In the five years of the group's existence, it produced a number of operas, and stage works, including the first original Israeli Opera, *Dan Hashomer* by Marc Lavry.[20] This company eventually also

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[16] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 73-74.

[17] Ibid. 76-77.

[18] Ibid. 117-119.

[19] Ibid. 118.

failed, this time due to internal conflicts. However, on November 13, 1945, while the Jewish community was involved in quarrels with the British authorities, Edis de Philippe, an American soprano, came to Palestine. On November 29, 1947, on the exact day that the United Nations voted for the establishment of the State of Israel, Edis de Philippe and a group of opera supporters met and decided to start the Israel National Opera. At its premiere, the War of Independence was taking place, but the heads of the state still came to witness the revival of opera. Between 1947 and 1958, the Israel National Opera performed about a thousand performances throughout Israel. Since there were not enough singers to perform leading roles in the operas, Philippe commissioned international singers. Placido Domingo, the now internationally famous opera singer, came from Mexico, as a not yet established opera singer, to Israel. He sang with the Israel National Opera for two and a half years. Once again, due to economic hardship, the opera company was forced to shut down.[21]

The history of opera in Israel is one of persistence, and thus, the decline of the Israel National Opera did not cause opera to cease to exist in Israel. Not long after that company shut down, the New Israeli Opera began, originally as a training workshop for singers, and other artists. In 1985, they launched their first opera production. Their next production of *Le nozze di Figaro*, was universally acclaimed as a milestone of Israeli opera history. In 1994, the New Israeli Opera finally secured a home at the opera house at the Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center.[22]

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[20] Peter Gradenwitz, *The Music of Israel from the Biblical Era to Modern Times*, 2d ed., (Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), 330.

[21] Ben-Aroyo, "Pioneers of the Opera," 10.

[22] www.operaheb.co.il/nio/history/index.html, 5/11/05.

In looking at the history of the development of Israeli opera, it easy to see that establishing opera in Israel did not come easy, facing many setbacks and difficulties. However, through persistence and the refusal to let the dream of having a national opera company in Israel collapse, Israel now has a successful, internationally renowned opera company.

CHAPTER 2

COMMON MUSICAL TRENDS IN ISRAELI ART MUSIC FROM THE 1920S THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE

Before looking at the specific operas which this study will focus on, it is important to have an understanding of the musical style and ideas of Israeli art music during the *Yishuv* period, particularly from the 1920s through the establishment of the state, as many of these compositional techniques and musical ideas are present in one or both of the operas, and are a reflection of the culture and ideology of the society in Palestine during that time.

It was in the 1920s and 1930s that Israeli art music started to thrive in Israel, with the immigration of various important composers to Palestine. These immigrant composers were faced with the expectation that they would contribute to the building of a national Jewish identity, and thus their previous compositional techniques from their countries of origin seemed out of place in Palestine.[1] They were immersed in the culture of the pioneers, who sought to create unity among the Jewish people, and they began to love the land, and be influenced by its landscape.[2] Each composer reacted to their new environment in different ways. When they arrived there was no substantial musical culture in Israel to shape their style of writing, rather it was up to them to establish a new

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[1] Peter Gradenwitz, *Music and Musicians in Israel*, (Tel Aviv: Israeli Music Publications Limited, 1959), 16-17.

[2] Fredda Rakusin Mendelson, "Marc Lavry: a prominent figure in the birth of Israeli music" (MSM thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, 1996), 25-26.

musical culture in Palestine. Every new composition was critiqued on the basis of whether it would help create a new national Jewish style of music.[3]

Although most composers did not reject entirely the musical style of the West in which most of them were trained, there was a trend among many of these early Israeli composers to move away from Western European culture and musical style in order to create a new uniquely Israeli style which would be inspired by the culture of the East. Composers felt that the musical style of the Arab world in which they lived was organically Middle Eastern. Therefore, many composers tried to create a synthesis of the music of the East and West. One popular philosophy of some of these early composers, most notably A.U. Boskovitch, was that composers should steer away from personal expression in their music and strive for national expression, which would represent the collective.[4]

One important aspect that played a big role in the musical expression of these early Israeli composers was the rejection of the Diaspora. Life in the Diaspora was viewed by the *Yishuv* in Palestine as being very negative, as opposed to the glorified life in Palestine. This rejection of the Diaspora caused composers to reject especially the music of Eastern Europe as being unsuited for the new society that was being created in Palestine. This resulted in the rejection of the Yiddish language, which was labeled as

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[3] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: Ideological Pressures in the Yishuv Period and their Offshoots in Israeli Art Music during the Recent Two Decades," *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, 4: Music of Israel (2004): 2.

[4] Rebecca Carmi, "Israeli Art Song" (MSM thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1993), 28-34.

'jargon', and the substitution of Hebrew in its place.[5] It needs to be said that in the 1920s, the time when Jacob Weinberg, the composer of *The Pioneers*, was composing music in Palestine, despite the hatred of Yiddish by members of the *Yishuv*, the attitude towards Yiddish was still mixed, since Joel Engel was publishing Yiddish songs during that time. However, there was a definite opposition to performances and public events in Yiddish. It was not until the 1930s, when new immigrant composers began composing arts songs in Hebrew, that composers began making ideological statements against the use of musical elements of Eastern Europe and the use of Yiddish.[6] Specifically, they avoided the augmented second interval, which was so characteristic of Eastern European Jewish music, and represented the humiliation of exile. There was to be no more weeping and wailing or pain and suffering associated with exile.[7] Max Brod said, " . . . this 'augmented second' . . . adds to the melody an element of weeping, meekness and sentimentality and therefore plays an important role in the songs of the Diaspora while the generation in Israel has rejected it."[8] This augmented second interval was clearly frowned upon by Israeli composers as being improper to the revived national spirit of Palestine.[9] In addition to the augmented second, these Israeli composers also rejected

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[5] Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 36.

[6] Jehoash Hirshberg, email correspondence, 26, November 2006.

[7] Eliyahu Schleifer, "Current Trends of Liturgical Music in the Ashkenazi Synagogue," *The World of Music* 37, 1995 (1), 63.

[8] Found in Carmi, "Israeli Art Song," 25.

[9] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 247.

Eastern European cantorial chants and improvisations, folk songs and klezmer music along with their modal systems.[10]

In the composers' efforts to move away from Western techniques, they made use of the natural minor scale, but without the leading tone. Although not always the case, in Western music, pieces in minor generally use the raised seventh, leading tone, which provides for stronger cadences. By not using the leading tone, strong dominant-tonic cadences were abandoned, which was one way that composers hoped to create a new style of music different from most of the music of the West. In addition to natural minor, composers adopted the ancient modes, especially Dorian, Aolian, Phrygian, and Mixolydian, which symbolized a national return to the ancient land of Palestine.[11] By using these ancient modes, they not only were steering away from Western techniques by using the lowered seventh, but were also differentiating their music from Eastern European music and cantorial modes. In this way, they were creating their own musical style unique to Palestine.

Max Brod defined this "Mediterranean style" of music, as it is often referred, as consisting of repeated patterns, irregular meters, ostinato repetitions, variation techniques, unison textures, no elaborate polyphony, no major-minor tonality, and no use of the augmented second interval.[12] The use of open fifths is another characteristic feature of Israeli music, which was generally avoided in 19th century Western music.

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[10] Schleifer, "Current Trends of Liturgical Music," 63.

[11] Schleifer, "Current Trends of Liturgical Music," 63.

[12] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 266.

As mentioned earlier, Israeli composers were influenced by Arabic music. Odef Assaf says, "Accepted as an undeniable fact today, the presence of the Arabic tradition in our culture was an object of desire and profound hesitations."[13] As a result of this, the Yemenite community became the ideal place for the pursuit of Arabic music, since they were an Arabic Jewish community. Therefore, composers could blend the East and the West without political hostility or religious distance. In addition, the fact that there was a native Jewish culture gave support to the notion that authentic Jewish culture had Arabic roots. A.Z. Idelsohn, through his research, believed that the Yemenites were the transporters of ancient tradition, and people admired and emulated Yemenite culture. Tzvi Avni said, "My interests . . . was in the Yemenite music, which was thought to be the most authentic music remaining from Ancient music."[14] This interest in Yemenite culture is found in the biographies of many of Israel's major composers.[15]

Another important style of Israeli music is the hora, which has long been identified as endemic to Israel. The hora was the most wide-spread form of dance music in Israel.[16] The hora was established in Israel by the pioneers who founded kibbutzim and other collective settlements in Palestine, and brought with them some of the culture of Europe, especially Eastern and Central Europe. Most notably they brought with them songs and dances and used them in Palestine, with the hora being the most popular among these dances. The hora came specifically from Rumania, and became essentially

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[13] Found in Carmi, "Israeli Art Song," 29.

[14] Found in Ibid. 31.

[15] Ibid. 29-31.

[16] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 258.

the national dance in Eretz-Yisrael. This dance fit perfectly the pioneer ideology and the collectiveness and social aspects of the kibbutzim. It was performed in a tightly closed circle, with linked arms and hands on the shoulders of their neighbors, which was an effective expression of the close relationships of the members of the community, with everyone having equal rights and value. The hora was characterized by stamping, jumping and leg swinging, and usually continued for hours, abandoning themselves to the togetherness of the group. The enthusiasm would rise almost to the point of ecstasy.[17] "The typical [musical] patterns of the horra included short symmetrical phrases in common time, regularly repeated syncopated rhythms, square phrases, short melodic motives in small range, avoidance of leading tones, and a simple diatonic harmony with open fifths substituting for major-minor triads."[18]

For the majority of early Israeli composers their musical style and ideas were a direct reflection of the environment in which they lived. Through the use of these various musical techniques, these composers strove to represent the ideology and atmosphere of the *Yishuv*. As a result, studying their music can give an excellent glance into Israeli history and culture. In the two operas which will be studied in-depth in the following two chapters, many of these common musical trends were employed by the composers, in order to bring out the text of the libretto and accurately reflect the atmosphere in Palestine at that time.

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[17] Gurit Kadman, "Folk Dance in Israel," in *HA-RIKUD: The Jewish Dance*, ed. Fred Berk (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972), 26-27.

[18] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 258.

CHAPTER 3

THE PIONEERS – ISRAELI OPERA BY JACOB WEINBERG

CREATION OF *THE PIONEERS*

The opera, *The Pioneers* (*Hechalutz*), is a great example of how Israeli opera can be an excellent lens into Israeli history, culture, and ideology. The opera is technically the first original Israeli opera ever written, but since it was never performed in its entirety in Israel, it is generally not considered to be the first Israeli opera. The music and libretto of the opera was written by Jacob Weinberg in 1924 with the intention that it would be performed by the Palestine Opera. However, by the time the opera was completed, the Palestine Opera could no longer afford to produce a new opera. Therefore, a full performance of *The Pioneers* never occurred in Palestine, but two concert performances of a few excerpts from the opera were performed in Palestine in April 1925 and May 1927. *The Pioneers* was eventually produced in 1934 in New York, but no reviews of the performance could be found, and it is not known whether it was a fully staged production.[1] Weinberg was awarded first prize in the musical contest of Philadelphia's Sesquicentennial Exposition for the opera. This was the first time that an entirely Jewish musical piece received recognition in an international music contest.[2] However, in a letter written by Weinberg, he says that although *The Pioneers* was praised with great

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[1] Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 77.

[2] Lewis Appleton, ed., "The Music of Gershon Ephros, Solomon Rosowsky, Heinrich Schalit, Jacob Weinberg," *Jewish Music Festival Theme: Bridging Israel and America through Music and Honoring Four American Jewish Composers*, pt. 2: (New York: National Jewish Music Council, 1963), 25.

enthusiasm by the whole press, it was ignored by local Jewish composers in America.[3] The most interesting, and probably the most meaningful performance of the opera took place in Berlin in the 1930's, during the time when the Nazis forbade works of a Jew from being performed in non-Jewish venues. A concert version was performed at the Prinzregentenstrasse Synagogue under the organization of the Judische Kulturbund in Deutschland with soprano Mascha Benya singing Leah, the soprano lead role.[4] In July, 1941, a few excerpts from *The Pioneers* were broadcast on the Palestine Broadcasting Service.[5]

Weinberg wrote the libretto to *The Pioneers* in Russian, but it was translated to Hebrew by Joseph Markovsky. The only score that exists of the opera is a piano-vocal score published by J. Fischer & Bro. in New York in 1932, which is written in three languages, Hebrew transliteration, English, and Yiddish. The English translation, except for one piece, was written by Arthur Mendel, and the Yiddish was written by Dr. Meyer Chartiner.[6]

In an article in the New York Times, Weinberg wrote that his inspiration for the opera came from two impressions he had of Palestine during the five years that he lived there. The first impression was that of the scenery and environment in Palestine. He said,

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[3] Philip V. Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine 1936-1940*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 230.

[4] *Jacob Weinberg*, www.milkenarchive.org/artists/artists.taf?artistid=56, 11 July, 2006.

[5] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 77.

[6] Jacob Weinberg, *The Pioneers [Hechalutz]*, with composer's remarks by Jacob Weinberg (New York: J. Fischer & Bro., 1932).

> The first impression was the visual and aerial charm of the country itself, the mild pastoral look of biblical hills, valleys and mountains. Their peace convinces one of the eternal truth of three great religions whose cradle is this place, holy for centuries and generations. Then Palestine bewitches the ear by its folksongs and dance rhythms, as well as by the characteristic sounds of the Sephardic Hebrew and Arabian languages, so original, tonally rich and refreshing for a Western ear. And, before all, the sweet stillness of the land is certainly the most 'musical' impression for us, . . . There are no rush hours in Palestine. Its tempo is eternally slow.[7]

Weinberg said that his second impression was even stronger and contrasts with his first impression. He said,

> It is a different holiness; the holiness of love and passionate fervor of the young generation toward the resurrection of their motherland. In mankind's history there have been hardly any national movements like this. Coming from all parts of the world, these strong men and women consecrate their lives to rejuvenate the country, and, to quote Walt Whitman, 'through the battle, through defeat, through defeat and victory, always moving, never stopping,' step by step, slow but sure, they near the final goal, the materialization of a cherished dream.[8]

JACOB WEINBERG

Jacob Weinberg, the librettist and composer of *The Pioneers*, was a pioneer himself. He was one of the pioneering composers who immigrated to Palestine during Israel's formative years and tried to found a new Jewish national art music based on authentic Jewish musical roots.[9] Since Weinberg himself was a pioneer during the time that the opera was written, the opera reflects the atmosphere and environment in which he lived.

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[7] "A New Hebrew Opera," *New York Times*, 11 November 1934.

[8] Ibid.

[9] *Jacob Weinberg*, www.milkenarchive.org/artists/artists.taf?artistid=56, 11 July, 2006.

Weinberg was born in Odessa on July 7, 1879 to a wealthy middle-class family who were very much assimilated with minimal Jewish observance.[10] The fact that he is from a wealthy family provides a first hand connection with the conflict in the opera of the wealthy families in the Diaspora not understanding the impoverished lifestyle that their children are living in Palestine. When Weinberg began composing he did not use any of the liturgical melodies and folk tunes which later became a significant part of his repertoire. However, that changed in 1911 when Weinberg became active in the Moscow branch of the Gesellschaft für Jüdische Volksmusic (Society for Jewish Folk Music). The Gesellschaft was a pioneering organization of Jewish composers, performers, and intellectuals in Russia who wanted to create a new authentic Jewish national art music.[11] Weinberg said of this organization, "There began my interest in things Jewish. I became very much absorbed in Jewish music and I began to collect and study Jewish folksongs. A new, great, and practically unexplored vista was opening before me."[12]

In 1923, Weinberg immigrated to Palestine.[13] In Palestine, he experienced the strong Zionist fervor that was prevalent and the self-sacrifice and relentless commitment of the pioneers to rebuilding the Jewish homeland.[14] Weinberg played a leading role in

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[10] *Jacob Weinberg*, www.milkenarchive.org/artists/artists.taf?artistid=56, 11 July, 2006.

[11] Adapted with excerpts from essay by Neil W. Levin, *Jewish Romanticism*, www.milkenarchive.org/articles/articles.taf?function+detail&ID=94.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 81.

[14] Adapted with excerpts from essay by Neil W. Levin, *Jewish Romanticism*, www.milkenarchive.org/articles/articles.taf?function+detail&ID=94.

establishing the Jewish National Conservatory of Music in Jerusalem, and the environment in Palestine imbued his compositions with even stronger connections to the Jewish tradition.[15] During the five years in which Weinberg lived in Palestine, he absorbed much of the Jewish oriental and Arabic musical styles and characteristics, such as modes and melodies, which were unknown in Europe.[16] Weinberg was the only composer of art music in Palestine in the 1920s, and thus did not represent a community of composers.[17] His music set the stage and paved the way for the group of immigrant composers who followed him in the 1930s.

In 1926, Weinberg moved to the United States, and became very active in New York's Jewish music circles. In the early 1940's, he organized a number of annual Jewish arts festivals in New York, and initiated Jewish music festivals in other cities as well. These festivals were supposedly the motivation for the formation of the National Jewish Music Council of the Jewish Welfare Board, which coordinated annual Jewish Music Month celebrations throughout the United States, and played an important part in American Jewish culture.[18]

An article written by Weinberg, "Curriculum for Jewish Composers and Performers," gives an idea of his feelings about Jewish music. He says that music has

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[15] Lewis Appleton, ed., "The Music of Gershon Ephros, Solomon Rosowsky, Heinrich Schalit, Jacob Weinberg," *Jewish Music Festival Theme: Bridging Israel and America through Music and Honoring Four American Jewish Composers*, pt. 2: (New York: National Jewish Music Council, 1963), 25.

[16] *Jacob Weinberg*, www.milkenarchive.org/artists/artists.taf?artistid=56, 11 July, 2006.

[17] Jehoash Hirshberg, email correspondence, 26, November 2006.

[18] *Jacob Weinberg*, www.milkenarchive.org/artists/artists.taf?artistid=56, 11 July, 2006.

always been identified as the language of international understanding. Therefore, he asserts that to avoid the isolation of Jewish musicians into a small group separate from the international music scene, a Jewish music curriculum needs to combine both Eastern and Western elements, studied simultaneously and equally. This is something that Weinberg does in his own compositions. He also says, "The Jewish musician, though being a faithful Jew in his ideals, tastes and aspirations, should however not lose sight of general culture, of a certain universalism which has always been an integral part of Judaism as a civilization."[19] This is a large reason why Weinberg had such a great impact on Jewish music in America, because he sought to create legitimate, authentic Jewish music, while keeping it accessible and usable in the international world.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *THE PIONEERS*

The opera, *The Pioneers*, is one of many pieces of art and music that deal with the early pioneers of Palestine, as many poems and songs have been written about the pioneering movement. Before discussing how the opera depicts the history and culture of the pioneers it is first necessary to have an understanding of the historical background upon which the opera is based.

The pioneers of Palestine were Zionists who believed that the future of the Jewish people was dependent upon them, and that the Jewish people could only survive if they had their own land and home, away from the oppressive rule and poor conditions in the Diaspora. They felt that it was their duty to make that happen. The pioneers were the epitome of self-sacrifice, willing to endure harsh conditions and hard work to build up

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[19] Jacob Weinberg, "Curriculum for Jewish Composers and Performers," *The Jewish Music Forum* 5, no. 1 (December 1944), 20-22.

Palestine, which they believed to be the answer to anti-Semitism and other Jewish problems.

The beginning of pioneering in Palestine began with the First Aliyah in 1882. These pioneers came in search of better conditions than the pogroms they were facing in Europe. They had an idealistic view of Palestine, believing that their problems would be solved there. However, by the end of the First Aliyah period in 1903, the idealism of these early pioneers began to diminish due to the extremely harsh conditions they faced in Palestine. In the late 1890's, many Jews became convinced that it was impossible for Jews to assimilate in Europe. Theodore Herzl was the leading speaker about this issue. He felt that the only solution was for Jews to have their own land to settle on. He published a small book called, *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*). The main idea expressed in the book was that assimilation was not the answer for Jews, and that the conditions for Jews in the Diaspora would continue to get worse unless there was a political solution, meaning the establishment of an independent Jewish state.[20]

In 1903, the harsh attacks of the Kishinev pogroms were the impetus for what is known as the Second Aliyah. These pogroms and further pogroms in 1905 gave many young Jews the determination to build a Jewish homeland.[21] These Zionists were not only fighting for liberation from foreign oppression, but also for protection from assimilation and loss of Jewish identity. They despised life in the Diaspora, not merely the European Diaspora, but they rejected the whole idea of living in the Diaspora at all. Therefore it was necessary for these pioneers to demonstrate and convince people that

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[20] Aryeh Rubinstein, comp., *The Return to Zion* (New York: Leon Amiel Publisher, 1974), 15-22.

[21] Ibid. 34.

life outside of the land of Israel was awful. One person who exemplified these pioneers was Aaron David Gordon.[22] He wrote, "In exile, we do not and cannot have a living culture, rooted in real life and developing within itself. We have no culture because we have no life, because the life that exists in exile, is not our life."[23] David Ben-Gurion made a similar statement in 1915 saying, "We cannot develop a normal and comprehensive culture in exile, not because we do not have the right but because we are physically and spiritually dependent on the alien environment that consciously or unconsciously imposes its culture and way of life upon us."[24] A.D. Gordon also wrote that the Jewish people were "broken and crushed . . . sick and diseased in body and soul."[25] He said that this was because the people had no roots in the soil and no real ground beneath their feet. These statements epitomized the common view of the Diaspora among the Second Aliyah leadership. As a result of this rejection of the Diaspora, all energy and hopes were focused on Palestine. Palestine was seen as the main center both of Jewish existence and of Jewish history, and was a source of inspiration. The leaders of the Zionist movement of the Second Aliyah did not allow self-indulgence, and they described Jews in the Diaspora in a way that resembled the views of anti-Semites.[26] In a reflection by a pioneer, M. Cherkassi, he talks about the Diaspora. He said, "From the time I came to Eretz Yisrael, I understood the meaning of

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[22] Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 47-48.

[23] Found in Ibid. 48

[24] Found in Ibid. 48.

[25] Found in Ibid. 47.

[26] Ibid. 47-49.

the term 'conquest of labor,' because I knew the Galut [exile] from which I had come, the Galut that humiliated us, and made us strangers who didn't belong."[27] He goes on to talk about how in the town where he grew up in Russia he saw Jewish merchants and shopkeepers forced out of business, and Jewish workers pushed out of their jobs and replaced by non-Jewish workers.[28]

Another important element of these pioneers of the Second Aliyah was that they wanted to create a new society, which was different from that of life in the Diaspora. To do this they developed the idea of *kibbush ha-avodah* (the conquest of labor). This meant that the Jews would be responsible for fulfilling all the economic aspects necessary for this new society to function properly.[29] This was the essence of what the pioneers were seeking to accomplish. To these pioneers, manual labor was extremely important, and was necessary to solve Jewish social and national problems.[30] They wanted individuals to support the national revival and prepare themselves to settle in Palestine as a pioneer. These individuals needed to be willing to do any type of work required of them, regardless of how difficult, strenuous, or dangerous, in order to help build this new national society. The young pioneers of the Second Aliyah felt that their transformation into manual laborers was part of this new national revival, and was essential to creating a

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[27] M. Cherkassi, from *Second Aliyah – Dreamers and Reality*, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Rubinstein, *Return to Zion*, 37-38.

[30] Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: MJF Books, 1972), 281.

self-sustaining Jewish society and economy.[31] A.D. Gordon was an influential proponent of the importance of labor. He said,

> The Jewish people has been completely cut off from nature and imprisoned within city walls these two thousand years. We have become accustomed to every form of life, except to a life of labor – of labor done at our own behalf and for its own sake. . . . We lack the principle ingredient for national life. We lack the habit of labor – not labor performed out of external compulsion, but labor to which one is attached in a natural and organic way. This kind of labor binds a people to its soil and to its national culture, which in turn is an outgrowth of the people's soil and the people's labor.[32]

The important part that labor played in the lives of the pioneers of Palestine can also be seen in a reflection by another pioneer, Miriam Paratz. She talks about her wedding day saying, "Our wedding was performed according to all the traditions with one innovation – instead of a cloth chupah we used sheaves of wheat. I, as a bride, felt that day a need to sanctify myself and the occasion through work, by working, which is the core of our life, the basis of my personal revolution and that of all young people in Palestine."[33]

Living conditions in Palestine during the early years of the pioneers was very difficult. Immigrants lived in tents or huts and had to cope with malaria, snakes, scorpions, and supervisors who made work very difficult.[34] A.D. Gordon, who exemplified these pioneers, is a good example of the willingness to endure hardships in order to work the land and further the goals of these pioneers. He immigrated to Palestine in 1903. Although he was forty-eight years old and had never done physical

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[31] Rubinstein, *Return to Zion*, 38.

[32] Aaron David Gordon, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[33] Miriam Paratz, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[34] Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, 281.

work, he insisted on cultivating the land with his own hands, despite suffering from malaria, hunger, unemployment, and insecurity, which were all common problems among early pioneers in Palestine. He was willing to endure these hardships because he felt that manual labor and cultivating the land in Palestine would enable people to rediscover religion and a sense of holiness.[35]

In the book, *Pioneers in Israel*, Shmuel Dayan tells the story of his experience as an early settler in Palestine. Since his story is likely similar to many other pioneers, this book gives a great look into the experiences of the early pioneers. He emigrated from Russia to Palestine in 1908 as a teenager, where he became a farmer.[36] He said that in Russia a depressed and uncertain atmosphere surrounded him, and the ideas of Zionism began to appeal to him. He decided to move to Palestine and help build the land, but his family did not take his decision seriously. Upon his arrival at Petach Tikva in Palestine, he found young men dancing in the street, and soon he was dancing with them. Group dancing and singing was a common occurrence among early pioneers. He had practically no money when he arrived and he had to endure many hardships. His description of his first day of manual labor, working in the fields, was brutal. He said that his fingers swelled, he had a headache, and he was trembling with fever. He described the sun beating down on him and flies buzzing all around and stinging. At the end of the day when he received his first day wages, he had regained courage, since he had earned the money by the sweat of his brow. However, the next morning he had malaria. As he continued to work, his hands became cracked and inflamed and touching a spade was

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[35] Rubinstein, *Return to Zion*, 38-39.

[36] Shmuel Dayan, *Pioneers in Israel*, ed. Yael Dayan, with an introduction by Yael Dayan, (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1961), ix.

incredibly painful, but the older workers encouraged him to continue. His malaria continued, and after three years the doctor told him he must leave Palestine or he will never get over it, but he did not leave. He loved seeing the growth of the citrus groves and the fruits of all his labor, accomplished by the sweat of his brow. He had grown fond of Palestine despite all the hardships he endured, and after another two years he was a skilled laborer.[37] He said, "To work and work hard became a matter of great national economic importance for us. It was a way of expressing our Zionism."[38] Dayan mentioned that one day he was out plowing and he burst into song. He said, "Here I was ploughing the soil of the land of Israel, what more could my soul want."[39] This sentiment was likely felt by many of the early pioneers.

The hardships faced by the pioneers in Palestine did not discourage many of them. They felt that despite the harsh and difficult conditions in Palestine, it was far better than living in the Diaspora under oppressive rule and pogroms. To many of the pioneers the joys of being in the land of Palestine and the pride in working to rebuild the land outweighed the difficult conditions. This can be seen in a reflection by Rachel, a pioneer, where she says,

> How did the day pass at Kinneret? The dawn would see us rise for work. There were fourteen of us. Blistered hands, bare feet, sunburnt and scratched, determined faces, and burning hearts. The very air rang with our song, our talk and our laughter. The hoes rose and fell ceaselessly. For a moment you stop and wipe the sweat from your brow with the edge of your "kaffiah", steal a loving glance at the sea. How glorious. Blue, a deep blue, a bringer of peace, soothing

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[37] Dayan, *Pioneers in Israel*, 5-13.

[38] Ibid. 13.

[39] Ibid. 16.

> the soul. A gull wheels above the water. Soon, the small steamboat which brings passengers from Tzemach to Tiberias, will puff its smoke skywards.[40]

In the same reflection, Rachel says, "The more spartan the meal, the more joyful our voices, we longed to sacrifice ourselves, and by so doing to sanctify the name of the homeland."[41] She goes on to say that after planting eucalyptus trees in the swamp, some of the pioneers would shake from fever, but they never stopped being thankful for their fate.[42] Another reflection by Sarah Malkin shows the willingness to endure the harsh conditions in Palestine. She says, "I slept with the mules' food, the laundry utensils, the snakes and rats. Here I set myself up. Often at night the rats would try to nibble at my toes. . . . But I didn't dream of demanding any better . . ."[43]

In addition to knowledge of the history and culture of the pioneers in general, since the pioneers in the opera, *The Pioneers*, come from Poland, it is important to have an understanding of the history of the pioneer movement in Poland specifically. 1915 through 1926 were the formative years of Zionism in Poland. In 1915 an official movement called *He-halutz* (The Pioneer) was founded by Zionists who came to America after the outbreak of the war. In 1916, a new pioneer movement, also called *He-halutz*, developed in Eastern Europe, which grew rapidly. These pioneers were very similar to the pioneers in other countries, and had much of the same ideology and views discussed earlier. Like the other pioneers, their goal was to establish innovative groups who would

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[40] Rachel, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Sarah Malkin, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

be willing to provide self-sacrificing labor in Palestine in order to enable extensive immigration to Palestine.[44] These young pioneers also wanted to develop radical world views and new identities, which would allow them to be both Jews and citizens of the modern world.[45] The pioneer movement, *He-halutz*, more definitely defined the principles of the previous aliyah movements.[46] An important part of the Polish pioneering movement was the use of agricultural training called *hakhshara* in order to prepare pioneers for life in Palestine. This preparatory training became the distinguishing feature of the movement and symbolized the great importance labor played in the ideology of the pioneers.[47] This idea of preparatory training was originated by Yosef Trumpeldor around 1908. Trumpeldor conceived of the pioneer movement as an army of anonymous servants of Zion, giving up all private interests, willing to do any work required of them, and entirely devoted to the challenge of building a Jewish Palestine. A popular picture of that time was of a pioneer wearing a blue shirt and khaki trousers working in an orange grove holding a spade or hoe. This picture appeared in the homes of many Jewish people during that period, portraying the vision of a new society and home in Palestine.[48]

Like all pioneers, the *He-halutz* movement felt that the only way to transform Palestine into the Land of Israel was to fertilize the land with the sweat of Jewish

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[44] Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 54.

[45] Ibid. 86.

[46] Rubinstein, *Return to Zion*, 75.

[47] Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland*, 54.

[48] Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, 327.

workers. Thus, physical labor was an important part of their ideology. The emphasis placed on labor by the pioneer movement in Poland between 1916 and 1917, should be viewed in relation to the economic collapse of Polish Jewry. This economic collapse sparked a more positive outlook on physical labor. The pioneering movement in Poland did not encourage and was not at all interested in work in Poland, but rather encouraged work in Palestine. They rejected entirely the Diaspora and all work in it.[49]

The formation of the first self-governing youth movement in the history of Zionism, *Hashomer Ha-tsair* (The Young Guard), had a great impact on the pioneer movement.[50] This youth group furthered pioneering ideology, striving to create a new type of Jewish youth "with strong muscles, a strong will, a healthy and normal intellect without sophistry and casuistry, a disciplined person, a Jew with all his heart, who possesses an idealistic world view with love for everything which is beautiful and sublime."[51] These youths were expected to be faithful to God, to the Jewish people, and to the land. This did not mean going to synagogue and praying every day for redemption, but rather that they were responsible to help the cause of their people and their land. To these youth, being a complete Jew did not involve formal religious practice, but rather devotion to the Jewish people, and knowledge of Hebrew and the Bible.[52]

Toward the end of 1918 the security of Jews in Poland was in great danger. From late 1918 through 1919 a wave of pogroms spread throughout Poland. Jews traveling in

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[49] Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland*, 54-55.

[50] Ibid. 81.

[51] Ibid. 83.

[52] Ibid. 81-83.

trains were attacked and beaten. In November 1918, a terrible pogrom occurred in which many Jews were killed and hundreds were wounded. This pogrom had a tremendous impact on Polish Jewry. The mood of the Jewish population in Poland during that time period can be seen from a letter written by A. Kaplan in April 1919.[53] He said, "Here we are awaiting the arrival of the Poles, and the Jews are very frightened, for the Poles boast that all the Jews will be killed."[54]

The influence of the pogroms and conflicts from 1918 through 1919 sparked an increase in hopes that an extensive emigration to Palestine would finally be possible. In May of 1919 many Jews began registering to immigrate to Palestine.[55] In 1919 the Third Aliyah began, with the *halutzim* being the leading group of the aliyah.[56] During the Third Aliyah, about thirty-five thousand immigrants came to Palestine, and almost nine-tenths of the immigrants were from Poland and Russia.[57] Sources show that the pioneers of this aliyah came from middle and lower-middle class families, as well as from wealthy families. Young men and women from wealthy families willingly gave up their riches and became peasants in Palestine, with some even hauling manure at the local pioneer farm. These pioneers were sons and daughters of merchants and storekeepers. They were former *kheyder* students who were no longer formally religious, and who reacted to the poor conditions in Poland by rebelling against the values and professions of their

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[53] Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland*, 88-90.

[54] Found in Ibid. 90.

[55] Ibid. 110.

[56] Rubinstein, *Return to Zion*, 76.

[57] Ibid. 85.

parents. These pioneers embraced a romantic vision of a new Jewish society to be created by the work of their own hands.[58] The pioneers of the Third Aliyah came in organized groups and were better prepared than the previous aliyah movements, as a result of the preparatory training they received in such things as agriculture and Hebrew. These pioneers had a great impact on the economic and social structure in Palestine, and transformed the character of the *yishuv*. Many future leaders came from this aliyah.[59]

In 1924, the Fourth Aliyah began, with about half of these immigrants coming from Poland.[60] Beginning in 1924, there was a significant increase in emigration to Palestine, which caused the pioneer movement to expand quickly.[61] The increase in emigration to Palestine was a result of two things. First, there was a significant economic depression in Poland, as well as economic restrictions placed on Polish Jews. This aliyah was named the Grabski Aliyah, because that was the name of Poland's finance minister who initiated these restrictions on Jews. The second reason for increased emigration was the tremendous limitations that had been placed on immigration to the United States. The Fourth Aliyah was different in social composition from the previous aliyah movements. There was a decline in pioneer immigrants, but was an increase in immigration of storekeepers and artisans from Poland. Most of these immigrants did not want to change their lifestyles and settled in the towns, especially in Tel Aviv. By the end of 1929, the

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[58] Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland*, 120.

[59] Rubinstein, *Return to Zion*, 74-76.

[60] Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, 314.

[61] Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland*, 125.

number of Jews in Palestine had reached 160,000, which was about triple the number at the beginning of the decade.[62]

The pioneers were essential to the development of the state of Israel. Their idealistic view of Palestine as the cure to the problems of Jewish life in the Diaspora, served as their motivation to immigrate to Palestine and build a new society. They wanted to create a new type of Jew who was strong and brave and willing to do whatever type of work was necessary in order to build this new society. These pioneers were willing to endure severe hardships in order to achieve their goals, and build up Palestine. Without their self-sacrifices and exceptional dedication to the land and the Jewish people, the state of Israel would probably not have come to fruition.

LIBRETTO OF *THE PIONEERS*

The libretto of the opera, *The Pioneers (Hechalutz)*, by Jacob Weinberg, gives an excellent representation of the culture and ideology of early Zionism and the pioneers of Palestine. Since Weinberg himself made aliyah in 1923 and was one of the pioneering composers of music in Palestine, through the opera he gives an inside look at life in Palestine and Eastern Europe at that time.

The dedication at the beginning of the opera score tells a great deal about the nature of the work. It says, "To the re-builders of Palestine, Chalutzim and Chalutzot.

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[62] Rubinstein, *Return to Zion*, 86.

Their work has inspired this work."[63] The opera is set in the year 1924, with Act I taking place in Poland, and Acts II and III in a *kvutzah* (workers' settlement) in Palestine.[64]

The opera begins in a *shtetl* in Poland. A number of young men are part of a Zionist club, and are passionate about leaving Poland and going to Palestine in order to help rebuild the land and create a new name for Jews. One of these young men, Zev, and a young woman, Leah, are in love. Despite being in love, Zev leaves Leah to immigrate to Palestine to follow his passion to live in Palestine and rebuild the land. Eventually, Leah comes to Palestine, along with Zev's parents, and joins Zev on the kibbutz where he is living, and they decide to get married. On the night before the wedding, Leah's wealthy parents come to Palestine to convince Leah to go back to Poland with them. Leah refuses and tells them that she is marrying Zev. Despite original objections to the marriage because Zev is from a poor family, they accept their daughter's decision to stay in Palestine and to marry Zev. The opera ends happily with everyone singing the "Hymn to the Holy Land."

What can be seen most clearly from the libretto is that it is an opera that promotes Zionist ideology, sending the message that if you come to Palestine everything will be great. Zev and Leah leave Poland, immigrate to Palestine, love their life there, get married, and are happy to be rid of their old meaningless lives in the Diaspora. There are many other aspects of Zionist ideology and culture addressed in the opera as well.

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[63] Jacob Weinberg, *The Pioneers [Hechalutz]*, with dedication (New York: J. Fischer & Bro., 1932).

[64] As mentioned in the previous section, 1924 was the beginning of the Fourth Aliyah, which saw a marked increase in immigration to Palestine, with about half of the immigrants coming from Poland.

One concept that is made evident in the opera is the contrast between the traditional Judaic practices of Jews in Poland, versus the primarily secular life of the pioneers in Palestine. After the instrumental introduction, the opera begins in Poland with the sound of someone chanting Torah off-stage in the synagogue, and worshippers standing in the street in front of the synagogue wearing *talitim*. In contrast to the religious atmosphere painted in the opening of Act I in Poland, Act II, which takes place in Palestine, begins with a Yemenite rhapsody, setting up a new type of atmosphere for the rest of the opera. This contrast between religious and secular is also seen in Act II, Scene 15, when Zev's parents come to Palestine. Zev's father, Abraham, asks if there is a temple to say *Maariv*, and the chorus of pioneers answers saying, "Here in the open under the heavens." Abraham goes on to ask if there is a *shochet*, and Nahum, one of the pioneers, sarcastically answers that Mord'cai Shoichet is their *shochet*. Then Rebecca, Zev's mother, inquires about the location of the *mikveh*, and the chorus of pioneers answers sarcastically again that it is far away near Tel Aviv, referring to Mikveh Israel, a colony near Tel Aviv. Thus, in Palestine there was no synagogue, no *shochet*, and no *mikveh*, and they had become devoid of ritual. The sarcastic attitude of the pioneers reflects their feelings about traditional Judaism and ritual in Palestine. Emphasis was not placed on traditional Judaism, but on rebuilding the homeland for Jews. There was no place for traditional Judaism in their new lifestyle in Palestine. What is interesting is that in Act III, Scene 23, there is a choral piece sung by the pioneers, called "Ora Dance." The piece repeats over and over that God will raise up Palestine. According to this piece, the pioneers still believed and had faith in God, despite their rejection of tradition and

ritual. Thus, they were not unreligious, but Judaism to them did not mean going to synagogue and praying every day.

The preparation, *hakhsharah*, discussed in the previous section, is also addressed in the opera. The pioneer movement established *hakhsharah* in Poland to prepare pioneers for life in Palestine. First, Zev and other pioneers in the opera were part of a Zionist club in Poland. One of the primary goals of these Zionist clubs was to encourage people to immigrate to Palestine. In Act I, Zev's father talks about how Zev spends day and night with his Zionist club, and that the club talks and writes in Hebrew and shouts, "Palestina!" In Act I, Scene 5, Zev talks about preparatory work to bring them to Palestine, such as extensive planting and intensive cultivation. This reflects the fact that pioneers needed to be prepared and qualified to work in Palestine, in order to be allowed to make aliyah.

The despising of life in the Diaspora, and the idea that the difficult conditions in Palestine are worth enduring and are far better than life in the Diaspora, in this case in Poland, is made very evident in the opera. In Act II, Scene 17, when Leah comes to Palestine, she says that she left Poland because in Poland life was empty and tedious, with nothing but idleness and lying. Later in Act III, Scene 21, Leah tells her parents that she left Poland because she was running away from that lazy, tiresome life. In the Finale of Act I, Zev says, "'Tis better far to dig a ditch, and work our homeland roads. Wherever our good workers go, the sun may burn like fire! 'Tis better far than dancing here 'mid constant pogroms dire!" Thus to Zev, even harsh conditions in Palestine, like the burning sun, is better than life in Poland. In that same scene, the chorus of pioneers exclaims that although they don't have any money, "the Jew works hard and does not

care." Another great example of the idea that the hardships in Palestine are better than life in the Diaspora is in Act II, Scene 13 when tourists come to visit the kibbutz. One of the tourists says, "But the life you lead here is surely not too comfortable!" Zev replies, "Yet here we can breathe more freely than you in your great skyscrapers!" Despite the discomfort and peasant-like living in Palestine, he feels that life is more relaxed and free than living in luxury in the Diaspora. In that same scene, Nahum says that they have had to deal with malaria and fever, but that does not matter much. Bronstein, who is not a pioneer, in Act III, Scene 21, describes the difficult conditions in Palestine further. He says that in Palestine there are no well-kept streets, nothing but rocks, and people live in miserable tents, and for this Leah left a luxurious house in Poland. In Act III, Scene 21, after Leah's mother is distraught that her daughter has become a peasant, Leah says to her parents, "For me this is not hard! Never before have I been as happy as I am here!" In that same scene Leah says that in Palestine she can live a glorious life, full and free. Thus, it is made clear in the opera that while the conditions in Palestine may be harsh, it is far better and happier than living in the Diaspora.

The joy felt by the pioneers living in Palestine is illustrated by the fact that at the beginning of the second act, which is the first glimpse at life in Palestine, workers are returning from work singing, an activity that was common on worker settlements during that time. In Act II, Scene 14, there is a Yemenite song sung by Zev, which talks about the beauty of nights in Palestine. The joy felt about being in Palestine is also illustrated by the "Ora Dance" in Act III, Scene 23, in which the chorus dances the hora, a common communal dance that took place on kibbutzim and *kvutzot* which helped unite everyone together.

The importance of labor and rebuilding the land through the sweat of their brows and establishing a new name for Jews are major themes of the opera. It is first seen most strongly in Act I, Scene 9. In that scene the chorus sings, "Goodbye, old folks, the children sing in ghettos their last song to you! Enough of scorn! They want to bring new glory to the name of Jew! And in our new homeland with blood and sweat we'll labor there!" Earlier in that scene, as mentioned earlier, Zev talks about digging ditches and working on the roads in Palestine. The importance of taking part in the rebuilding of Palestine is also seen in Act II, Scene 13. The tourists who came to visit Palestine offer to supply the pioneers with handkerchiefs and tangle foot, but they refuse to accept their help because they are proud of the peasant-like life they live. One of the tourists asks them, "You don't need anything, but what about the country?" Nahum responds, "Not charity, but love! That's all the country needs!" Deborah, one of the other pioneers, continues, "Not patrons, but partners! That's all the country needs!" Then Zev says, "Not words, but deeds." The pioneers clearly do not want to accept help from others, but rather want people to join them in re-building Palestine. In Act III, Scene 20, on the night before Leah and Zev's wedding, Leah is still working late. The other pioneers tell her that it is time to stop working and to come and celebrate, but she insists on continuing to work longer to feed the cattle water. Thus, even celebrating her wedding is secondary to the importance of work. The transformation of these pioneers into new Jews upon arriving in Palestine can be seen in Act II, Scene 15. In this scene Leah comes to Palestine and she says that she is no longer Leah Stern from Poland, but she has been transformed into a new woman, Leah Kochav.

The goal of the pioneers of building a united people and land in Palestine is also reflected in the opera. In Act III, Scene 22, the chorus of pioneers sing, "We shall build a loyal people. Come all, come hither, all! We shall build a united people. We shall build a united land." The group dancing and singing of the pioneers which takes place throughout the second and third acts furthers the idea of a united people.

Another concept that is made evident in the opera is the conflict between wealthy parents in the Diaspora and their children in Palestine, living the lives of peasants. This was a legitimate occurrence at that time. Many of the pioneers were from wealthy families, who gave up their plush way of life in the Diaspora to live as peasants in Palestine in order to help rebuild the land. The parents of these pioneers could not understand and often objected to the way of life of their children and their decision to live in Palestine with such poor conditions. This is seen clearly in Act III, Scene 21 when Leah's wealthy parents come to Palestine in order to convince Leah to leave Palestine and return to Poland. Upon seeing Leah, Hannah, Leah's mother, says to Leah's father, Eliezer, "Our only daughter has become a worker! My life is bitter!" They cannot understand why Leah is choosing to live that kind of lifestyle.

The last aspect of the ideology of the pioneers that is demonstrated in the opera is self-sacrifice. As discussed earlier, this was an enormous part of the ideology of pioneers. What was important to the individual did not matter, what was important was what the Jewish people and the land of Palestine needed. In addition to Leah's self-sacrifice to give up her lavish lifestyle in Poland to come to Palestine, Zev also illustrates self-sacrifice. He leaves Poland and immigrates to Palestine, despite being in love with Leah, who at first remains in Poland. In Act II, Scene 17, Zev mentions to Leah that

during the two years he spent apart from her he thought about her all the time. Despite missing Leah and thinking about her so much, he remained in Palestine to devote himself to rebuild Palestine and do what he and the other pioneers felt was essential for the Jewish people. The character of Chaim, the matchmaker, makes the selflessness and self-sacrifice of the pioneers stand out even more. Chaim is the buffo, comedic role in the opera. He is a selfish, greedy, sleazy character, who is out to make money anyway he can. For example in his aria in Act I, Scene 4, Chaim talks about being a matchmaker, and states that being a matchmaker is all about lying. He says, "Lying rules in this world!" Clearly throughout the opera he is looking out for himself. Aside from being the comic character of the opera, it seems that his character provides another purpose as well. Chaim's selfishness stands out against the selflessness of the pioneers in the opera, who are willing to make many sacrifices to rebuild Palestine. Thus, through the character of Chaim, the pioneers look even better and more devoted to Palestine.

The libretto of *The Pioneers* gives an in-depth look into the culture and ideology of the early pioneers of Palestine. It is an idealistic opera that promotes Zionist ideology, sending the message that if you come to Palestine everything will be great. The opera paints the Diaspora in a very negative light, while portraying Palestine as the answer to all Jewish problems, and shows the importance of labor and rebuilding the land to the pioneers of Palestine. It depicts the self-sacrifice and selflessness of the pioneers and accentuates the desire to create a new name for Jews.

MUSIC OF *THE PIONEERS*

The ideas and messages expressed in the libretto of the opera are supported and strengthened by the music. Jacob Weinberg does an excellent job of bringing out the text and settings of the opera through the music. Weinberg very effectively uses two different styles to represent the two different environments in which the opera takes place. In Act I, which takes place in Poland, the music is composed in the style of Eastern European music, and in Acts II and III, which take place in Palestine, the music is in a romantic Eastern style influenced by the sounds of the East. This is especially interesting because of the year that the opera was written. Weinberg was writing music in Palestine in the 1920s before a clear ideology was established rejecting the music of Eastern Europe and the use of Yiddish, which did not come about until the 1930s.[65] Weinberg's use of music in the style of Eastern Europe to represent life in the Diaspora, painting the Diaspora in a negative light, and using a different, more romantic Eastern style with the use of Oriental melodies for the music in Palestine, was defining what he believed the music of Palestine should sound like. In this regard, Weinberg paved the way for the group of immigrant composers who followed him, such as Alexander Boskovitch, Paul Ben-Haim, and Marc Lavry, the composer of the opera, *Dan Hashomer*, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

In the music representing Eastern Europe, Weinberg makes use of many of the aspects of Eastern European music which were rejected by many of the composers in Israel, as discussed in chapter two. This music not only paints the environment of Poland during that time, but it also is used in such a way that it makes fun of and ridicules life in

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[65] Jehoash Hirshberg, email correspondence, 26 November 2006.

the Diaspora. Eastern European music is represented in the opera through the use of the augmented second interval, a Yiddish folk song, a Chassidic folk song, and cantillation.

Throughout the first act there are many instances of the augmented second interval. In fact at times it is exploited beyond the norm in order to strongly emphasize the atmosphere of the Diaspora, and paint the Diaspora in a negative light, since as mentioned in chapter two, the augmented second was associated with weeping and weakness. It is also important to note that whenever there is a passage in *Ahavah Rabbah*, he harmonizes it in *Ahavah Rabbah*. The introduction to the first act makes use of the augmented second, setting the stage for the atmosphere of the first act of the opera in Poland (Ex. 1). Even within the first act in Poland, the augmented second is generally not used in the music of the pioneers, including Zev, except for rare cases for textual purposes. It is used in some of the music of Chaim, the matchmaker, who as mentioned earlier is a sleazy, selfish character, and Bronstein, who frowns upon the ideology and zeal of the pioneers. Chaim's aria is a great example of how Weinberg uses the augmented second and Yiddish folk song in a way that makes fun of the Diaspora. His aria uses part of the melody of a popular Yiddish folk song, "*A Dudele*," which is written in *Ahavah Rabbah*, but whereas the Yiddish text is of a religious nature, the aria is about the selfishness of Chaim. He says that the matchmaker business is all about lying, but that is alright because the whole world lies. The fact that Weinberg took part of a popular Yiddish folk song in *Ahavah Rabbah*, which is endemic to the Diaspora, and changed the text to be about lying and selfishness, sends a very negative message about the Diaspora, especially juxtaposed against the selflessness of the pioneers (Ex. 2a/b).

The augmented second is also used in Act I in some of the music of Leah, since she did not become a true pioneer until the second act in Palestine. In fact her aria from The Song of Songs, in Act I, which happens to be the most known part of the opera, begins in d *Ahavah Rabbah*, and is filled with augmented seconds. After a section in Bb major, the piece moves back to d *Ahavah Rabbah* on the phrase "because I languish, I languish with love" (Ex. 3). This use of the augmented second in relation to lamenting is a recurring pattern in the opera, which can also be found in Leah's arietta in Act II in which she laments not knowing whether Zev loves her. Interestingly, Weinberg does not completely abandon the augmented second in the second and third acts in Palestine, but he uses it for specific reasons. For example in Act III, Scene 22, the chorus sings a phrase which uses the augmented second, for the text, "Come, all, come hither, all!" Since the augmented second was associated with the Diaspora, by using the augmented second for this phrase, they are summoning people through the musical language Jews in the Diaspora relate to (Ex. 4).

Chassidic folk songs were also associated with life in the Diaspora. Therefore, Weinberg made a point of including a Chassidic folk song in Act I, Scene 7, where there is a full quote of a Chassidic Sabbath Song (Ex. 5). This song is a Chassidic *nigun*, without words, except for the phrase, "Good Sabbath." Typical of Chassidic songs, it is a very accessible, inspiring melody. However, Weinberg expands upon the melody by setting parts of it for choir. Interestingly, whereas Chassidic songs were exclusively for men, Weinberg sets this Chassidic song for soloist and mixed choir.

Another characteristic of the music in Poland is that much of it is based on the ancient scales of the traditional cantillation of the Torah. Weinberg also used the melody

of the traditional call to the Torah for an aliyah in the introduction, freely treated (Ex. 6a/b). Weinberg said, "It is being used symbolically as a call to the Jewish people to accomplish its duty to the Holy Land."[66]

In the finale of the first act, we begin to see a change in the character of the music, with the singing of the melody of the refrain of *Hatikvah*, as the pioneers sing about going to Palestine. In 1907, even before Israel became a state, *Hatikvah* had become the national anthem of Zionism. The text was written by a poet, Naphtali Herz Imber, in late 1877 or early 1878, and the poem was first sung with the melody during the celebration of the first wine season at one of the earliest modern pioneer settlements in Palestine, Rishon-le-Zion. *Hatikvah* was very popular amongst the pioneers, and it provided appropriate expression to the aspirations of Jews in the Diaspora for the modern return to Zion.[67] Thus, it is very appropriate that Weinberg uses it in the opera as the pioneers are preparing to go to Palestine. The melody of *Hatikvah* is treated very interestingly, in that it begins in natural minor with a full statement of the refrain in one solo voice, but when the chorus enters, Weinberg develops certain motives of the melody, and even states one of the motives with the use of augmented seconds (Ex. 7). The most logical reason for this is that the pioneers are still in Poland, and have not yet arrived in Palestine, so they have not fully let go of the culture of the Diaspora.

The music of the second and third acts is written in a different style and makes use of many of the techniques discussed in chapter two, which was used frequently in early Israeli art music. According to Weinberg, the music of Palestine in the opera is of

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[66] "A New Hebrew Opera," *New York Times*, 11 November 1934.

[67] Irene Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music: It's History, Traditions, and Culture* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 229.

secular character and Semitic, which he defines as Hebraic-Arabian in modes and rhythms.[68] An example of this is "The Arabian Song," which occurs in the second act. This piece uses the text of verse ninety-seven of the Koran, and in the music Weinberg uses a few Semitic folk themes of Oriental and Occidental origin freely treated. Weinberg also points out in the composer's remarks of the piano-vocal score that the passages marked "recitativo" can be performed in a declamatory manner in order to reflect the highly inflected character of Semitic speech.[69] The music of Palestine tries to blend the musical styles of the East and West, using Western techniques with Eastern harmony and modes. In this music, Weinberg makes use of Yemenite music, the hora, and the natural minor and Dorian scales, which as discussed in chapter two were an important part of early Israeli musical style.

The combination of East and West can be seen most clearly in the first scene of the second act, #11, "*Echad Mi Yodea*" (full piece provided in Example 8 with diagram), following an orchestral Yemenite Rhapsody, which opens the act. This scene is a choral piece of the text, "*Echad Mi Yodea*," sung by the workers in Palestine, and contained in this piece is the main motive of the opera (Ex. 8, m.1-4). Weinberg composed the piece in the form of a fugue, which is clearly a Western technique. However, he uses the natural minor scale without the leading tone and the Dorian scale, which, as mentioned in chapter two, go against Western standards and are indicators of early Israeli musical style. Thus, Weinberg juxtaposes in this piece Western and Eastern techniques.

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[68] "A New Hebrew Opera."

[69] Jacob Weinberg, *The Pioneers [Hechalutz]*, with composers remarks by Jacob Weinberg (New York: J. Fischer & Bro., 1932).

The first exposition of "*Echad Mi Yodea*" begins in e natural minor and is made up of two statements of the subject and two real answers. A real answer means that it is an exact replication of the subject, but on a different scale degree, with no altered notes. The real answers occur on the fifth scale degree, which is very typical of fugues. By using a real answer at the fifth scale degree it actually gives the feeling of being in Dorian, which includes a raised sixth scale degree (Ex. 8, m.7-13). It is also relevant to note that in Western fugal practice when the answer is on the fifth scale degree, it is very common that the seventh scale degree of the subject be answered with the third scale degree rather than the fourth.[70] However, in this piece the seventh scale degree is answered with the fourth (Ex. 8, m.8). The likely reason for this is that since the piece is in natural minor with no leading tone, the seventh scale degree has a different role, and thus it is not necessary to alter the answer. After each statement of the subject or answer, that part continues with counterpoint above or below the next statement of the theme (Ex. 8, m.7-25). Following the first exposition, there is a unison statement of the subject in e natural minor (Ex. 8, m.26-31), which is then followed by a full statement of the first part of the subject in the soprano, but in the key of a natural minor (Ex. 8, m.33-36). While the soprano is singing the first part of the subject, the tenor and bass sing just part of the first part of the subject (Ex. 8, m.34-35). Interestingly, the soprano then states twice part of the first part of the subject but with the use of the augmented second (Ex. 8, m.37-40). And finally in the coda, all four voices sing together in chordal fashion (Ex. 8, m.41-47). The use of open fifth harmonies, characteristic of early Israeli music, is also found in this piece (Ex. 8, m.26-27).

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[70] Douglas Greene, *Form in Tonal Music: An Introduction to Analysis*, 2nd ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), 263.

The use of Yemenite music can be found in the orchestral introduction to the second act, entitled *Yemenite Rhapsody*, and in the *Yemenite Song*, #14, sung by Zev (Ex. 9). Weinberg said of the *Yemenite Song*, "Mr. Idelsohn and Mr. Saminsky consider it a tune of Georgian Jews. It is possible. Yet I heard it from the Yemenites in the village of Silwan."[71] Weinberg had gone to Silwan in order to select the proper tune for the opera through direct contact with the community.[72] Once again, the *Yemenite Song* is in minor without the leading tone, and Weinberg uses open fifths throughout the piece (Ex. 9, m.1-4). In this piece Weinberg takes a Yemenite song and harmonizes it in an Israeli style.

The hora, which, as mentioned in chapter two, is such an enormous part of Israeli culture, is also used in the opera in Act III, Scene 23, the *"Ora," Dance* (*'Eil ivne hagalil'*) (Ex. 10). This is an already existing popular hora dance, and documentation of the Second Aliyah period says that night after night people would gather together and sing, and would often sing this piece.[73] This hora was published several times in folksong collections in two versions, or as two related tunes. One of the tunes used the augmented second frequently, while the other was in the Dorian mode.[74] Not surprisingly, Weinberg uses the tune in the Dorian mode. The piece fits many of the characteristics of a hora. It is in common time and contains short symmetrical phrases of two bars each, short melodic motives in a small range of either a fourth or a third, and no leading tone (Ex. 10, m.7-12). It also contains simple diatonic harmonies with open fifths

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[71] Found in Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 186.

[72] Ibid. 186.

[73] Ibid. 24.

[74] Ibid. 247.

instead of triads (Ex. 10, m.19-22), and accents on the downbeat of each measure, which allow for feet stamping, a common feature of the hora dance.

In addition to Weinberg differentiating between the music of the Diaspora and the music of Palestine, he was also influenced by the operas of Rimsky-Korsakov, especially *The Golden Cockerel*. Since Weinberg was a member of the Society for Jewish Folk Music, which was heavily influenced by The Mighty Five, including Rimsky-Korsakov,[75] Weinberg was very influenced by his music. Leah's aria from Act I was modeled after a famous soprano coloratura aria from *The Golden Cockerel*.[76] The aria in *The Golden Cockerel* is called "All Seeing Sun, you rise in glory," and the text is exotic love poetry. In the aria, the Queen of Shemakha describes the scenery of Russia saying, "All seeing Sun, you rise in glory from far-off lands beyond the dawn. You see the realm of song and story, the land of dreams where I was born. Do you see gardens bright and sunny, and lilies trembling on the breeze? And do the honeybees sip honey from fragrant flowers on leafy trees?" In Leah's aria in *The Pioneers*, Weinberg uses the text from The Song of Songs, "I am the rose of Sharon," which is also exotic love poetry, but paints the scenery of Palestine instead of Russia. Since Weinberg was born in Russia that might have been the land of dreams when he was born, but at that point it was the land of Palestine.

In opera, the music is as important as the libretto, and is essential to bringing the libretto to life. The music of an opera needs to illustrate the points of the libretto and help tell the story. In *The Pioneers*, Jacob Weinberg very effectively supports the themes

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[75] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 78-81.

[76] Ibid. 257.

of the libretto through the music. Just like the libretto, the music of the opera helps paint a picture of life during the time of the pioneers of Israel. Through studying the libretto and music of this opera, one is able to see the role Israeli Opera has played in reflecting Israeli society and history. Thus, *The Pioneers* acts as a microcosm of the life and culture of Palestine during the time of the pioneers of Palestine.

CHAPTER 4

DAN HASHOMER – ISRAELI OPERA BY MARC LAVRY, LIBRETTO BY MAX BROD

CREATION OF *DAN HASHOMER*

The opera, *Dan Hashomer*, is another great example of the use of opera to illustrate early Israeli history, culture, and ideology. This opera has many similarities to *The Pioneers*, in that both operas address themes that reflect the period of the Yishuv, both portray the importance of working the land for the pioneers and both distinguish between the music of the Diaspora and the music of Palestine. However, whereas Weinberg wrote *The Pioneers* in 1924, before there was a clear ideology rejecting the music of Eastern Europe in Palestine, Marc Lavry composed the music of *Dan Hashomer* in the early 1940s when this ideology was in full force, and when the idea of creating a "Mediterranean style," unique to Palestine, permeated much of Israeli art music. Therefore, Lavry took what Weinberg accomplished in *The Pioneers* and expanded upon it at a more advanced level.

Dan Hashomer was the first original Israeli opera to be performed in Israel. The libretto of the opera was written by Max Brod and the music was composed by Marc Lavry. The opera was based on a play by Shin Shalom called *Yiriyot el Hakibbutz* (*Shots to the Kibbutz*), but the opera is different from the original play, as only a small part of the libretto text appears verbatim in the play. In addition, many scenes were written differently than the play, expanded, dropped or shortened, and there were fundamental changes in the characters. Originally the character of Dan was called Gad, but during the rehearsals of the opera, his name was changed to Dan, because for the Russian singers in

the opera, Gad was associated with a derogatory word in Russian.[1] In creating the opera, Lavry and Brod had to consider the fear of British censorship. This forced Brod to blur the identity of the Arab gangs who attack the kibbutz in the opera. Initially they were called robbers and at the last minute their identity was changed to enemies.[2]

The decision to write the opera was made in the end of November 1941, and on February 17, 1945, *Dan Hashomer* opened in the Mugrabi Theatre in Tel Aviv,[3] performed by the Palestine Folk Opera.[4] The opera was performed throughout the entire season and it opened the following season. After thirty-three performances in large cities and smaller communities in Israel, the opera closed, and has never been performed in its entirety since. However, parts of the opera were recorded in 1956 with Lavry as the conductor, and parts have been broadcast on the radio in Israel. The orchestral and piano-vocal scores of the opera were never published, and the great haste at which the orchestral score was prepared is obvious in Acts II and III, where in many places the text is not even copied into the orchestral score from the piano-vocal score. In fact, in Act I, the character of Dan is still labeled as Gad in the score. During the rehearsals there were many changes and cuts made in the score, which were noted by crossing out entire pages in red pencil, which shows that Lavry was severely critical of his compositions. This is the way the manuscript of the score still looks today. Some of the omissions in the opera

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[1] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard by Marc Lavry," *Tatzlil*, 17: (1977), 123-124.

[2] Ibid. 126.

[3] Ibid. 124.

[4] Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 120.

seem to have been a result of time pressure rather than musical motivation, and often take away from the plot of the opera, causing abrupt character changes. In the recording of the opera conducted by Lavry himself, there were a number of changes made to the music. Due to all the changes made throughout the rehearsal process and the recording of the opera, it is apparent that the current score of the opera is not the final version of Lavry's intent. Therefore, in order to understand the score there needs to be a critical process of preparation and editing, so as to get the most accurate version of the score with all of the changes and cuts.[5]

The performances of *Dan Hashomer* stirred up a great deal of responses among the Jews in Israel. On October 22, 1945, the opera was given a special prize by the organization, *Keren Kayemet LeYisrael*, not only because it was the first original Israeli opera produced in Israel, but because of the idea of the importance of working the land expressed in the opera.[6]

In a critical article by Gershon Svat, the great difficulty of creating an original national opera in the 1940s in Israel is revealed. He said that any play that has national folk characteristics was looked at suspiciously. He also stated that new plays at that time in Israel usually portrayed an exaggerated amount of national ideology mixed with a little art, a little good taste and a little talent, and that one would have suspected that this would be even more the case with an Israeli opera. Svat goes on to say that on the evening before the performance of *Dan Hashomer* he ran into two music lovers who bemoaned the production of the opera saying, "That's all we need. Is not the national cliché that is

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[5] Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard," 123-128.

[6] Ibid. 128-130.

widespread in the theatre, in art, in literature, and in Israeli song enough? Do we also need to bring it into the opera?"[7] Svat then writes, "Marc Lavry is not Golinka, but what he created with *Dan Hashomer* is commendable, and I believe that even those two music lovers from Jerusalem that I mentioned, if they could get over their prejudice and go and see *Dan Hashomer*, would leave pleasantly disappointed."[8] They would be disappointed because they would realize that they were wrong about what they had anticipated with the opera. S'vat also argues against the criticism of foreign influences on the opera. He says that while it is true that there are echoes of Puccini and Verdi in the opera, all operas are influenced by other operas. He continues saying that there is nothing wrong with that, especially at the beginning of Israeli opera, and that Lavry created honest and good music in *Dan Hashomer*.[9]

Since, as mentioned in the previous chapter, *The Pioneers* was never performed in Israel, it can not be seen as a precedent to opera in Israel. *Dan Hashomer*, however, provided a prototype for Israeli opera, and provided a foundation for Israeli opera upon which future composers could build. This was partly because of the prominent role that Marc Lavry's music played in Palestine and later in Israel.

MARC LAVRY

Marc Lavry, the composer of *Dan Hashomer,* was a very influential and important composer in Israeli history. He, like Weinberg, was one of the pioneering

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[7] Found in Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard," 130.

[8] Found in Ibid. 130.

[9] Ibid. 130-131.

composers who immigrated to Palestine and tried to create a genuine Israeli musical style. His music was very much influenced by the landscape and surroundings he encountered in Palestine.

Lavry was born in Riga, Lithuania in 1903, but received his entire musical training in Germany. After settling in Berlin for a period of time, the Nazi rise to power caused him to return to Riga, which also became the victim of anti-Semitism and a Fascist coup. As a result, Lavry decided to immigrate to Palestine. He was not a Zionist, and he considered immigrating to the United States or Russia instead.[10] However, Lavry wrote that he felt that his only choice as a Jew was to go to Palestine. He made aliyah in 1935, settling in Tel Aviv, and he fell in love with the country, which became a source of inspiration to him and also his spiritual homeland. He felt like he was a part of Israel and, like the other pioneers, was eager to do whatever was needed, including joining the *Haganah*. Thus, Lavry himself was dedicated to the collective goals of the society in Palestine, much of which is displayed in the opera. The unique land and its diverse people inspired Lavry to create music influenced by the sounds around him. He combined his strong European training with the new sounds to create an appealing Israeli musical style. It did not take him long to feel completely comfortable calling himself an Israeli composer rather than a European composer. As years past, the daily life of the pioneers, the struggles with the Arabs and British, and the dream of a Jewish state coming to pass, caused him to dedicate his life to Israeli issues and to incorporate them into his music. It is for this reason that Lavry was called "one of the founders of the

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[10] Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 160.

national school of modern Israeli music."[11] While Jacob Weinberg was composing in Palestine before a clear ideology had been established by Israeli composers in regards to the rejection of the music of Eastern Europe, Lavry was composing in Palestine at the time when this ideology was established, and at the time when the so-called Mediterranean style was in full force.

Lavry saw himself as a *sheliach tzibbur*, and a servant of the audience, and felt that it was an honor to fulfill the needs of the Jewish *Yishuv*.[12] He was very popular not only in Israel, but abroad, because of his expertise in writing in a folk style, with his melodies being generally simple, melodic, and very accessible.[13] As opposed to the expressionist music of Germany and France, Lavry's music, influenced by the Russian nationalistic point of view, was meant to be an expression of the society in which he lived.[14] Thus, he felt that his music would represent the collective voice of Israel, as opposed to just his own. Therefore, Lavry's views on his music directly parallels the ideas of collective identity expressed in the opera. He said that he never tried to write in an Israeli style, or force upon himself any new views of music upon arriving in Palestine.[15] However, he said,

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[11] Fredda Rakusin Mendelson, "Marc Lavry: a prominent figure in the birth of Israeli music" (MSM thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, 1996), 4-8.

[12] Marc Lavry, "A Composer's Creed," *Tatzlil*, 17: (1977), 122.

[13] Mendelson, "Marc Lavry," 13.

[14] Eliyahu Schleifer, Interview by author, May, 2006.

[15] Lavry, "Composer's Creed," 122.

> As soon as I absorbed the influence of the country, when I felt myself part of it, and as soon as I acquired the language, I started to write naturally in the same style that I have maintained to the present day. I write for the audience and I wish to be understood by the audience. I want my work to evoke in the listeners the same emotions and ideas that provided me with the inspiration for my works. For this reason, I choose a simple and easily understood musical language . . . I do not recognize music devoid of melody, even though a melody may be very modern.[16]

Irene Heskes has divided the origins of Israeli music into three categories: Eastern European, Central European, and Mediterranean. Marc Lavry fits into all three of these categories. He was born in Eastern Europe and was influenced by the sounds of his youth, such as Yiddish, Hasidic and liturgical music. Much of his music features Eastern European melodies and the sounds of Jewish cantillation. Lavry received his training in Central Europe, studying with some of the great teachers there, and was very much influenced by the European national opera style, especially that of Giacomo Puccini. Lastly, in Palestine, he was influenced by the Mediterranean music and sounds there, such as Yemenite and Arabic tunes, Jewish folk songs and dances, and especially the Hora. He combined all these Mediterranean sounds in his music. Lavry is especially known for his development of the Israeli Hora, which he incorporated into many of his compositions. Through him the Hora became a national symbol and became associated with Israeli music. Lavry successfully blended the musical styles he had acquired and absorbed in Europe with the oriental sounds of Palestine. Cantor Eliyahu Schleifer thinks that he was also influenced by contemporary American composers like Aaron Copland

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[16] Found in Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: Ideological Pressures in the Yishuv Period and their Offshoots in Israeli Art Music during the Recent Two Decades," *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, 4: Music of Israel (2004): 5.

and Roy Harris. Their simple musical style and description of American life parallels Lavry's style and description of life in Palestine.[17]

Lavry's simple, accessible approach to composition and his ability to write music that spoke to the people of the *Yishuv* combined with his ability to blend the musical styles of Europe which he had acquired there with the new Oriental sounds of Palestine made him a very popular Israeli composer, who left a lasting impression on the music of Israel.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *DAN HASHOMER*

The Israeli opera, *Dan Hashomer*, premiered in 1945, provides an in-depth look into life on a kibbutz during the formative years of Zionism and the state. Particularly, it shows the struggle people had to deal with between individual needs and desires and the collective needs and goals of the kibbutz, which is manifested in the opera in the need for personal self-sacrifice, as it relates to social aspects, as well as the role of the *shomer* (guard), who is willing to sacrifice himself for the good of the kibbutz. In order to demonstrate the conflict between individual needs and the collective goals of the kibbutz, it is first necessary to look at the historical background and ideology upon which the opera is based.

The individual and the community of kibbutzim during the early pioneering years were so intertwined that it was impossible to separate the identity of the individual from the identity of the group. Kibbutz life was dependent on the unity of everyone and everything on the kibbutz. In a reflection by Yosef L., apparently a kibbutz member of

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[17] Mendelson, "Marc Lavry," 17-22.

the Second Aliyah, he says, "There was a vision of a kind of communal river into which all the individual streams poured forth, creating the mighty current of love and brotherhood."[18] Each person was dependent on his neighbor, which was good in many ways, but also led to various problems. Ideological collectivism was a major part of kibbutz life. This meant that individuals needed to identify with the founding principles of the kibbutz. In order to make decisions, individuals needed to respect different opinions than their own and a democratic process was essential to the success of the kibbutz. Without this ideological collectivism the community would collapse. Collectivism went far beyond just ideology; it enveloped everything about kibbutz life. This collectivism included cultural, educational, social, work, and economic areas, and no one was allowed to have private property.[19] In many kibbutzim, even the children were considered as belonging to the entire kibbutz, rather than members of the individual families. The children lived collectively in special communal homes.[20]

On these kibbutzim, the interests of the individual definitely took back burner to the needs of the group. If there was a conflict between individual and group needs, the individual was expected to give up his needs for the good of the group. This came into play often in regards to vocational preferences. Although people's desired vocations were usually considered, if the kibbutz needed them to do different work, they were expected to comply with the needs of the community. In addition, an individual was

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[18] Yosef L., found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[19] Dan Leon, *The Kibbutz: A New Way of Life*, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1969), 30-33.

[20] Eliyahu Schleifer, Communications with author, 30 May, 2006.

allowed to have his own political views, but if a formal decision was made, he needed to support it, regardless of whether it conflicted with his views. Every member of the kibbutz was responsible for the welfare of every other member and of the community as a whole. Another important element of kibbutz life at that time was that group living and group experiences were far more important than individual living and experiences. The reason for this is that the kibbutz sought to create a society which interacts and has intimacy and concern for each other. This caused a problem for those individuals who liked to have privacy, as they were often frowned upon. Any person who liked his privacy more than being with the community was seen as a threat to the community, as it prevented the group from becoming a closed society. This idea of privacy being frowned upon was an extreme sequel to ideas that were common in the *shtetl* where the immigrants came from. They felt that one of the worst things that could be said about a person is "he keeps to himself" or "he hides it from others". Withdrawal from the community was seen as an attack, and people felt that they should be able to enter a person's living space whenever they want.[21]

One group who was greatly impacted by the collective ideology of the kibbutz was the youth, who were preparing to join the Zionist youth movement, during their adolescent years. The youth of the kibbutzim were living in an environment of intense sharing and socialization. They were instilled with a group identity, while they were going through their preparatory training for the youth movement. Passing from adolescence to adulthood, while living and working together, created a feeling of

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[21] Melford E. Spiro, *Kibbutz: Venture in Utopia*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 29-33.

solidarity, which helped make the youth movement a close community, and those bonds usually remained strong throughout their lives.[22]

A big issue that caused problems for many people was that many early kibbutzim viewed the family as a threat to the solidarity of the kibbutz. Therefore, every effort was made to discourage building a family. Couples were not allowed to have any personal relations outside of the privacy of their rooms. Public displays of affection were greatly frowned upon. The words, husband and wife, were rejected as belonging to the society which people had left behind in the Diaspora.[23] This issue is made very clear in several reflections by various people from kibbutzim during that time period. One of these reflections from Kibbutz Afikim talks about an instance where two people on the kibbutz got married through a small ceremony at the Rabbinate, and the kibbutz got very angry at them. It says, "The kibbutz condemned the two *chaverim*, and criticized them for disturbing the ethical basis of the workers' movements and of the kibbutz."[24] Another reflection mentions an instance when a group of people on the kibbutz arranged the children's house, which was being built, like the room of a bourgeois family. This act indicated to them how those people felt about families on the kibbutz, who live a separate life and do not participate in the communal life of the kibbutz. A reflection from Kibbutz Geva says that it was customary for couples not to eat together in public. It says, "We thought that we were building a new life together, a new way of life. . . . we thought we were breaking new ground – and that there was no need to get married at all! We were

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[22] Stanley Maron, *Kibbutz in a Market Society*, (Israel: Yad Tabenkin, 1993), 19.

[23] Ibid. 22.

[24] Kibbutz Afikim, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

opposed to the whole [family] framework – we wanted to build a completely new life, without private interests."[25] This issue of marriage and family is addressed further by Nachman Raz. He says, "Couples would not go arm in arm. The first time we kids saw a couple hugging in public, to us it seemed the height of immorality. There was a kind of puritanism on the whole question of outwardly displaying affection – out of the desire not to emphasize the family or make it conspicuous in comparison to the *chevra* [society]."[26] He goes on to say that when his older brother was born and his mother was ill in the hospital, his father only visited her for a few hours during the weekend, because abstaining from work just to satisfy selfish desires was considered sinful. He explains, "It was unthinkable that family life would take precedence over work and the needs of the community."[27] The conflict of having children is addressed by Z. Dor-Sinai from Kibbutz Tel Yosef. He says that every couple had to take into their tent one single person. In this reflection, he talks about his feelings about his wife being pregnant. He says that they kept his wife's pregnancy a secret, because they did not know how the *chevra* [group] would react. It was against the norms of the time, because their hard lifestyle and work did not leave room for pregnant women, nor was there space for babies. In response to his wife's pregnancy, he says, "I felt uncomfortable with respect to

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[25] Kibbutz Geva, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[26] Nachman Raz, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[27] Nachman Raz, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections.

the *chevra* and regarded myself as a kind of traitor to the *chevra*. Was it possible? A dedicated *chalutz* [pioneer] like myself causes the *chevra* additional headaches."[28]

This issue of the members of the kibbutzim frowning on marriages and families also affected non-married couples, who were in love. They were often forced to suppress their feelings, and could not fulfill their desires. This is described in great detail in an article published under the name of "Rachel" in 1934, which caused an enormous amount of controversy in the worker's movement. She talks about having three people in every tent, because it was the only way for the kibbutz to absorb immigrants. She lived in a tent with her boyfriend and another woman, with only a thin cloth to separate them from the other woman. The article addresses the extreme difficulty this caused the author and her boyfriend. They were not able to sleep together or express their love for each other, because of their lack of privacy. She says,

> I am – all of me – a silent prayer that she will not waken. Then, my whole world would be lost. I am frightened to move – scared to whisper in his ear the words I have stored and nursed for him so long. Perhaps, no word can add at such a moment but I need to speak, I so need to. And, sometimes, at the moment of greatest closeness, I feel her turn in her bed (or perhaps it is only my imagination) and, in a moment, my dream ceases, and I return to this world. I don't feel anything. Nothing; and he, who was so close, vanishes suddenly, leaving only an aching pain in the heart . . . And a heavy tear – so bitter – rolls down his shoulder. He wipes the tears from my face and quietly presses me to him as if to comfort and pacify the young child, hurt so badly by someone unseen.[29]

She talks about how she was more united with her boyfriend in the crowded dining room than in the tent, because in the dining room no one paid attention to them or listened to what they were saying. She ends the article saying, "There are many doubts and, inside

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[28] Z. Dor-Sinai, Kibbutz Tel Yosef, found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

[29] "Rachel" found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

me, a shout of protest: What have they done to me? Will I ever get used to it? The duty of absorbing aliya, the holiest duty in Eretz Yisrael, accompanies the desecration of my love. Yes, what other way is there but desecration? Was such a sacrifice really demanded of me? Was it?"[30]

The impact of self-sacrifice and collective identity was felt very strongly by those members of *Hashomer* (the watchman). *Hashomer* was founded in 1909, as an organization that was responsible for guarding and securing the settlements.[31] One main goal of the organization was to convince the *Yishuv* that a defense force is an essential part of national rebirth.[32] From the beginning of Jews settling in Palestine until World War I, every Jewish town and collective settlement needed to protect itself, mostly against Arab thieves, individuals, and organized gangs. As a result Jewish security groups began to evolve. First, settlements designated at least one person to be responsible for their security. These guards worked day and night, and as time passed they hired Arabs to guard the settlements. This was unsuccessful because the Arab guards would often collaborate with the thieves and bandits. Therefore, settlers organized small groups to serve as voluntary guards.[33] In September 1907, a pioneer group formed a guardians' organization named *Bar-Giora* after one of the leaders of the

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[30] "Rachel" found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections.

[31] Me'ir Pa'il, "From Hashomer to the Israel Defense Forces: Armed Jewish Defense in Palestine" *Centenary of Zionism*, Sept. 22, 2003, found on www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern+History/Centenary+of+Zionism/From+Hashomer+to+the+Israel+Defense+Forces.htm.

[32] Yaacov N. Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers: How the Israeli Defense Forces Began*, (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), 36.

[33] Pa'il, "Hashomer to the Israel Defense Forces."

anti-Roman revolt in 66-70 A.D. Their motto was, "In blood and fire Judea fell and in blood and fire Judea shall rise!"[34] At this time Arab nationalism in Palestine was emerging as a reaction against the colonization of Palestine by Jews. This led to an increase of tensions between Jews and Arabs, including an increase in land disputes and violent attacks.[35] Eventually, the members of *Bar-Giora* had decided that their secret organization was not enough, and that they needed to create a larger and partially open organization in order to be of national significance and meet the challenges they were facing. Therefore, in April 1909, they established a new defense organization called *Hashomer*.[36] Their philosophy was that quality mattered more than quantity, so they had a vigorous selection process. The members were expected to be brave, driven in pursuit of the goals of the organization, self-disciplined, and have integrity. The harsh screening process led to incidents of suicide by some men who were either not accepted or their probationary period was extended.[37] As a result of the highly selective nature of the organization, *Hashomer* only had at most a hundred members at a time. They were supplemented with several hundred people who guarded as non-members. The members of *Hashomer*, like the New Jew of the *Yishuv*, wanted to be seen as brave and not weak and cowardly like in the towns where they came from in the Diaspora. While *Hashomer* was originally based in the north of Palestine, eventually they began to spread to the rest of the country. Without developed infrastructure of roads and telecommunications, it

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[34] Ze'ev Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army: 1874 to the present*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1985), 2.

[35] Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers*, 36.

[36] Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army*, 2.

[37] Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers*, 38.

made a centralized command structure impossible, and necessitated that the organization act as a clearinghouse.[38]

Starting in the fall of 1919, Arab uprisings increased, and Palestine, as well as Syria and Egypt, faced sporadic violence, rioting, and small-scale guerilla warfare. In the Galilee, which had wide-open borders, there were attacks by armed gangs on various Jewish settlements. The most well known of these attacks was against the village of Tel Hai, which was defended by fifteen men under Yosef Trumpeldor. The group became known for their heroism in clinging to their outpost. They had the philosophy that once a Jewish settlement is established it will never be surrendered. Seven of the defenders were killed, including Trumpeldor, who supposedly died saying in Hebrew, "sweet and becoming it is, to die for one's country." These defenders became a symbol of Jewish self-defense and heroism for many generations of Israeli youth.[39] In 1920, Arab riots spread to Jaffa, and many new immigrants were killed. *Hashomer* was not adequate enough to meet the challenges of these attacks, and of the times, and a more versatile group was needed. Therefore, in May 1920, *Hashomer* was disbanded.[40]

Hashomer was the first to engage in self-defense with the goal of replacing the image of the weak Jew, with the image of a new courageous Jew, who was willing to defend himself, his settlement, and his country. This determination led to the success of

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[38] Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defense Forces*, (New York: Public Affairs, 1998), 12-15.

[39] Ibid. 20.

[40] Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army*, 6.

later Jewish armed forces in Israel.[41] Their goal was to combine force with Zionist ideology to fulfill the national goals of Palestine. They formed a bond between themselves and the heroic figures of the First and Second Temple periods, bringing back the bravery that had been missing during exile. In actuality, these guards were forced to be brave, because during this difficult period, their only option for survival and defending their settlements were themselves.[42] *Hashomer* demanded an enormous amount of devotion, self-sacrifice, and discipline from both its members and their wives.[43] The lifestyle of the guards was very difficult. They needed to deal with exhaustion from guarding at night, the need to sleep during the day, illness, a lack of a normal daily routine, and a lack of free time for things such as culture.[44]

The hardships that these guards had to endure are described in detail in various statements by guards or people connected to them. These hardships are addressed in the following statement by a former veteran guard, Mendel Portugali. He says,

> Guarding has ruined my health, there is much poison in guarding, and much, much has to change in the life of the guards. Spiritual satisfaction from guarding perhaps existed only at first, when everything was still new, but afterwards you see how empty the life of a guard is, and emptiness leads to lethargy and demoralization . . . But the political situation forces us to take part in the guarding; therefore we must link guarding with work, so that we may be sound in body and in mind and so that others' property will not be fair game for us.[45]

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[41] Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, 17.

[42] Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers*, 2-10.

[43] Henry Near, *The Kibbutz Movement: A History*, vol. 1, (Washington, DC: Oxford University Press, 1992), 18.

[44] Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers*, 48.

[45] Found in Ibid. 44-45.

Another statement by Atara Shturman talks about the reasons why the *shomrim* lacked culture. She says, "In Hashomer there was no lack of people with a healthy sense of culture, men of spiritual grandeur, but life in its vicissitudes and hardships created a form of world outlook that demanded simplicity of a man to the point of becoming stripped of everything and actively opposed to all external signs of accepted culture."[46] One wife of a guard talks about the horrendous living conditions where the guards lived. She lived in a room together with five other guards, with huge mice and all kinds of bugs. At one point she said to her husband that she was tired of that kind of life, and he was furious at her, and did not speak to her for several days. It was not acceptable to complain. These statements clearly demonstrate the difficulties that the men and women of *Hashomer* had to face. The idealism and devotion which drove them to fulfill their duties deteriorated in the course of their years in the organization with all of its difficult demands.[47]

A reflection by Yitzhak Oz very effectively depicts the life of a *shomer*. He talks about the dangers involved in guarding, and how the nights were long and full of beauty, but also full of ambushes and danger. He describes the noises of nature and animals heard in the quiet of the night, providing an unnerving atmosphere. In addition he talks about the loneliness of guarding in the night, with the knowledge that at any moment he could be killed. He goes on to say,

> The responsibility you have as a guard for those souls exhausted from their day's work, sleeping their sleep, confident in your watchfulness, brings down upon you great courage but also great tension . . . Sometimes, I dream of leaving this life, and returning to work the land. But I hear, time and time again, the words of the leader of Hashomer, Israel Giladi, ringing in my ears. "Many will be found to work the land. But only a few to guard. There is too much danger – but what will

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[46] Found in Goldstein, *From Fighters to Soldiers* 49.

[47] Near, *The Kibbutz Movement*, 47-48.

> our work in Eretz Yisrael be worth, if we continue to rely on others to guard us? We have to take responsibility for our own security." That is what Giladi had told me, and he was right. Our lives and property were at the mercy of others.[48]

It is easy to see the self-sacrifice made by the guards of *Hashomer* for the good of the kibbutz and the collective community. They played an important role in the building of the *Yishuv* and the fulfillment of the goals of Zionism. In the following section, it will be shown how the self-sacrifice of the guards of *Hashomer* and the conflict between individual and collective identity on kibbutzim during the formative years of Zionism and the state are represented in the opera, *Dan Hashomer*.

LIBRETTO OF *DAN HASHOMER*

The conflict between individual needs and the collective needs of the kibbutz just mentioned, and the self-sacrifices that go along with it, are very effectively portrayed in the libretto of the opera, *Dan Hashomer*. Along with this theme, is the idea of the importance of working the land and building up Palestine, which was expressed in great detail in the opera, *The Pioneers*. As a result of the cuts made in the opera, from the original play, as discussed earlier, the plot and character development and relationships are a little hard to follow.

The opera takes place on a small unnamed kibbutz in the north, which is threatened by Arab neighbors. It is hinted in one of the pieces in the opera that it takes place in the settlement of Hanita. Hanita is a kibbutz in the Upper Galilee, about five miles east of the Mediterranean shore and Rosh Hanikra on the Lebanese border. It was founded in 1938 as the first settlement of the Zionist project of "*Choma Umigdal*" (Wall

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[48] Yitzhak Oz, Found in Collection of Journal Entries and Reflections, from Collection of David Mendelsson.

and Tower), and was attacked by the Arabs on the very first night of its foundation and ten of its members were killed in that attack. Hanita became an important symbol of the heroic settlements of the *Halutzim*.[49]

Throughout the opera, the kibbutz is in danger of being attacked by Arab gangs, which are called robbers or enemies in the opera in order to disguise their identity as a result of British censorship.[50] The main plot of the opera focuses on Dan, a guard on the kibbutz. Dan and Efrat, a young woman on the kibbutz, are in love with each other. Nachman, the best friend of Dan, is also in love with Efrat, and continually tries to convince Efrat to be with him. Although Efrat also has feelings for Nachman, she chooses to be with Dan, because Dan needs her more. Eventually, however, Efrat gives in to Nachman. Throughout the opera, Dan becomes more and more suspicious of Nachman. Dan has dreams that he is going to have an encounter with the "black shadow," which represents Dan's dark emotions, feelings and urges. At the end of the opera, Dan does have an encounter with the "black shadow," which tries to convince him that since Nachman will be returning to the kibbutz in the dark night, this would be a good opportunity for him to shoot Nachman, since people would think that he thought he was someone attacking the kibbutz. Dan overcomes the "black shadow," and does not shoot Nachman, and Dan and Nachman are united in the end for the good of the kibbutz.

A subplot of the opera is that of the older generation of religious Jews, who live on the kibbutz alongside the young pioneers and workers. Many of them frown upon the way of life and lack of religious practice of the young pioneers. They are not concerned

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[49] Eliyahu Schleifer, Communications with author, 30 May, 2006.

[50] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard by Marc Lavry," *Taztzlil*, 17: (1977), 126.

with the threats of attack by the Arabs, but rather they are concerned with the sins of the young people. Although some of them miss Jewish life in the Diaspora and think that the young Jews who are neglecting religious practice should be punished, an elderly rabbi, Rabbi Velvele, is proud of what the young pioneers are doing. He is grateful to them for sacrificing their lives to rebuild Palestine, and feels that the older generation needs to support them and share their sins by giving up some religious practices themselves. As a result, Velvele deliberately breaks all *mitzvot*, in order that the divine punishment will befall on him, rather than on the young members of the kibbutz, who had abandoned religion in order to build their kibbutz. When Velvele is killed by an Arab attack, he is presented as the sacrifice that saved the younger generation of the kibbutz.[51]

Although the danger of attack by the Arabs to the kibbutz is all the time in the background, the opera focuses on the internal problems of the kibbutz. The main characters in the opera are all struggling with the idea that individual feelings and emotions should be put aside for the benefit of the kibbutz and the collective. Dan, especially, is seen in the opera as the true representative of this early kibbutz ideology, in which people would be ashamed to have any romantic feelings, when they should be focusing on the dangers to the kibbutz and their own duties. In effect, this negates their very existence. Therefore, although Dan is deeply in love with Efrat, he can not admit to having such private emotions.[52] Dan's main goal in the opera is to revive the conscience of each member of the kibbutz. Dan feels that if every member of the kibbutz is considering the collective needs of the kibbutz, and there is no internal strife, than they

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[51] Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 269.

[52] Jehoash Hirshberg, Email correspondence with author, 31 May 2006.

will better be able to deal with attacks from the outside.[53] Throughout the opera, Dan struggles with the realization that his individual feelings of jealousy about the fact that his best friend, Nachman, is in love with his girlfriend Efrat, might impact his loyalty to the collective spirit of the kibbutz.[54] This is why Dan resists the urge to shoot Nachman; because he knows that a strong kibbutz will not stand by bloodshed and conflict from within, but only by reviving the conscience of each member of the kibbutz, and working together for one common purpose.[55] Dan's struggle with his emotions and dark thoughts are a result of all of his suppressed feelings and emotions. In the opera, Dan, despite the threat of serious danger, turns down the offer by Nachman to replace him on guard duty. This shows Dan's dedication to the kibbutz over his own needs, and his willingness to sacrifice his life for the good of the kibbutz. Therefore, Dan demonstrates the self-sacrifice that the guards of *Hashomer* were willing to go through in order to defend the community.

Efrat also shows her dedication to the kibbutz and the suppression of individual emotions. Although she is actually in love with Nachman, as just mentioned, in the beginning of the opera she will not be with him because Dan needs her more. She explains why she chose Dan in her arietta in Act I, Number 5. She says, "*Mishum shechalash hu v'ne-ezav v'zakuk l'isha shek'moti* (Because he is weak and alone and he needs a woman like me)." Since the kibbutz needs Dan to be strong to protect it, she needs to be with Dan. Therefore, for the good of the kibbutz she stays with Dan, and

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[53] Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard," 123.

[54] Hirshberg, *Community of Palestine*, 269.

[55] Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard," 123.

resists Nachman, thus, suppressing her individual feelings. In that arietta, she summarizes the essence of the message of the opera, when she says, "*Uchlum ein lanu, l'chulam, matara achut, matara m'shutefet ug'dola bakibbutz haze; g'ulat ha-am, g'ulat adama va-avoda* (There is nothing for us, for all of us, but the purpose of brotherhood, and the common and great purpose in the kibbutz; redemption of the people, redemption of the earth, and the work)."

Rabbi Velvele is an extreme example of self-sacrifice and giving of oneself for the good of the collective. As mentioned, he breaks *mitzvot*, risks his own life and is even killed in order that divine punishment will happen to him, and not to the young pioneers. He puts aside his own beliefs and desires, which are a large part of who he is, and isolates himself from the rest of the older religious generation, in order to support the goals of the collective. In an aria, in Act II, Number 15, Velvele defends the young pioneers to his piers of the older generation, saying "*Klum einam m'kimim po olam chadash* (Are they not building here a new world)? *Klum einam bonim et Eretz Yisrael* (Are they not building the Land of Israel)?" He goes on to say in number 15b, "*Klum einchem margishim kibbutz banu kan, olam chadash . . . Achdut, cheirut, shivyon . . . Yeish l'hitkonein l'korban* (Do you not feel the kibbutz was built here, a new world . . . Brotherhood, freedom, equality . . . We must be ready to sacrifice)." In that same piece he compares himself to the pioneers who are fulfilling a great purpose. He says, "*Ela ani poeil bateil she-eino yodeia lama hu mistoveiv ba-olam* (But I am a simple worker who does not know why he wanders in the world). *Ani chayav l'hi pakeid* (I need to make myself present). *Ani nikra lihyot korban shel Yisrael* (I am being called to be a sacrifice for Israel)."

Even Nachman exhibits self-sacrifice in Act I, Number 10, when he offers to replace Dan on guard duty, despite the dangers of attack and the risk to his life. This is an especially selfless act because of the rivalry Nachman has with Dan over Efrat. Despite his envy of Dan, he is willing to sacrifice his own life in order to save Dan and the kibbutz.

The concept of the importance of working the land and rebuilding Palestine is portrayed in great detail in the finale to Act I, Numbers 11a and 11b. The chorus says, "*Adama, Avoda, leshivyon, lig'ula* (Earth, Work, for equality, for redemption). . . . *Am matza et hamoledet. Shuv adam la-adama* (People have found the homeland. Return man to the land). *Avoda nichye chayayich* (Through work we will live our lives)."

In the piece, "*Ma mi laila baChanita* (What of night in Hanita)," which is sung while Dan is standing guard during the night, the atmosphere which is described in the reminiscence by Yitzhak Oz, discussed in the historical background to the opera, is accurately portrayed. There is a feeling of the unnerving nature of the night, the awareness that all around there is danger, and at any moment Dan could be killed. However, the piece grows in intensity, and despite all the danger, Dan sings bravely, "*Yeish mishmeret ba-Chanita, kol ha-laila kol ha-leil* (There is a guard in Hanita, all the night, all the night)."

The final scene of the opera illustrates the main point of the opera. After Dan overcomes the "black shadow", he and Nachman are united as friends again, and Dan believes that now the kibbutz can once again be unified. After Nachman tells him that the enemy is gathering again to attack, Dan says, "*Nitzalnu, Nachman, achi. Al mora. Efrat shuv y'didim anachnu, ani v'hu. Shuv echad hakibbutz. Chaveirim, chaveirim,*

hatargishu ma chazakim anachnu achshav. Ma meluchadim. Anachnu lish'at hahachra-a (We've been saved, Nachman, my brother. Do not fear. Efrat again we are friends, I and he. The Kibbutz is one again. Friends, friends, can you feel how powerful we are now, how close together. We are at a pivotal moment)." Thus, Dan feels that as long as the entire kibbutz is united in one common purpose, they will be strong and will be able to endure attacks from outside of the kibbutz.

The libretto of *Dan Hashomer* does an excellent job of bringing the issues of kibbutz life during the pioneering days of Palestine to the fore. It addresses the internal struggles that people had to deal with in making sacrifices for the good of the community, and the incredible bravery and devotion of the early settlers and *shomrim*. It also shows the ramifications that can be caused by the suppressed emotions that members of kibbutzim had to endure, as a result of the need and desire for collective identity.

MUSIC OF *DAN HASHOMER*

Using a variety of musical styles, Marc Lavry effectively brings out the themes of the libretto of the opera. Similar to Jacob Weinberg in *The Pioneers*, Lavry uses different music to represent the young pioneers and the older generation of religious Jews. While the music of the younger generation, such as Dan, Nachman, and Efrat, is composed in a more Mediterranean style and employs a variety of musical styles and ideas, the music of the older generation, is generally in an Eastern European style with the use of augmented seconds, and Chassidic dance music.

Lavry's Hebrew was not fluent enough at the time that he was writing the opera. Therefore, he worked with an assistant, who stood next to the piano and read the text in

Hebrew. The use of various styles was necessitated not only by the conflicts in the opera between the world of the older generation and the world of the pioneers, but also by the contrast between the emotional world of individuals and the collective world of the kibbutz as a whole. Generally each style is used separately and they are not blended together. An exception occurs in the Finale of the first act, where two different styles are used together for dramatic effect. The main styles used in the opera are Chassidic dance music and prayer melodies in the style of Eastern Europe, the style of Israeli folk song, particularly the march and the hora, and the recitative and aria style of late Italian romantic opera, especially Puccini.[56]

One technique used by Lavry in the opera to unify the opera is the use of recurring motives. All important motives occur not only in the overture, but also recur in the opera many times. There is an attempt to associate characters with certain motives, although this is not always strictly adhered to.[57]

Like Weinberg, Lavry steered away from the musical style of Eastern European music for the younger generation and made use of the natural minor and Dorian modes. A great example of the use of the Dorian mode can be found in the opening piece of Act III, "*Ma mi laila baChanita* (What of night in Hanita)," which is sung while Dan is standing guard during the night (Ex. 11 and diagram). "*Ma mi laila baChanita*" is the most well known piece in the opera, because it was played on the radio for immigrant

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[56] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard by Marc Lavry," *Tatzlil*, 17: (1977), 128.

[57] Ibid. 128.

camps in Cyprus.[58] The piece begins in B major with a statement by the chorus of the main musical motive of the opera, which occurs at numerous points throughout the opera, and is the first motive of the overture (Ex. 11, m.3-6). It occurs so many times that Jehoash Hirshberg asserts that it is not a leitmotif, but only the main motive of the opera which symbolizes the emotional world of the kibbutz members. This motif reaches its climax in this piece.[59] During this section in major, Dan and the chorus alternate phrases, and the text is reflecting inwards as they are losing hope in any relief coming to Israel. As the text changes to Dan pleading for help to come to Israel, the piece moves to B Dorian with a pivot note of C# in measure 14, which transitions into the new key. The rest of the piece, with the exception of one brief cadence in B major towards the end of the piece, stays in B Dorian, with alternating statements by Dan and the chorus (Ex. 11, m.15-end). It is in this section that despite all the danger that is all around, the feeling of the unnerving nature of the night, and the lack of sign of any relief or hope coming to Israel, Dan sings bravely, "*Yeish mishmeret ba-Chanita, kol ha-laila kol ha-leil* (There is a guard in Hanita, all the night, all the night)" (Ex. 11, m.23-26 and m.31-34). Thus, it is through the mode of Dorian that Dan asserts his bravery and willingness for self-sacrifice. Lavry is using the Dorian mode to be the language of bravery and the pioneering spirit.

In "*Ma mi laila baChanita*," Lavry makes use of many of the other features of Israeli music at that time, such as open fifths. In the section in Dorian, there is a repeated ostinato pattern that occurs in the orchestra throughout almost the entire rest of the piece

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[58] Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard," 123.

[59] Ibid. 128.

(Ex. 11, m.19-24, m.27-32 and m.36-39). The use of ostinato repetitions is described by Max Brod as being representative of the "Mediterranean style", as mentioned in chapter two. What is interesting is that although Lavry uses the Dorian mode, which was used along with natural minor to distinguish Israeli music from Western music, he does not completely tie himself to the harmonies of the Dorian mode, which consists of a minor five chord and weakens cadences. Although using the minor five chord most of the time, at important half cadences he uses a major five chord, which makes for a stronger cadence (Ex. 11, m.18, m.26, m.35, and m.48). Thus, although Lavry utilizes many of the characteristics of the "Mediterranean style", he does not strictly separate his compositions from Western harmonic techniques.

The Chassidic dance music and prayer melodies used in the opera make abundant use of the augmented second interval. Lavry uses it in the opera to represent the older generation who are not committed to rebuilding Palestine, and who miss Jewish religious life in the Diaspora. An example of a Chassidic song can be found in Act II, Scene 17a and b, in which the older generation are reminiscing about the pleasures of Shabbat in the Diaspora, and bemoaning religious life in Palestine, and the music makes use of the augmented second (Ex. 12).

The march is the main stylistic feature used in the opera. It appears in the opera in several different styles, such as military marches and stylized marches. The stylized marches use more complex harmonies of augmented chords instead of the simple harmonies of the military marches in the opera.[60] Some common characteristics of marches are rhythmic patterns with repeated accents, simple harmonies and textures, and

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[60] Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard," 128.

often memorable melodies. The march became popular in art music in the 17th century through the opera and ballet of France, and they came to have heroic and sacrificial connotations, as well as military ones.[61] An example of a military march occurs in the opera in the orchestra in Act II, Number 29, while a battle is going on. It contains many of the features of marches. It has recurring rhythmical patterns with repeated accents and simple harmonies and textures. It also is in 3/2 meter, which was a common time signature for marches in the 17th and 18th centuries.[62] (Ex. 13)

The last stylistic feature of the music of the opera is the recitative and aria style of late, Italian, romantic opera, especially Giacomo Puccini. Efrat's role was based on women in Puccini operas.[63] Although some aspects of Puccini's musical style changed throughout his career, there are some consistent characteristics that occur throughout the music of his operas, such as sequences and melodies with step-wise motion. Puccini also made abundant use of recurring motives throughout his operas and even within individual pieces.[64] As mentioned, in *Dan Hashomer*, Lavry makes use of recurring motives to help unify the opera. In the opera, he composes most of the arias and recitatives in the style of Puccini, especially the music of Efrat, and employs many of the stylistic features of Puccini's music. A great example of this is Efrat's aria in Act II, Number 16, in which she asks Rabbi Velvele to pray for Dan's safety (Ex. 14). The aria begins in Phrygian (minor scale with a lowered second, but no augmented second), which is one of the

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[61] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s. v. "March."

[62] Ibid.

[63] Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard," 128.

[64] Grove Music Online, s.v. "Puccini, Giacomo, Dramaturgy and musical style," 25, October, 2006.

modes used often by early Israeli composers. In the aria, Lavry uses a recurring motive, which emphasizes the Phrygian mode, and which also occurs in Efrat's aria in Act I (Ex. 14, m.4).

The music of *Dan Hashomer* very effectively supports the libretto of the opera. Through the use of different styles to represent the different world of the young pioneers and the older generation of religious Jews, and the conflict between the emotional aspects of the individual and the collective goals of the kibbutz, Lavry brings these conflicts to life. Through the music he helps paint the picture of what life was like on kibbutzim in that time.

„דן השומר", מודעת האופרה הא"י העממית

Found in Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Opera, Dan the Guard by Marc Lavry," *Tatzlil*, 17: (1977), 125.

CONCLUSION

While *The Pioneers* did not have any great impact on Israeli opera, since it was never performed in Israel, *Dan Hashomer* established a foundation upon which original Israeli operas could be built. Since *Dan Hashomer*, there have been a number of Israeli operas written. Most of them deal with specific issues and themes relevant to Israel's history, culture and changing ideology. Given the intensity of life in Israel, most of the original Israeli operas that have been written are serious dramas that give insight into the complexity of life in Israel.

An important composer of Israeli opera has been Josef Tal, since he has written a variety of Israeli operas. Tal has a completely different view on Israeli musical composition than what has been discussed in this study, which Jehoash Hirshberg calls "individual nationalism". Tal does not try to write in an Israeli style, rather he asserts that his music is Israeli simply because he is Israeli and is immersed in its culture and scenery. [1]

Tal's first opera, *Saul at Ein Dor*, is a good example of Israeli opera reflecting Israeli ideology. The opera was written in 1955 as an opera concertante, to be performed in concert and on the radio.[2] It is based on Samuel I, chapter XXVIII, verses 3-25 in the Bible. The opera is a reflection of Israeli culture because of the way Tal uses the Biblical

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[1] Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: Ideological Pressures in the Yishuv Period and their Offshoots in Israeli Art Music during the Recent Two Decades," *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, 4: Music of Israel (2004): 5.

[2] Peter Gradenwitz, *Music and Musicians in Israel*, (Tel Aviv: Israeli Music Publications Limited, 1959), 51-52.

text, and the important and distinct role that the Bible played in the lives of Jews of the *Yishuv* and the early years of the state. Whereas traditional Jews in the Diaspora had built up the rabbinic texts, Oral Law, to the point of giving it even greater importance than the Bible itself, the Zionist movement sought to reverse this.[3] They associated the Oral Law with exile and the Diaspora, and felt that the Bible needs to be the most important and defining text for the Jewish people.[4] However, the Bible was seen by the early Zionist movement and the pioneers of Israel not as a religious text, but as a historical text.[5] Thus, given the point of view of Zionists toward the Bible, it is natural that Tal chose to set an Israeli opera on a Biblical text. Tal, however, takes the nationalistic view of the Bible even further in that he does not treat the Biblical text in the opera as a religious text or a nationalistic text, but rather as a psychodrama, from a humanistic point of view, which emphasizes the human tragedy of the story.[6]

Another opera that is a strong reflection of Israeli culture and Zionist ideology is *Alexandra*, composed by Menachem Avidom, which was first performed in 1957.[7] The libretto of the opera was written by Aharon Ashman, based on his play, *Alexandra the*

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[3] Anita Shapira, "The Bible and Israeli Identity," *AJS Review*. Vol. 28, 1, (2004): 13-15.

[4] Assaf Sagiv, "Zionism and the myth of motherland," *Azure*, Vol. 5, (1998): 109.

[5] Shapira, "The Bible and Israeli Identity," 13-14.

[6] Eliyahu Schleifer, Interview by author, May, 2006.

[7] Joseph Peles, "Inherent Richness and Variety of the Music of M. Avidom," trans. Miriam Morgan, http://www.imi.org.il/articles/Inherent%20Richness%20and%20Variety%20of%20the%20Music%20of%20M.htm, 11 April, 2006.

Hasmonean, which was dedicated to the memory of the Ghetto fighters of World War II.[8] The opera is based on the writings of Josephus Flavius and tells of the attempt of Alexandra, the mother of Herod's wife, Miriam, to stage a revolt against Herod, in order to bring freedom to her people and re-establish the Hasmonean reign over the country.[9] This is a reflection of early Zionist ideology because of the strong role that the Hasmoneans, especially the Maccabeans, played in the ideology of early Zionists. Zionists were proud of the heroism of the Hasmoneans and saw themselves as the followers of the Hasmoneans, who needed to liberate the Jewish people. Interestingly, the opera is not about the Maccabeans who were successful, but is about the last revolt of the Hasmoneans, in which they were defeated. This is why the opera was dedicated to the memory of the Ghetto fighters, because it is not the success of revolts which Zionists were proud of, rather it was the heroism of revolting at all. The description of the end of the opera in the synopsis in the vocal score shows the connection between the opera and Israeli ideology. It says:

> Alexandra is led to the scaffold. At this moment many beacon-fires are set ablaze on the horizon, announcing that the zealots from all parts of the country are pledging themselves to the continuation of the struggle against tyranny. Alexandra takes heart. Now she is sure that the sacrifice of her life will not have been in vain, that victory must come. She sends her last blessing to her people to the strains of the zealots hymn, powerful in its belief in the indestructibility of Israel.[10]

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[8] Menachem Avidom, *Alexandra*, libretto by Aharon Ashman (Tel Aviv: Israel Music Institute, 1966), 3.

[9] Peles, "Music of M. Avidom."

[10] Menachem Avidom, *Alexandra*, 10.

Since the opera was written after Israel became a state, the opera seems to be viewing Israel as the new Hasmonean dynasty, and that Zionists and Israel have fulfilled the goals of the Hasmoneans.

Today, composers continue to write original Israeli operas, and are still turning to themes relevant to Israeli culture for the libretti of the operas. In fact, ten years ago, the New Israeli Opera began a project of commissioning new Israeli operas, with the purpose of enriching the limited repertory of Israeli operas.[11] As a result there have been four new Israeli operas written in the past ten years.[12] One contemporary opera that deals with a whole number of Israeli themes is the chamber opera, *Dear Son of Mine*, premiered in 1995, composed by Haim Permont, with a libretto by Talma Alyagon-Rose. *Dear Son of Mine* is an intense chamber opera which deals with war and bereavement. The opera demonstrates the issues of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis and the distressing experience of immigration.[13]

Another contemporary opera that reflects themes relevant to Israeli society is *A Journey to the End of the Millennium*, composed by Joseph Bardanashvili, and premiered in May 2005. The opera is set in Europe at the end of the first millennium, and is based on the novel of the same name, written by A.B. Yehoshua.[14] Although the opera is speaking about Jewish life in Europe, the opera clearly relates to Jewish life in Israel. Since Yehoshua and Bardanashvili are both Israeli, it would stand to reason that they

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[11] Jehoash Hirshberg, "Joseph Bardanashvili's A Journey to the End of the Millennium: A New Israeli Opera," *IMI News* 2 (2005): 2.

[12] Ibid. 2.

[13] Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East," 11.

[14] Hirshberg, "Journey to the End of the Millennium," 2.

were simultaneously referring to life in Israel. The fact that the opera was written in Hebrew to be performed in Israel shows that they clearly were addressing issues in Israeli society, which the Israeli audience would be able to relate to. The opera addresses three main issues. Whereas *Dear Son of Mine*, emphasizes the conflict between Jews and Arabs, in *A Journey to the End of the Millennium*, the main issue is the conflict between Jews themselves, between Oriental, Sephardic Jews, and Ashkenazi Jews, which is very much a conflict in Israel which still exists today. Yehoshua is part of a prominent Sephardi family from the Old City of Jerusalem, and Bardanashvili comes from the old Eastern community of Georgia, South East of Russia. Therefore, since both Yehoshua and Bardanashvili come from the Sephardi and Eastern Jewish traditions, they are aware first hand of this conflict between the oriental Jewish traditions and the traditions of Ashkenazi Jews.[15] Another issue addressed in the opera is strict religious decrees which inhibit individual emotions and family ties, which is clearly apparent in the Orthodox communities in Israel. Lastly, the opera also deals with the suppression of women in a male-dominated religion, which is also evident in Israel today.[16]

The music of contemporary operas, reflect the music of contemporary Israeli art music, which varies in style. It is characterized by pluralism, while at the same time still adhering to some of the original musical trends. Collective nationalism is still expressed in some of the music of many contemporary Israeli composers. However, the changing views of Israel towards the Diaspora, has resulted in not just a desire to create Israeli

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[15] Communications with Eliyahu Schleifer, 2006.

[16] Hirshberg, "Journey to the End of the Millennium," 2.

nationalistic music, but to create universal Jewish nationalistic music.[17] Nowadays, composers realize that the Israeli style of music is not one unified style of music, but is a synthesis of influences and styles. This can be the only way to represent music in a land such as Israel, where diversity is so prevalent, with immigrants from all over the globe. In a land with such diversity one unified style is very difficult to achieve. Jehoash Hirshberg states:

> The main objective of the composers and cultural critics of the Yishuv, that is, the crystallization of a style of genuine Israeli music, which would express the inner spiritual world and the reality of life of the local Jewish society, has been achieved. Yet, paradoxically, the result is the opposite to that which had been envisioned at the beginning of the process. The Israeli style is not a synthetic unified entity that enables identification within a few measures. Quite the contrary. It is a rich syncretism of sources, influences and methods of expression, which constitute a superb representation of Israel's extreme heterogeneity. The Israeli style simultaneously strives in three directions: to create a genuine national identity, to further the assimilation into the globalization process, and the continued search for links with the East.[18]

This same idea can be applied not only to the music of contemporary operas, but also to the evolution of opera in Israel in general. The *Yishuv* strove to create a unique society in Palestine different from life in the Diaspora. Therefore, the original goal of opera in Palestine was to create its own unique form of opera on par with the European model, and performing every opera in Hebrew. As Israeli views towards the Diaspora changed and they became more interested in global assimilation, opera in Israel changed as well. There was no longer the need to create a unique form of opera; rather a more universal appeal was sought. Therefore, today, the New Israeli Opera Company performs operas in their original language rather than in Hebrew. In December 2005, I attended a

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[17] Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East," 8-12.

[18] Ibid. 12.

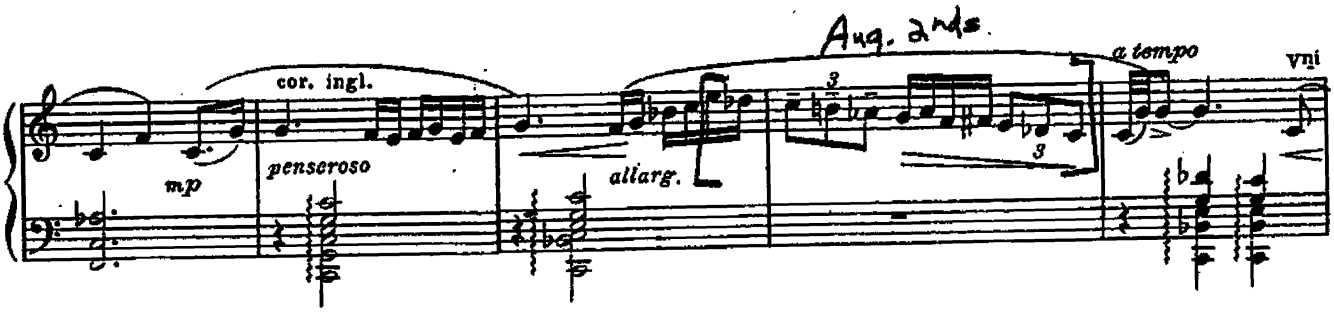
performance of Carmen in Tel Aviv at the New Israeli Opera Company. The opera was performed by a touring Russian opera company in French set in Spain, with English and Hebrew subtitles. The diverse countries represented in that production epitomize Israeli society, which is made up of immigrants from all over the world. Despite the fact that opera in Israel has moved towards a more universal approach, Israeli opera still remains unique because of the commissioning of original Israeli operas which generally reflect Israeli themes, and are written in Hebrew. Thus, they would only be performed in Israel.

Israeli opera from its inception has been an important tool in reflecting the ideals of the *Yishuv* and of Israel, and has served as a microcosm of Israeli society. It is an excellent lens into the history, culture, and changing ideology of Israel.

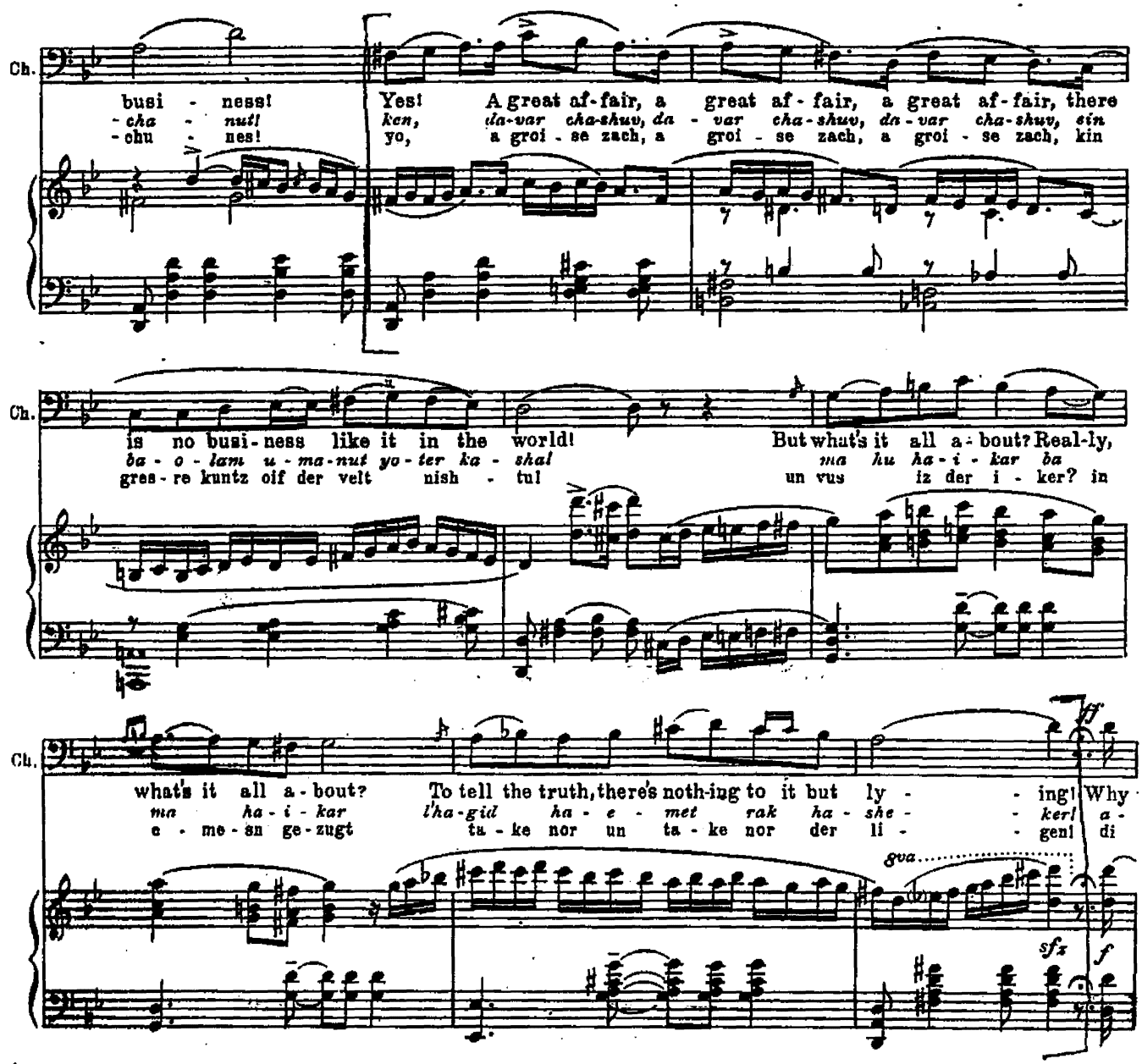
APPENDIX

Musical Examples from *The Pioneers*

Example 1

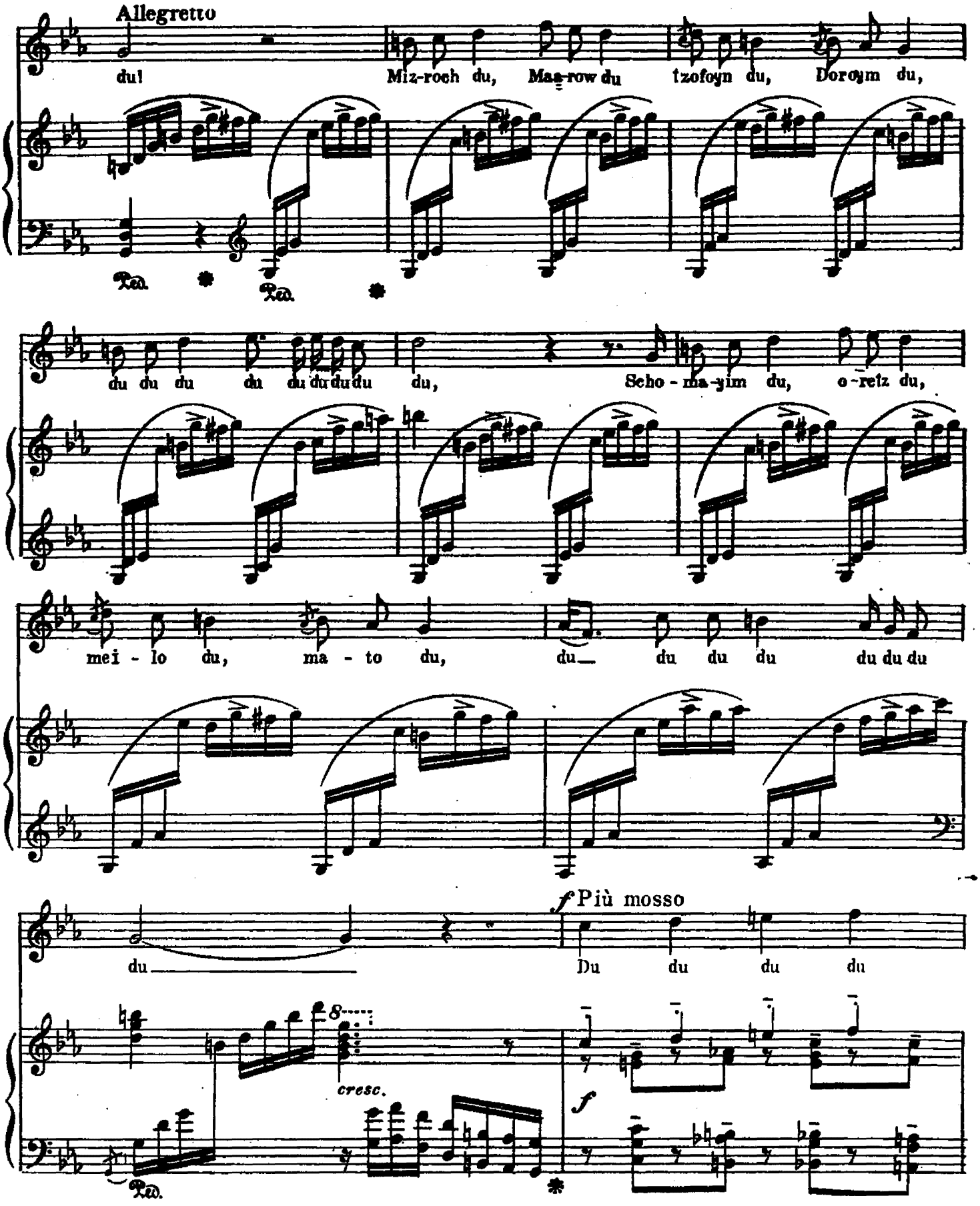


Example 2A

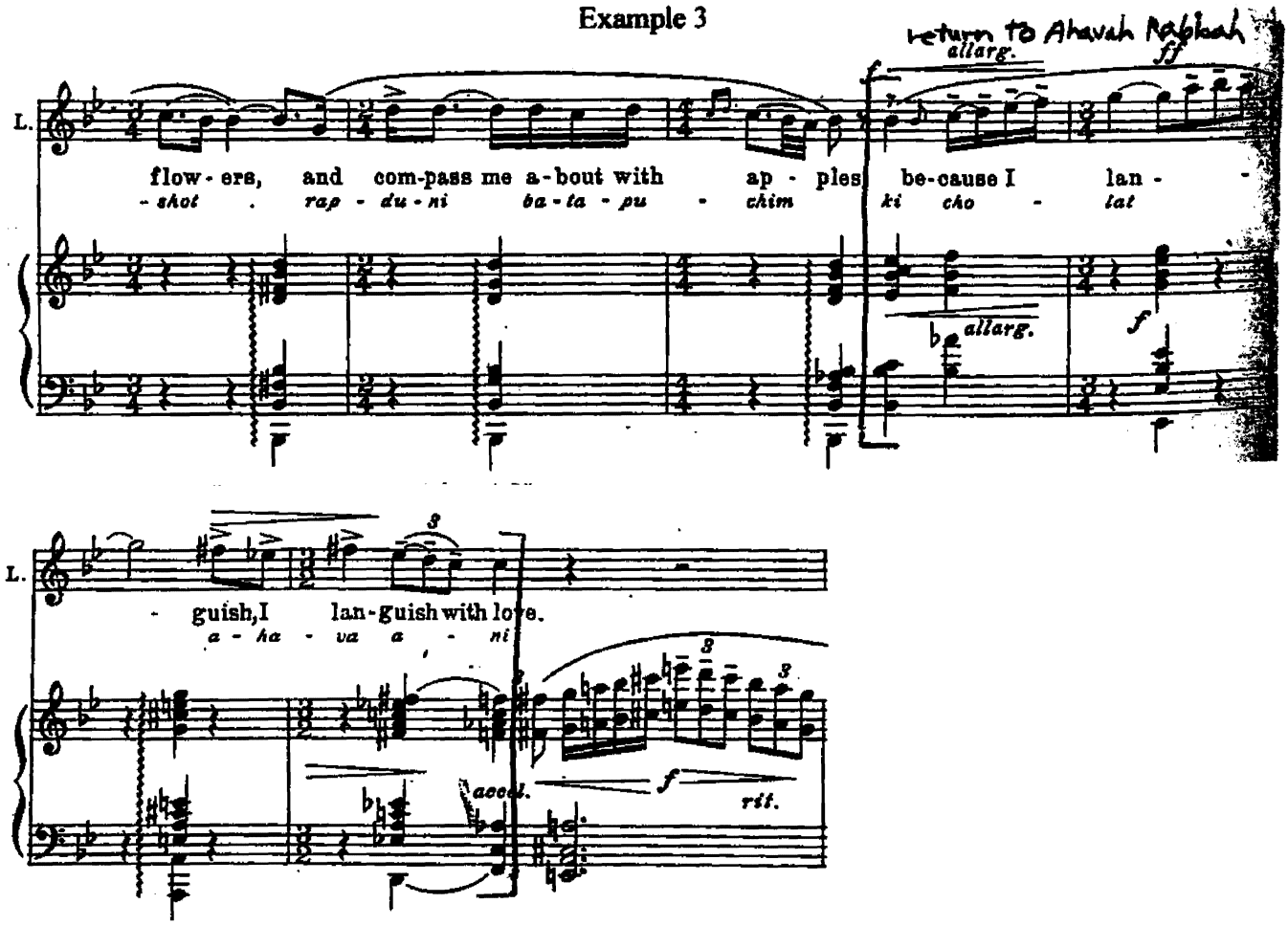


Example 2B

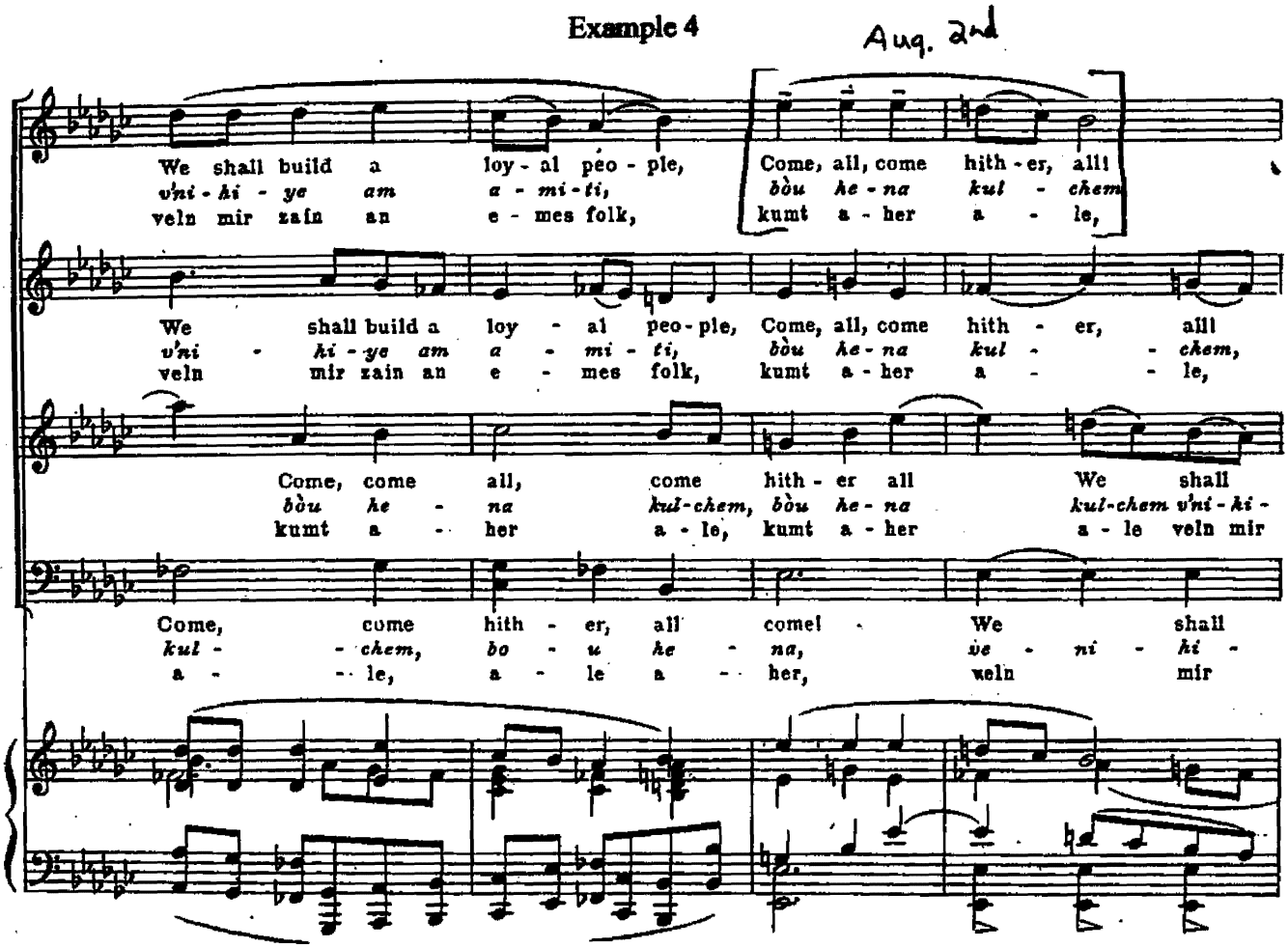
A Dudele by Reb Levi Yitskhok



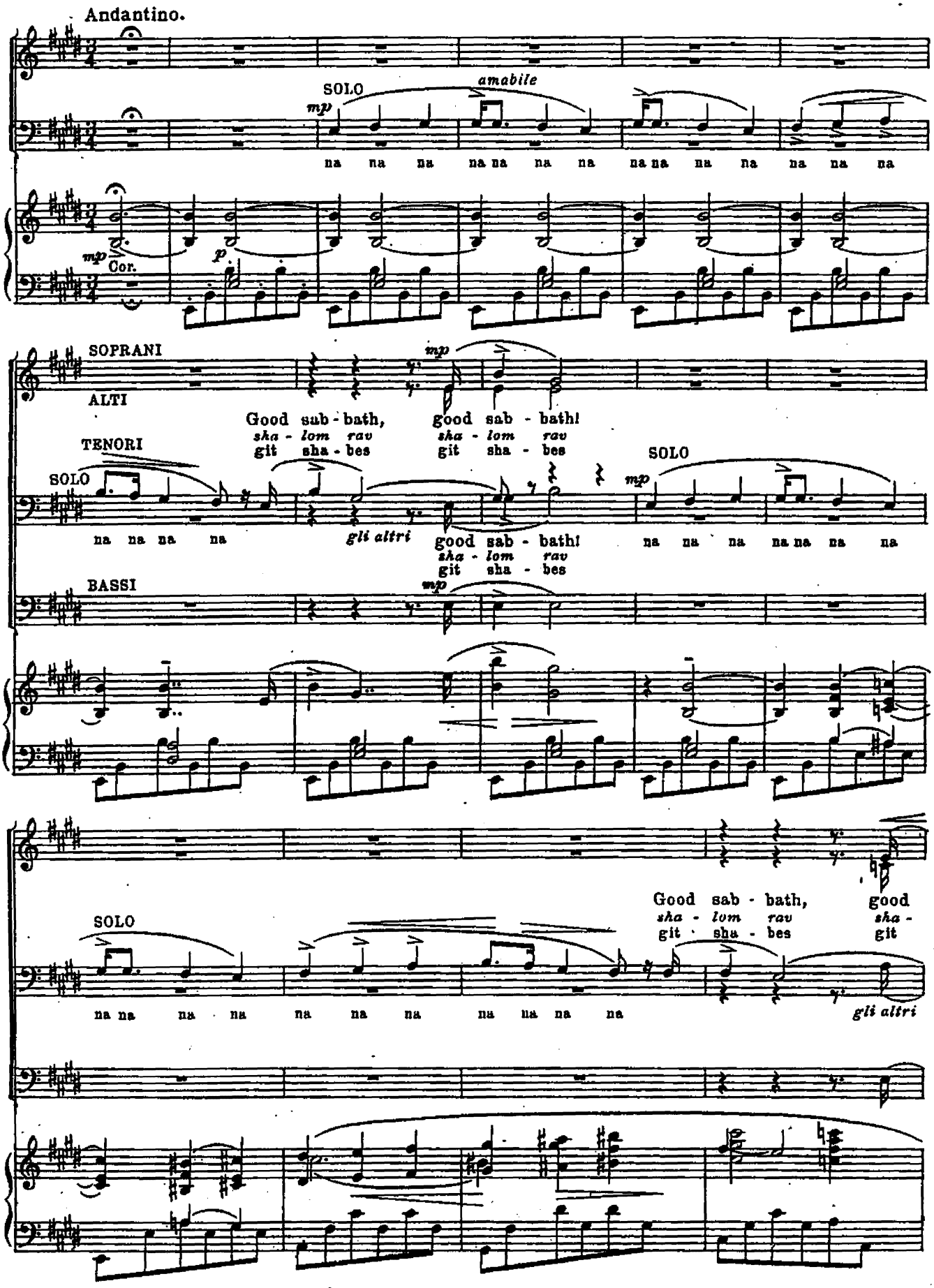
Example 3



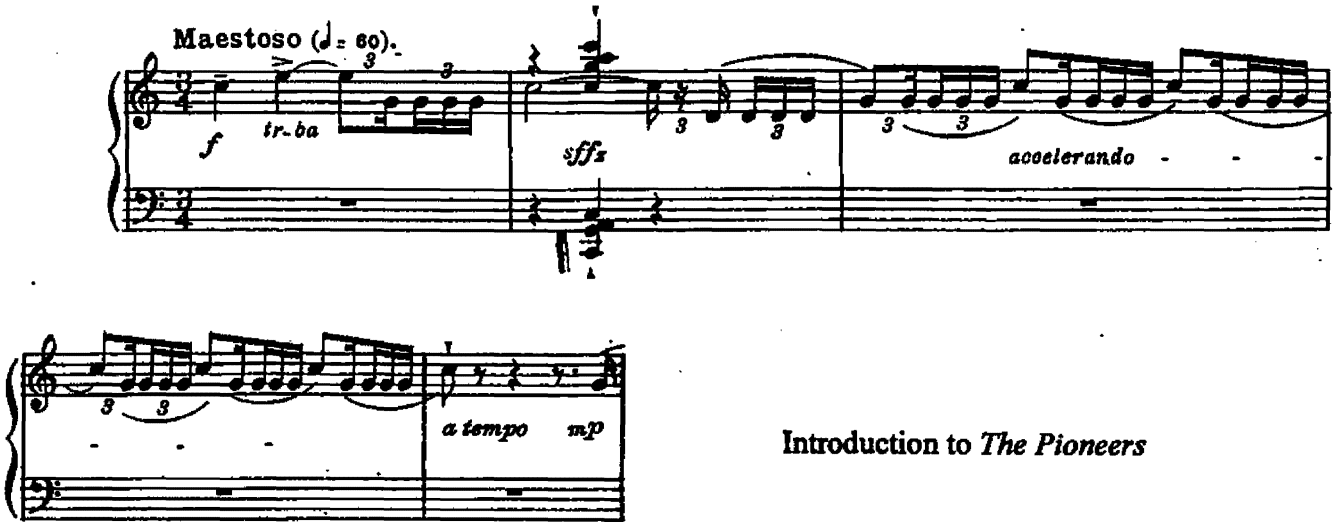
Example 4



Example 5

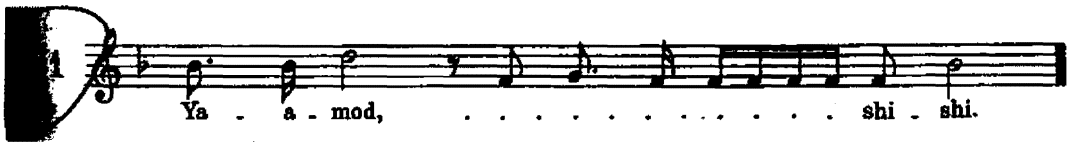

Andantino.
SOLO
amabile
mp
na na na na na na na na na na na na na na
mp
Cor.
p
SOPRANI
ALTI
mp
Good sab - bath, good sab - bath!
sha - lom rav sha - lom rav
git sha - bes git sha - bes
TENORI
SOLO
SOLO
mp
na na na na
gli altri
good sab - bath!
sha - lom rav
git sha - bes
na na na na na na na
BASSI
mp
Good sab - bath, good
sha - lom rav sha -
git sha - bes git
SOLO
na na na na na na na na na na na na
gli altri

Example 6A



Introduction to *The Pioneers*

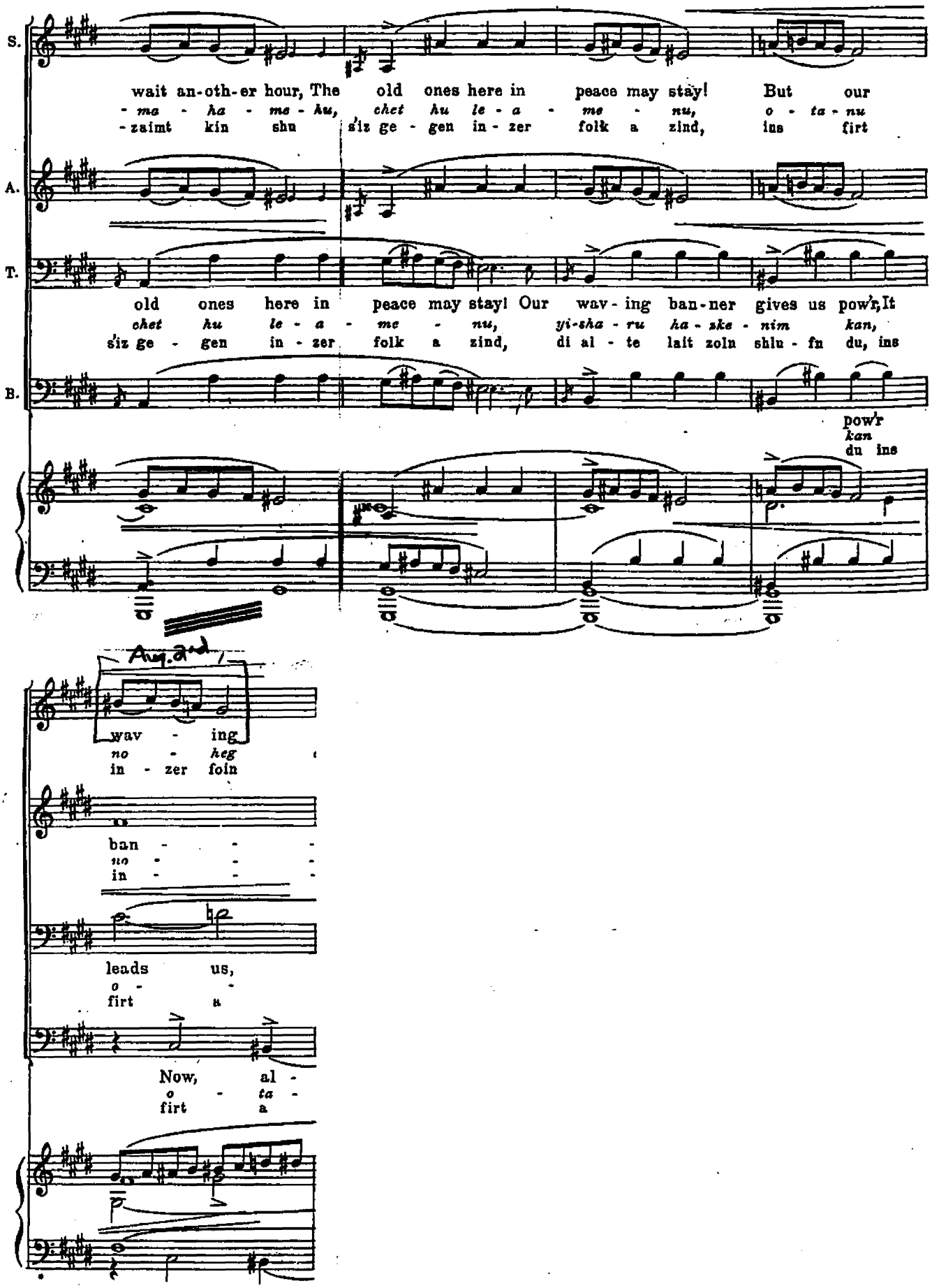
Example 6B



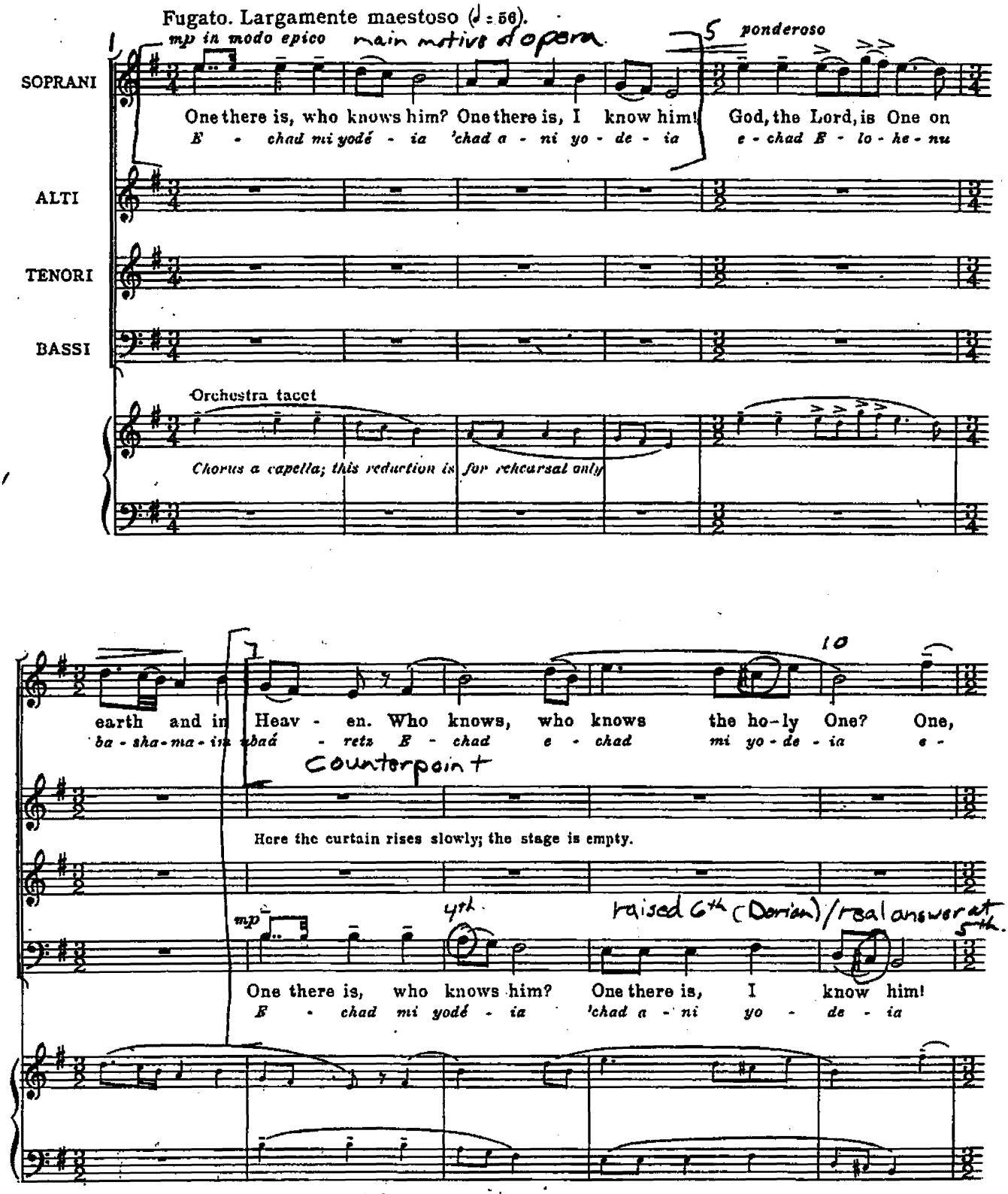
Traditional call to the Torah

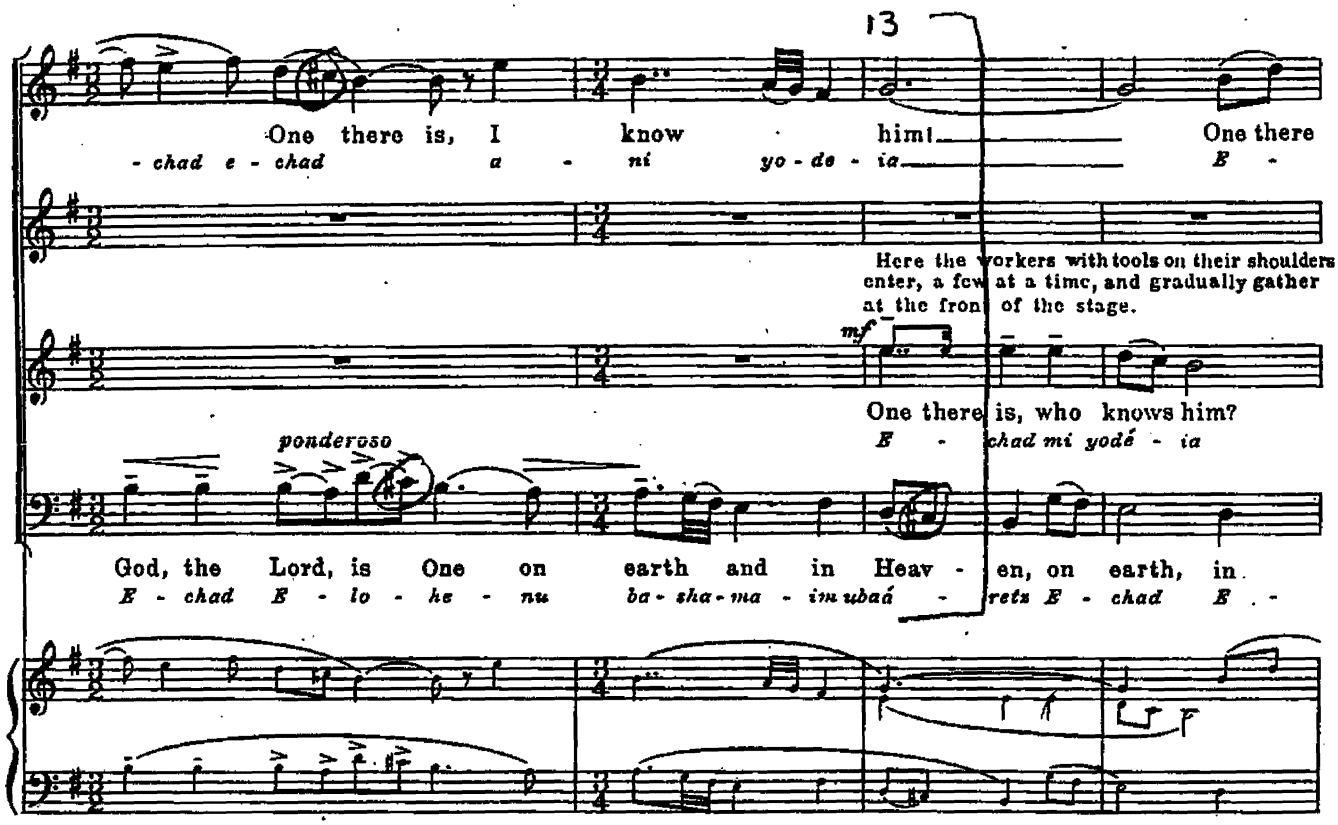
Found in Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, vol. 8 (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1973), 21.

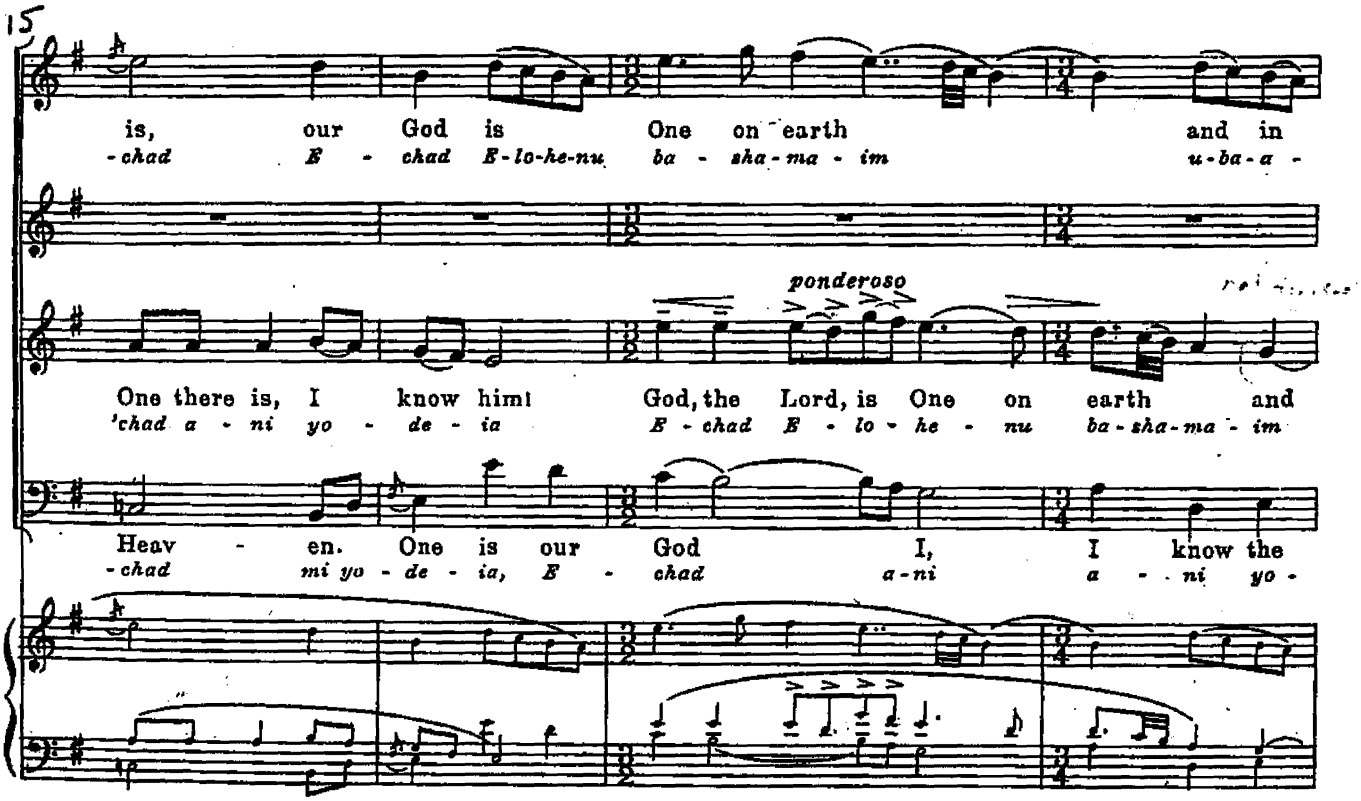
Example 7

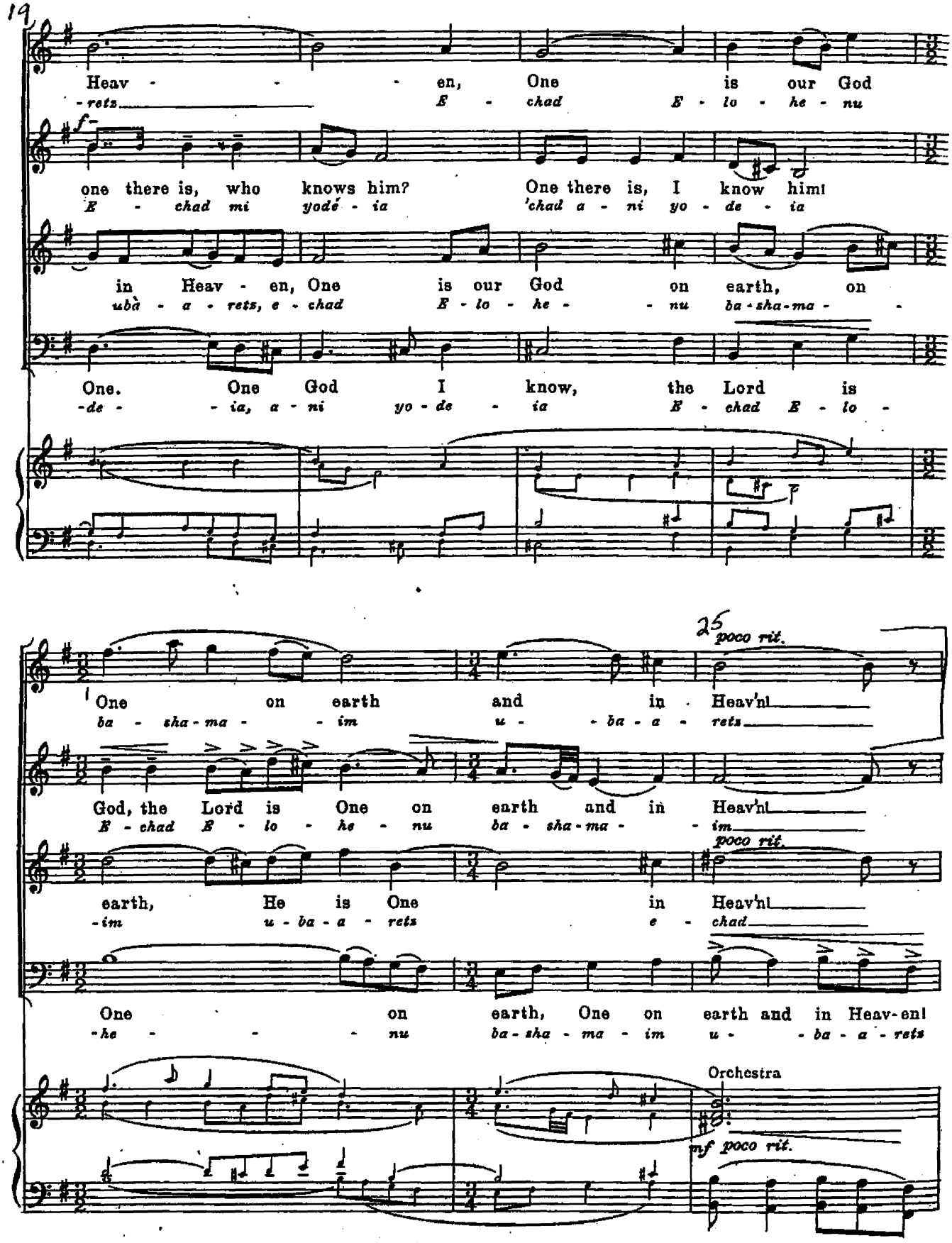

S.
wait an-oth-er hour, The old ones here in peace may stay! But our
-ma - ha - me - hu, chet hu le - a - me - nu, o - ta - nu
-zaimt kin shu s'iz ge - gen in - zer folk a zind, ins firt
A.
T.
old ones here in peace may stay! Our wav - ing ban-ner gives us pow'r, It
chet hu le - a - me - nu, yi-sha - ru ha - ske - nim kan,
s'iz ge - gen in - zer folk a zind, di al - te lait zoln shlu - fn du, ins
B.
pow'r
kan
du ins
Aug. 2nd
wav - ing
no - heg
in - zer foin
ban - - -
no - - -
in - - -
leads us,
o - -
firt a
Now, al -
o - ta -
firt a

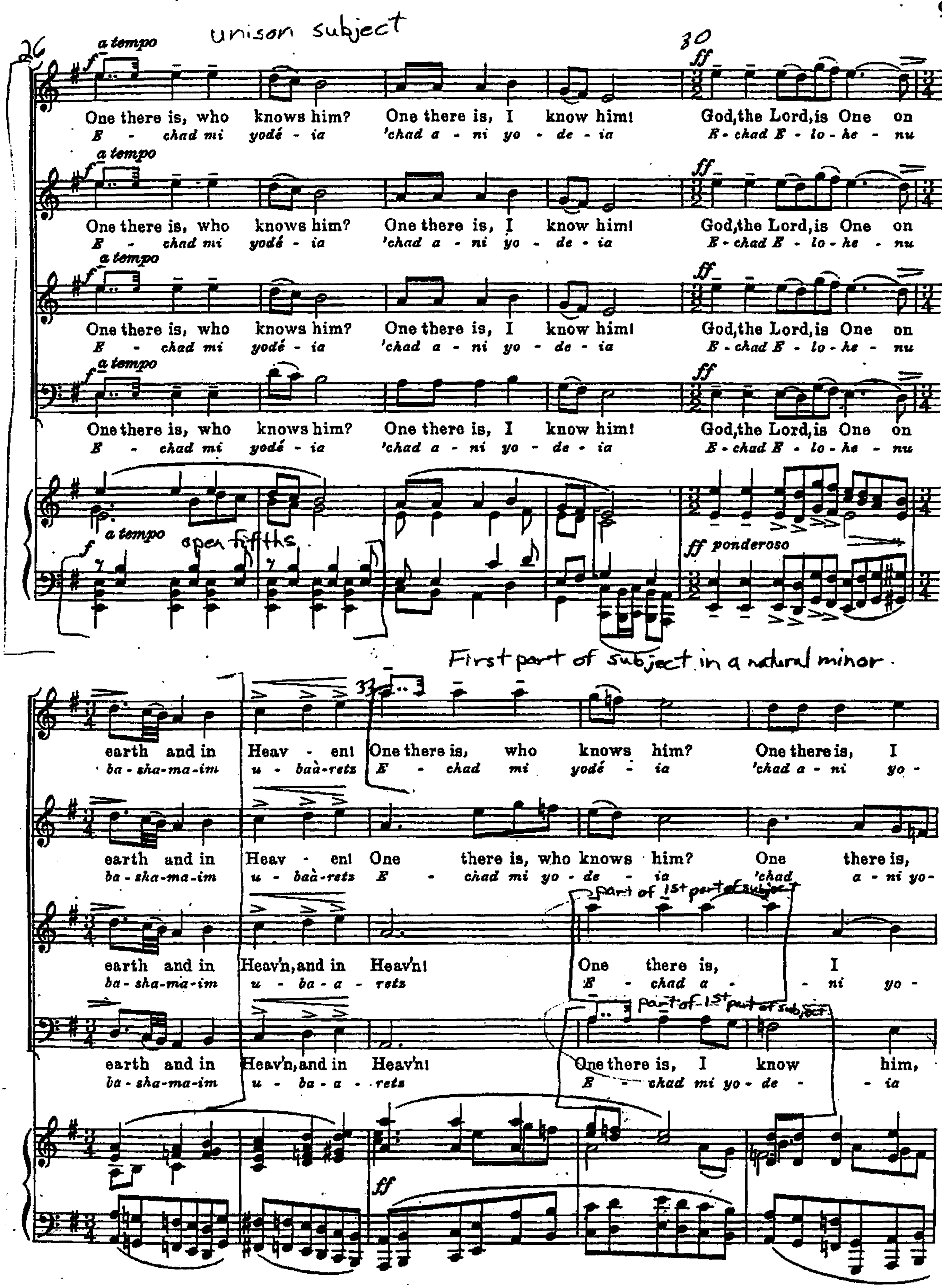
11. Chorus.


Fugato. Largamente maestoso (♩ = 56).
mp in modo epico
main motive of opera
ponderoso
SOPRANI
One there is, who knows him? One there is, I know him! God, the Lord, is One on
E - chad mi yodé - ia 'chad a - ni yo - de - ia e - chad E - lo - he - nu
ALTI
TENORI
BASSI
Orchestra tacet
Chorus a capella; this reduction is for rehearsal only
earth and in Heav - en. Who knows, who knows the ho-ly One? One,
ba - sha-ma - im u-vaá - retz E - chad e - chad mi yo - de - ia e -
Counterpoint
Here the curtain rises slowly; the stage is empty.
mp
4th
raised 6th (Dorian) / real answer at 5th.
One there is, who knows him? One there is, I know him!
E - chad mi yodé - ia 'chad a - ni yo - de - ia

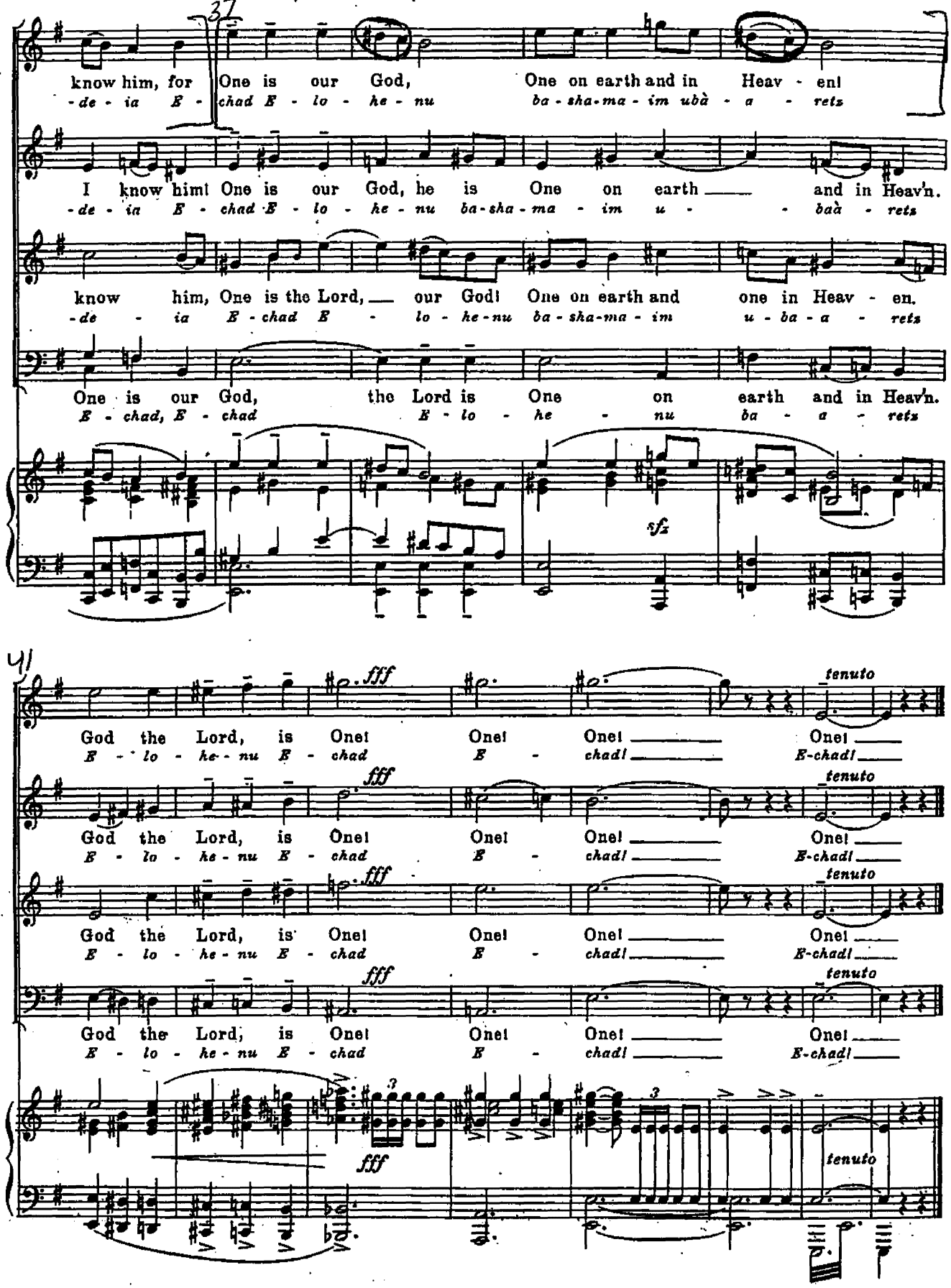

13
One there is, I know him! One there
- chad e - chad a - ni yo - de - ia E -
Here the workers with tools on their shoulders enter, a few at a time, and gradually gather at the front of the stage.
mf
One there is, who knows him?
E - chad mi yodé - ia
ponderoso
God, the Lord, is One on earth and in Heav - en, on earth, in
E - chad E - lo - he - nu ba - sha - ma - im u-ba-á - retz E - chad E -


15
is, our God is One on earth and in
- chad E - chad E-lo-he-nu ba - sha - ma - im u - ba - a -
ponderoso
One there is, I know him! God, the Lord, is One on earth and
'chad a - ni yo - de - ia E - chad E - lo - he - nu ba - sha - ma - im
Heav - en. One is our God I, I know the
- chad mi yo - de - ia, E - chad a - ni a - ni yo -


19
Heav - - - en, One is our God
-retz E - chad E - lo - he - nu
f
one there is, who knows him? One there is, I know him!
E - chad mi yodé - ia 'chad a - ni yo - de - ia
in Heav - en, One is our God on earth, on
ubà - a - retz, e - chad E - lo - he - nu ba-sha-ma -
One. One God I know, the Lord is
-de - - ia, a - ni yo - de - ia E - chad E - lo -
25
poco rit.
One on earth and in Heav'n
ba - sha-ma - - im u - - ba - a - retz
God, the Lord is One on earth and in Heav'n
E - chad E - lo - he - nu ba - sha-ma - - im
poco rit.
earth, He is One in Heav'n
-im u - ba - a - retz e - chad
One on earth, One on earth and in Heav-en!
-he - - - nu ba-sha - ma - im u - - ba - a - retz
Orchestra
mf poco rit.


unison subject
a tempo
26
30
ff
One there is, who knows him? One there is, I know him! God, the Lord, is One on
E - chad mi yodé - ia 'chad a - ni yo - de - ia E - chad E - lo - he - nu
open fifths
ff ponderoso
First part of subject in a natural minor
33
earth and in Heav - en! One there is, who knows him? One there is, I
ba - sha - ma - im u - baà - retz E - chad mi yodé - ia 'chad a - ni yo -
earth and in Heav - en! One there is, who knows him? One there is,
ba - sha - ma - im u - baà - retz E - chad mi yo - de - ia 'chad a - ni yo -
part of 1st part of subject
earth and in Heav'n, and in Heav'n! One there is, I
ba - sha - ma - im u - ba - a - retz E - chad a - ni yo -
part of 1st part of subject
earth and in Heav'n, and in Heav'n! One there is, I know him,
ba - sha - ma - im u - ba - a - retz E - chad mi yo - de - ia

2 statements of part of 1st part of subject with Aug 2nds.



#11 "Echad mi yodea" Diagram

A (Exposition) m.1-24 in e natural minor

	m.1-7	m.7-13	m.13-18	m.19-24
S	subject	counterpoint	counterpoint	counterpoint
A				Real answer at 5th
T			subject	counterpoint
B		Real answer at 5th	counterpoint	counterpoint

B in e natural minor

	m.26-31
S	Unison
A	statement
T	of
B	subject

C in a natural minor m.33-40

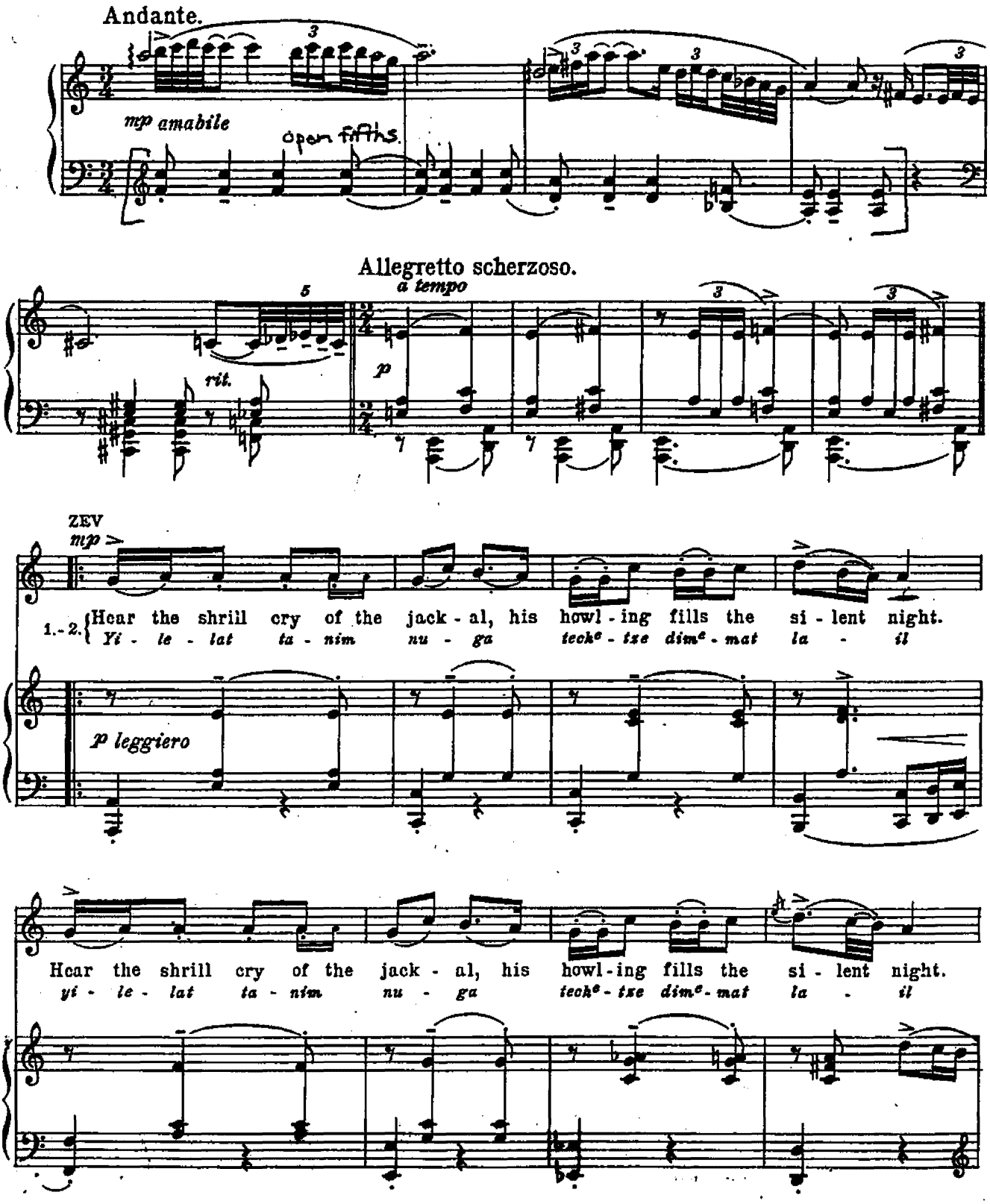
	m.33	m.34	m.35	m.36	m.37-40
S	1st	part	of	subject	2 statements of part of 1st part of subject with augmented second
A	counter-	point	counter-	point	counterpoint
T		part of 1st part of subject			counterpoint
B		part of 1st -	part of subject		counterpoint

Coda m.41-47 ends in E major

Example 9

14. Yemenite Song*

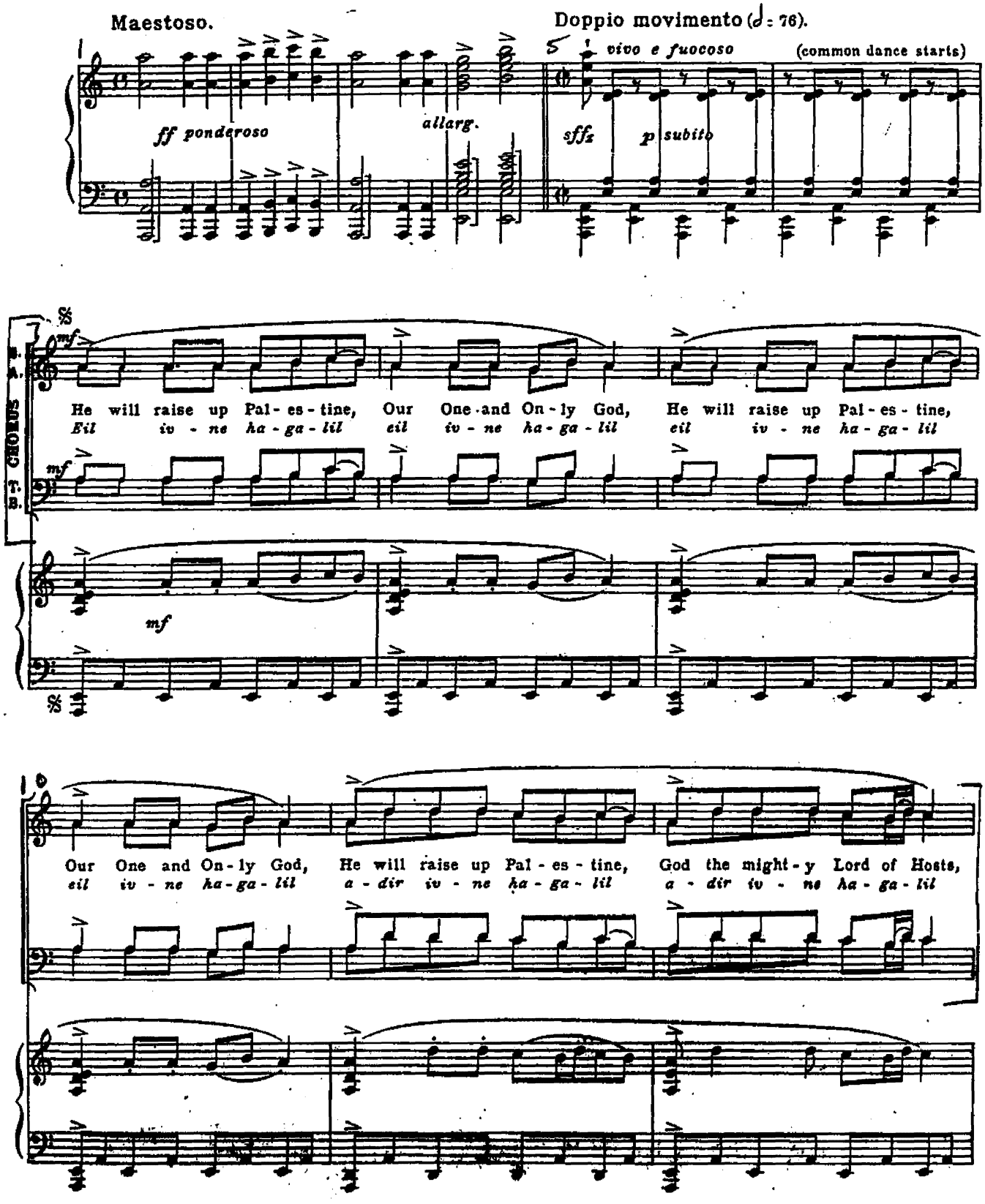
(Zev)

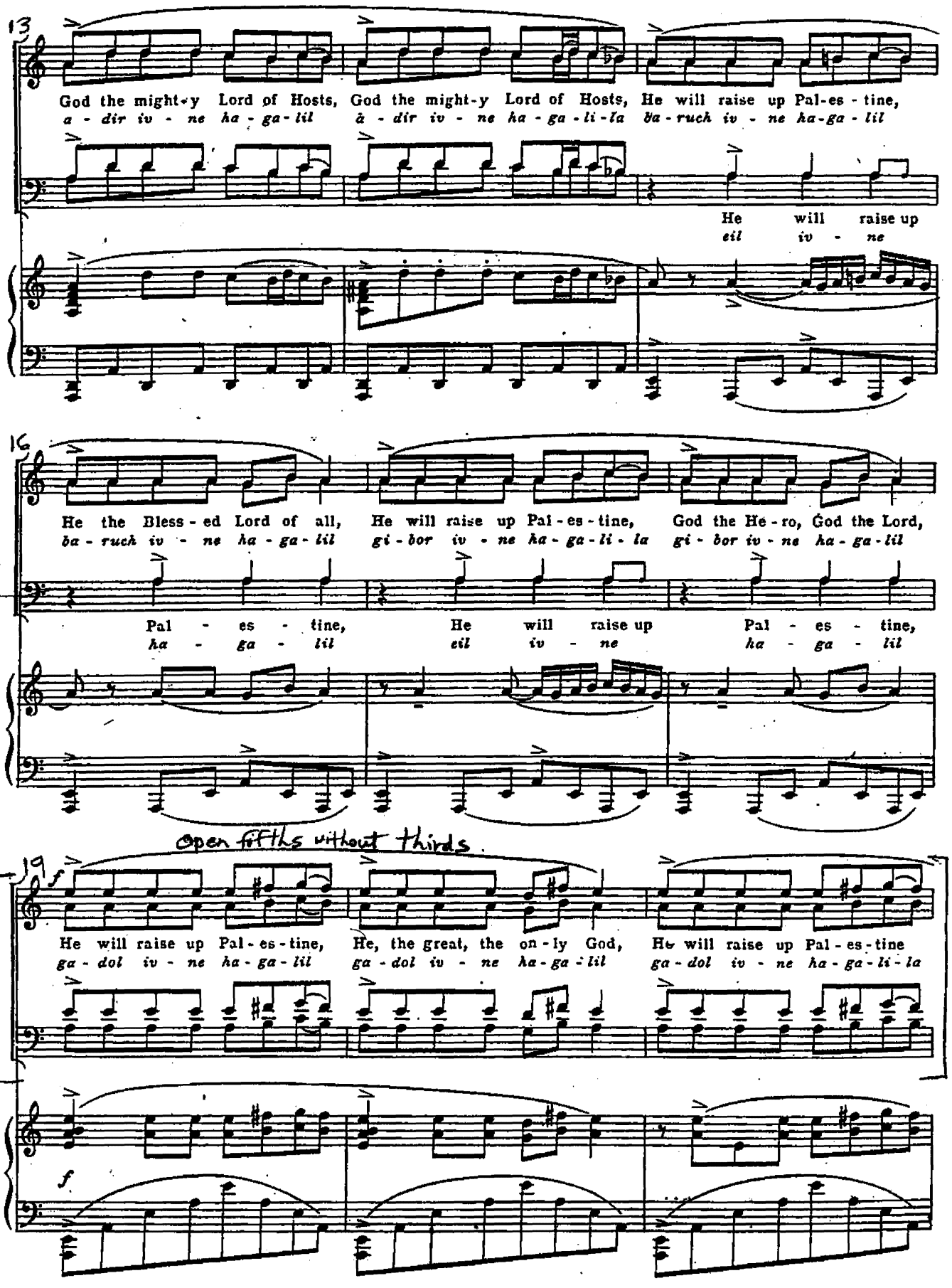


Example 10

23. "Ora," Dance.

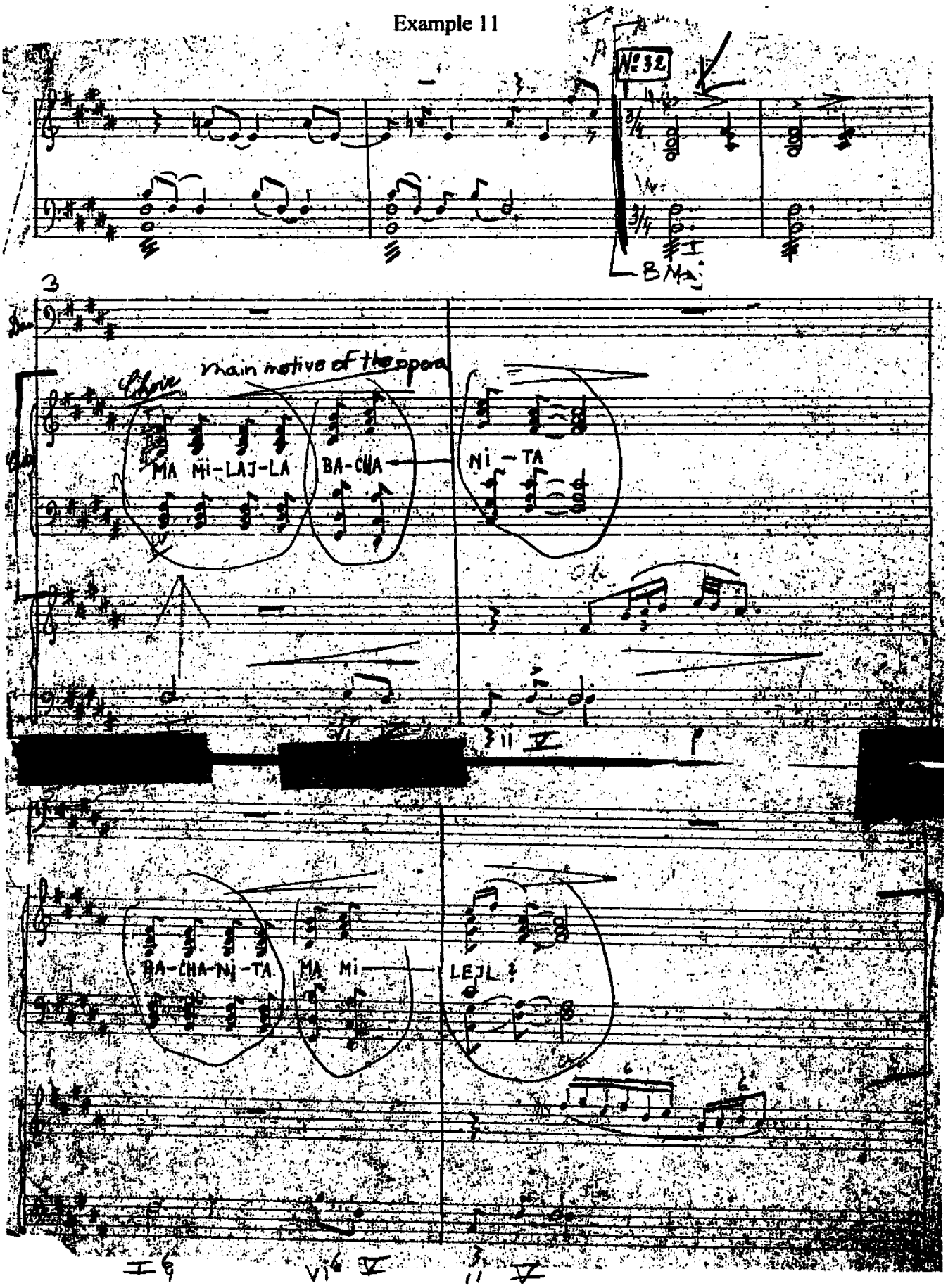
(Chorus)

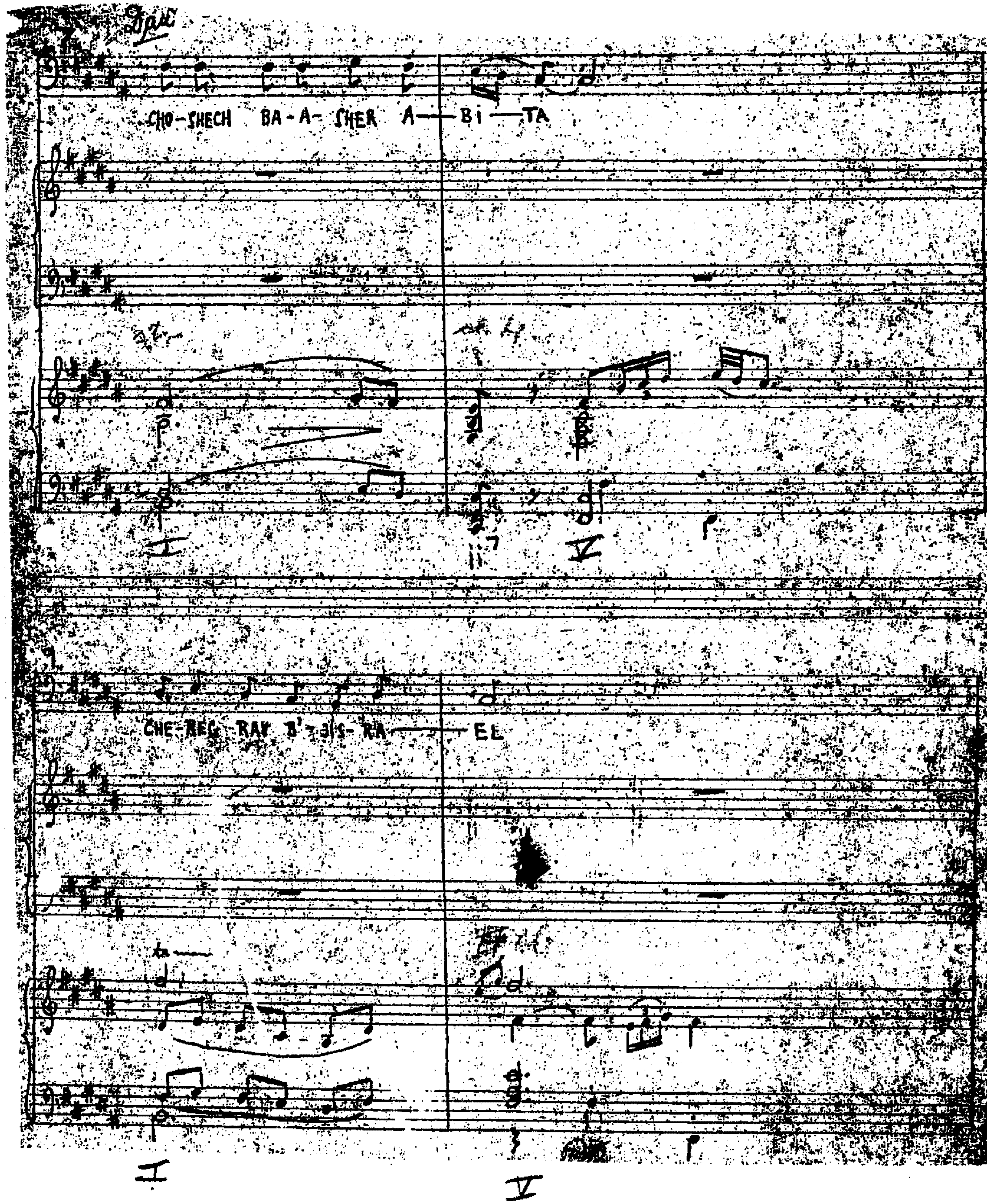


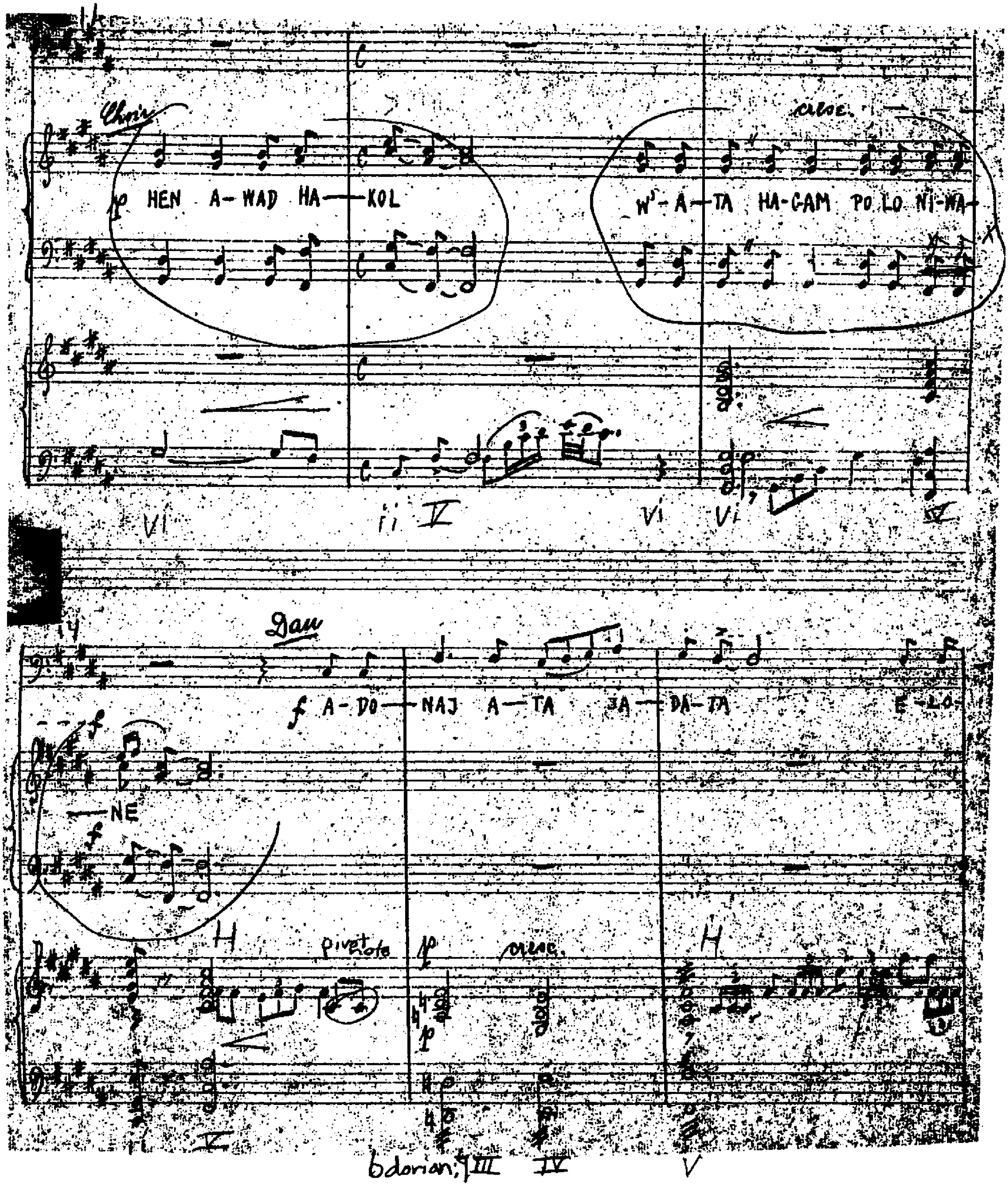

13
God the might-y Lord of Hosts, God the might-y Lord of Hosts, He will raise up Pal-es-tine,
a-dir iv-ne ha-ga-lil à-dir iv-ne ha-ga-li-la ba-ruch iv-ne ha-ga-lil
He will raise up
eil iv-ne
16
He the Bless-ed Lord of all, He will raise up Pal-es-tine, God the He-ro, God the Lord,
ba-ruch iv-ne ha-ga-lil gi-bor iv-ne ha-ga-li-la gi-bor iv-ne ha-ga-lil
Pal-es-tine, He will raise up Pal-es-tine,
ha-ga-lil eil iv-ne ha-ga-lil
open fifths without thirds
19
f
He will raise up Pal-es-tine, He, the great, the on-ly God, He will raise up Pal-es-tine
ga-dol iv-ne ha-ga-lil ga-dol iv-ne ha-ga-lil ga-dol iv-ne ha-ga-li-la
f

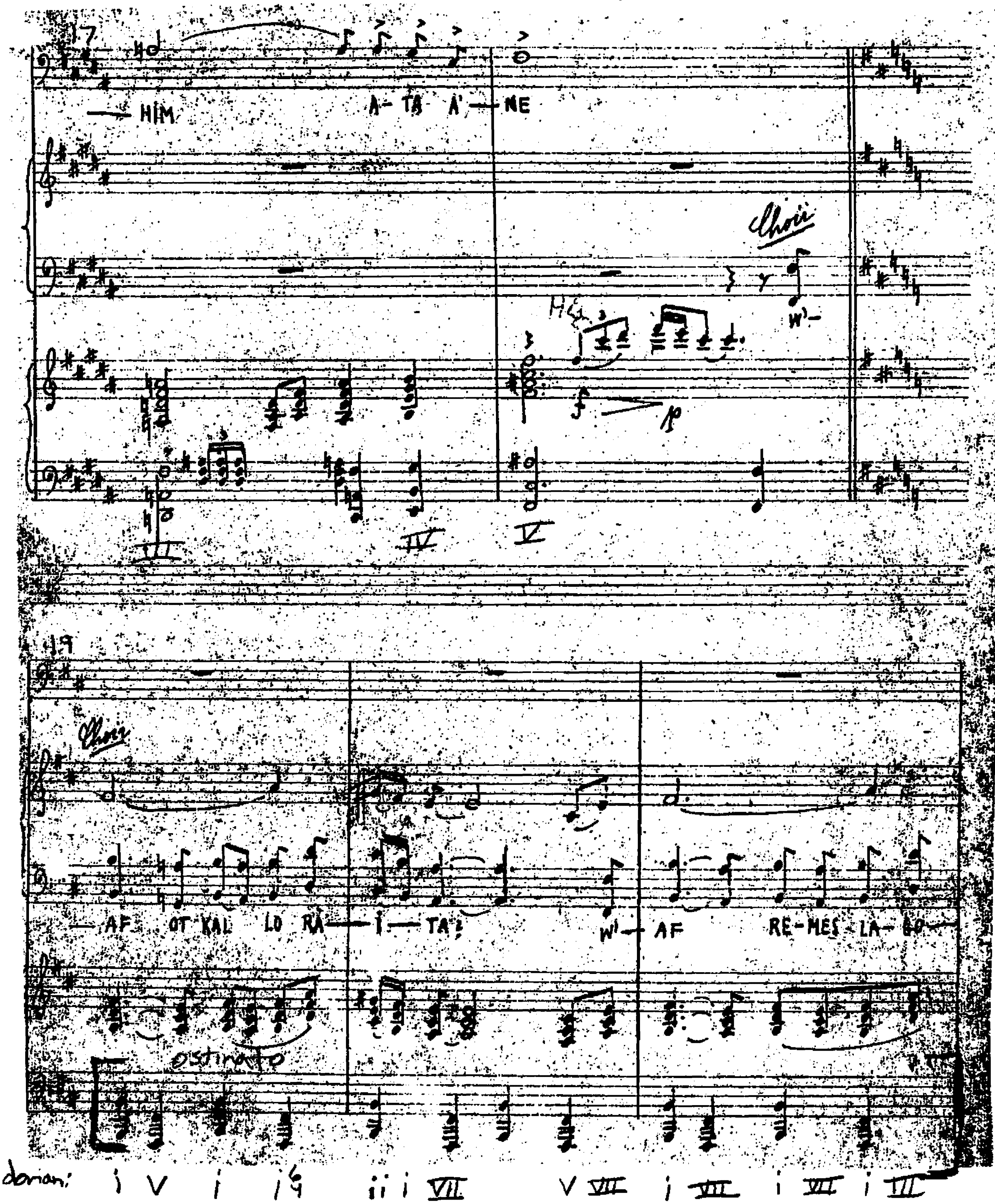
Musical Examples from *Dan Hashomer*

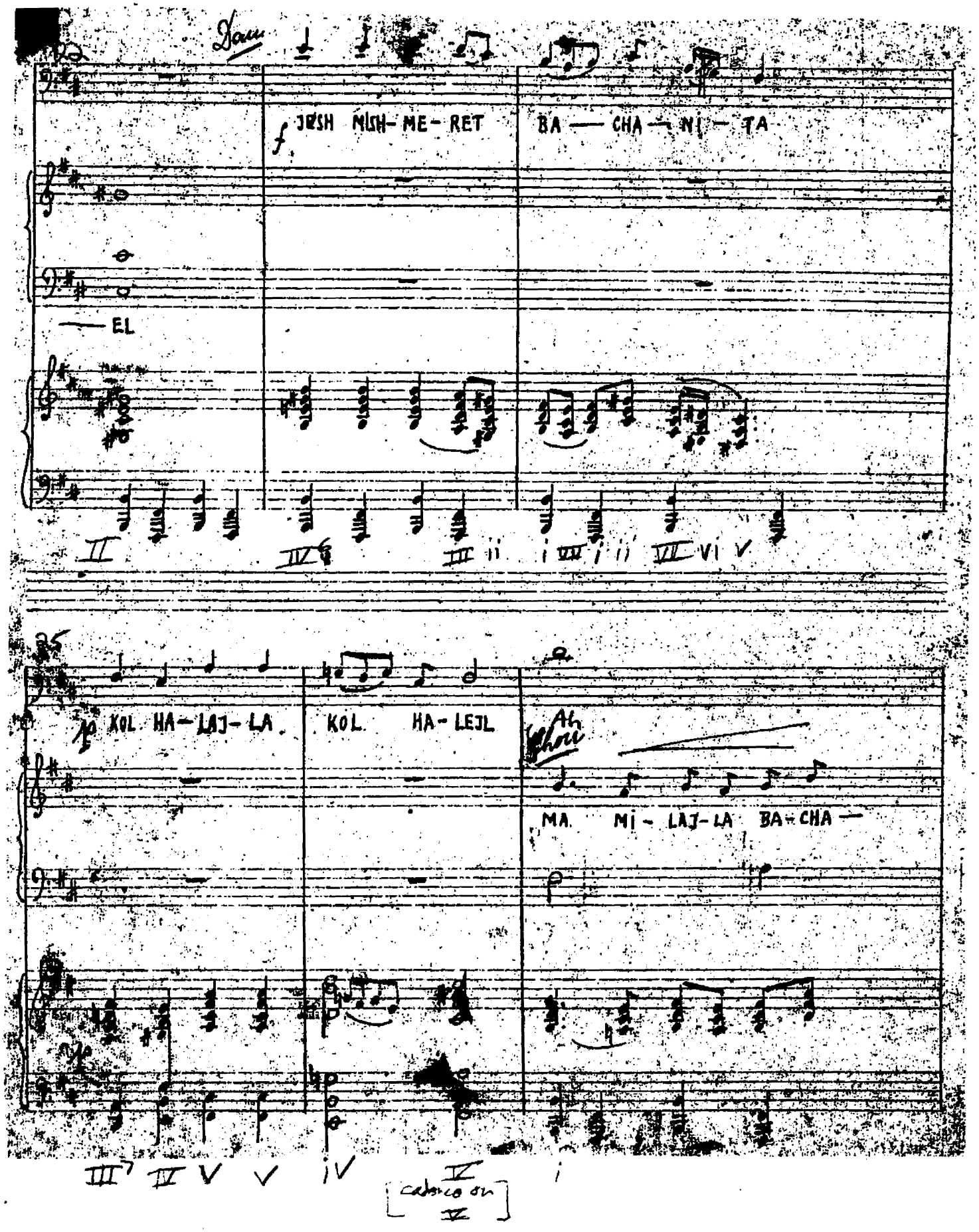
Example 11

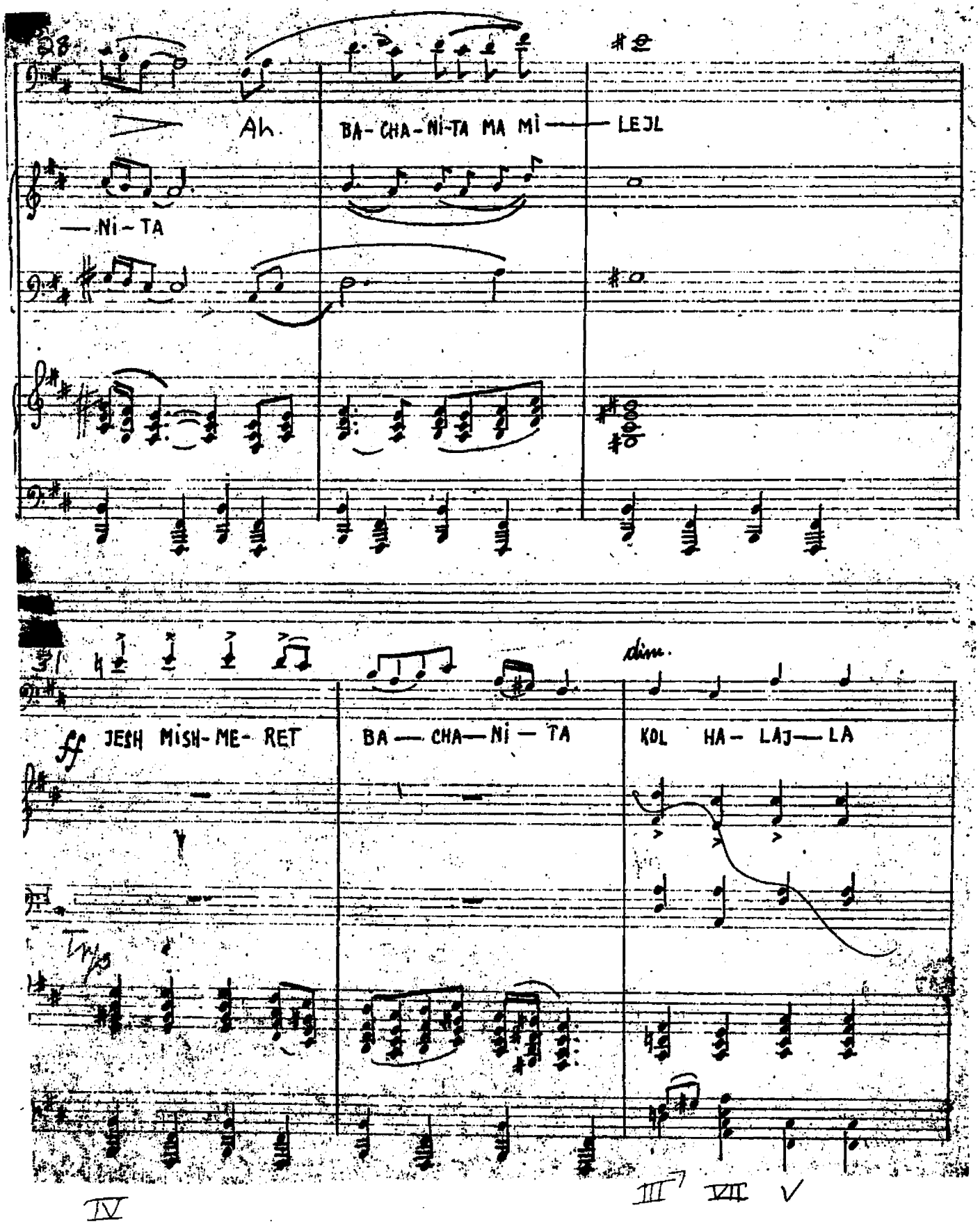


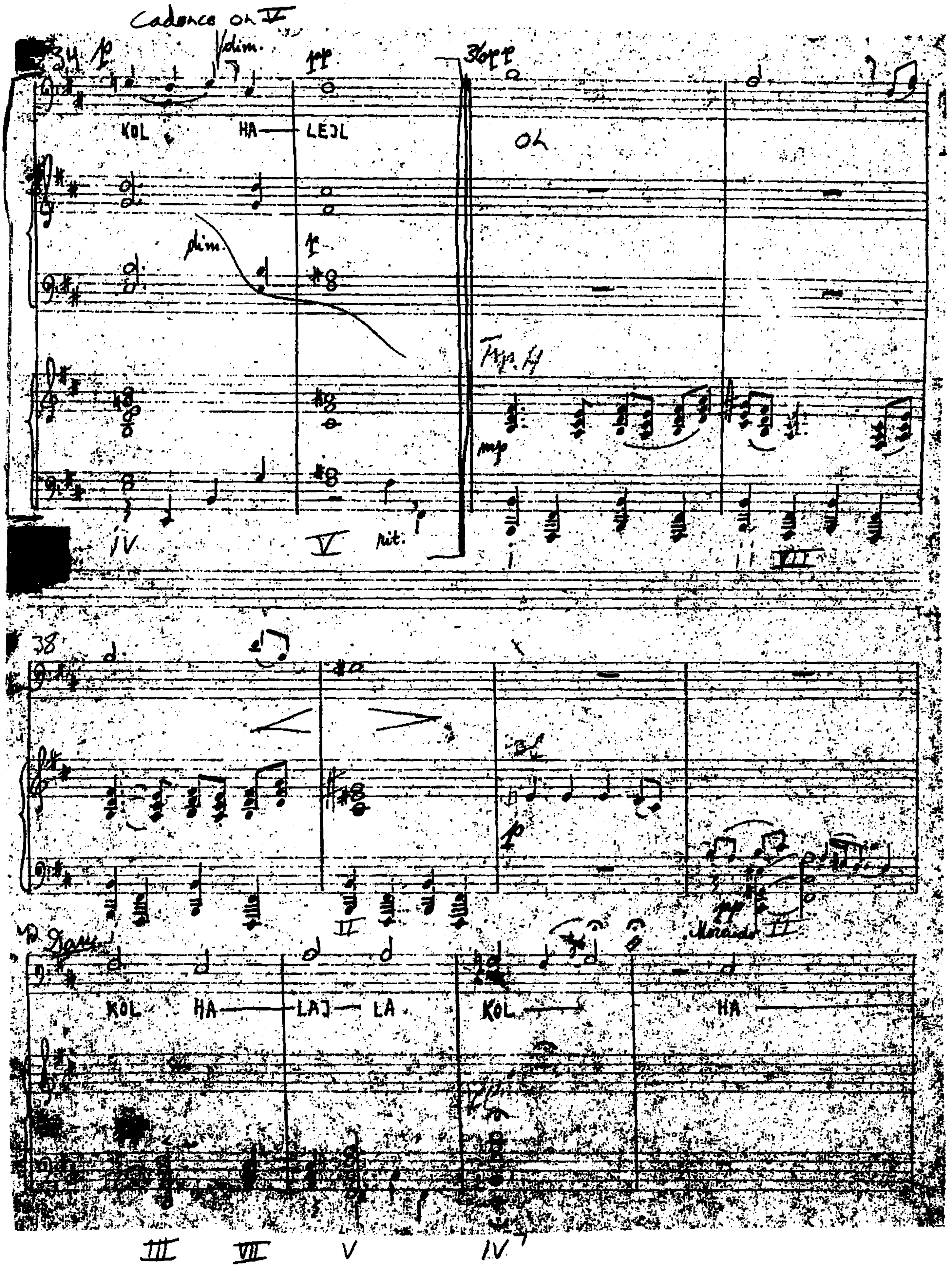

CHO-SHECH BA-A-SHER A—BI—TA
I
V
CHE-REG RAV B'-YIS-RA—EL
I
V

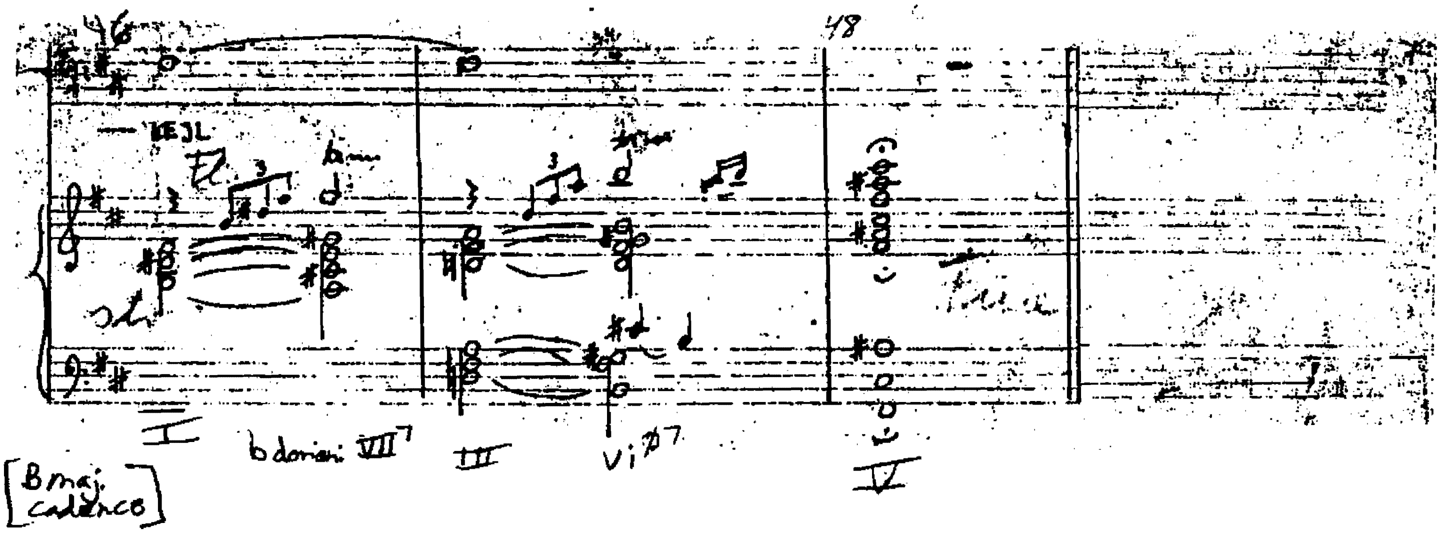

Choir
p HEN A-WAD HA—KOL
cresc.
W'-A—TA HA-GAM PO LO NI-WA-
Dan
f A-DO—NAJ A—TA JA—DA-TA E-LO-
—NE
pivot note
cresc.
b dorian;


17
HIM
A- TA A' — NE
Choir
W'-
IV
V
19
Choir
AF OT KAL LO RA — I — TA;
W' — AF RE-MES LA-GO
ostinato
b dorian: i V i i ii i VII V VII i VII i VII i VII


Lau
f JOSH MISH-ME-RET BA — CHA — NI — TA
— EL
II IV6 III ii I VII I ii VII VI V
35
p KOL HA-LAJ-LA KOL HA-LEJL
Ah Yhou
MA MI-LAJ-LA BA-CHA —
III7 IV V V iV V i
cabrio on V


Ah.
BA-CHA-NI-TA MA MI
LEJL
—NI-TA
dim.
ff JESH MISH-ME-RET
BA — CHA — NI — TA
KOL HA-LAJ — LA
IV
III
VII
V


Cadence on V
dim.
KOL HA— LEJL
OL
dim.
rit.
KOL HA— LAJ— LA
KOL—
HA—


46
48
I
b dorian: VII7
III
vi ø7
IV
[B maj. cadence]

Ma mi laila baChanita Diagram

Section A in B Major

m.1-14
Solo and Choir Text about losing hope for Israel Main motive of the opera m.1-6

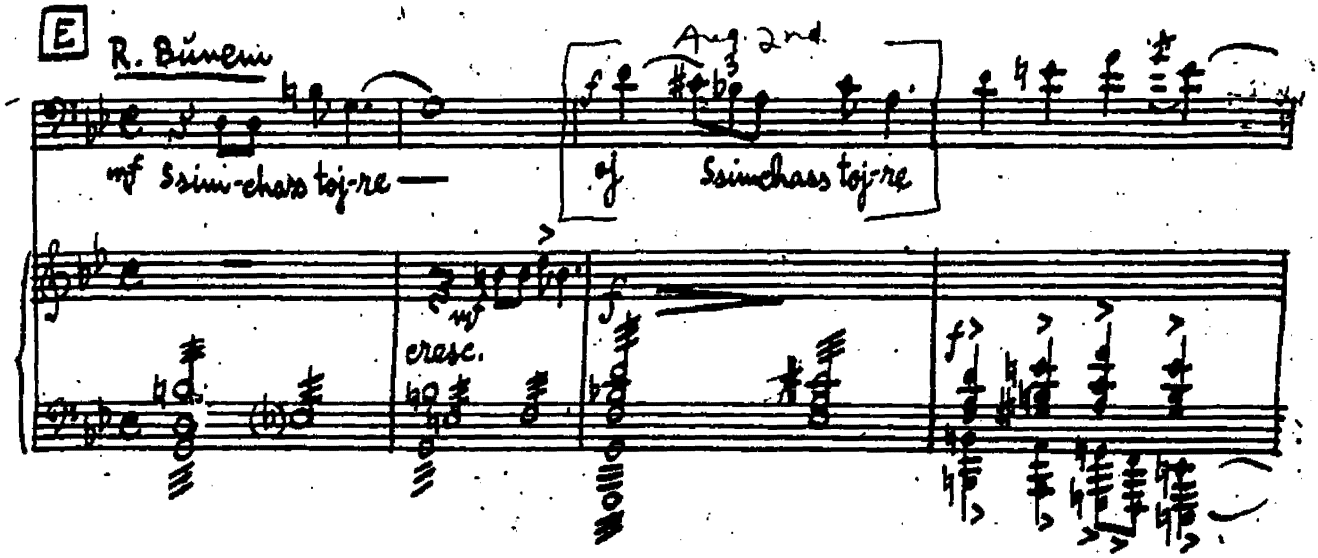
Transition

m.15-18
Solo only Text - Pleading In b Dorian

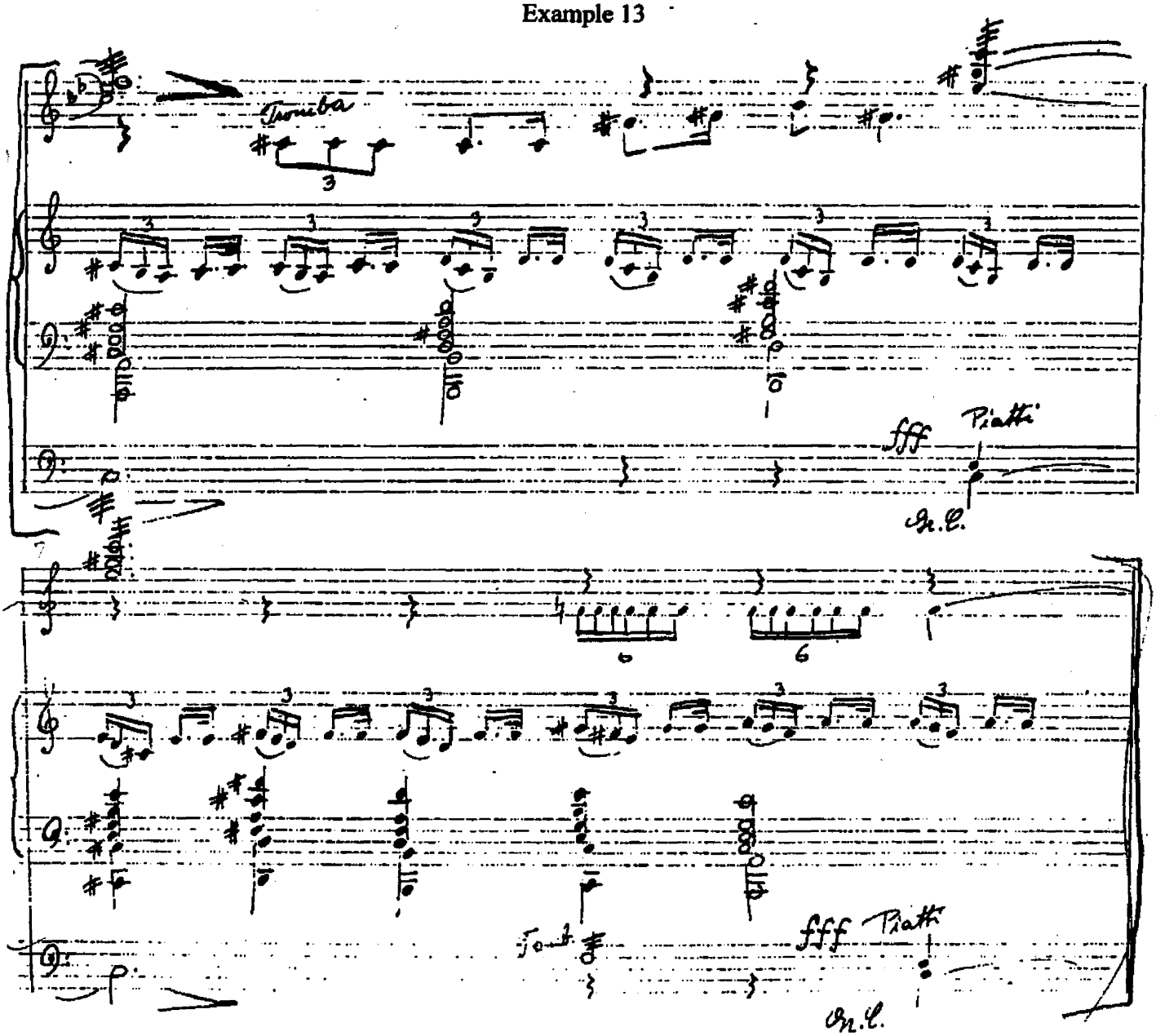
Section B in b dorian m.18-48

m.18-26	m.27-35	m.36-48
Solo and Choir Text - Heroic First tonic cadence in b dorian at m.19 Half Cadence on V in m.26 Ostinato	Solo and Choir Text - Heroic Half Cadence on V in m.35 Ostinato	Solo only Ostinato Cadence in B Major m.46 Final Cadence on V

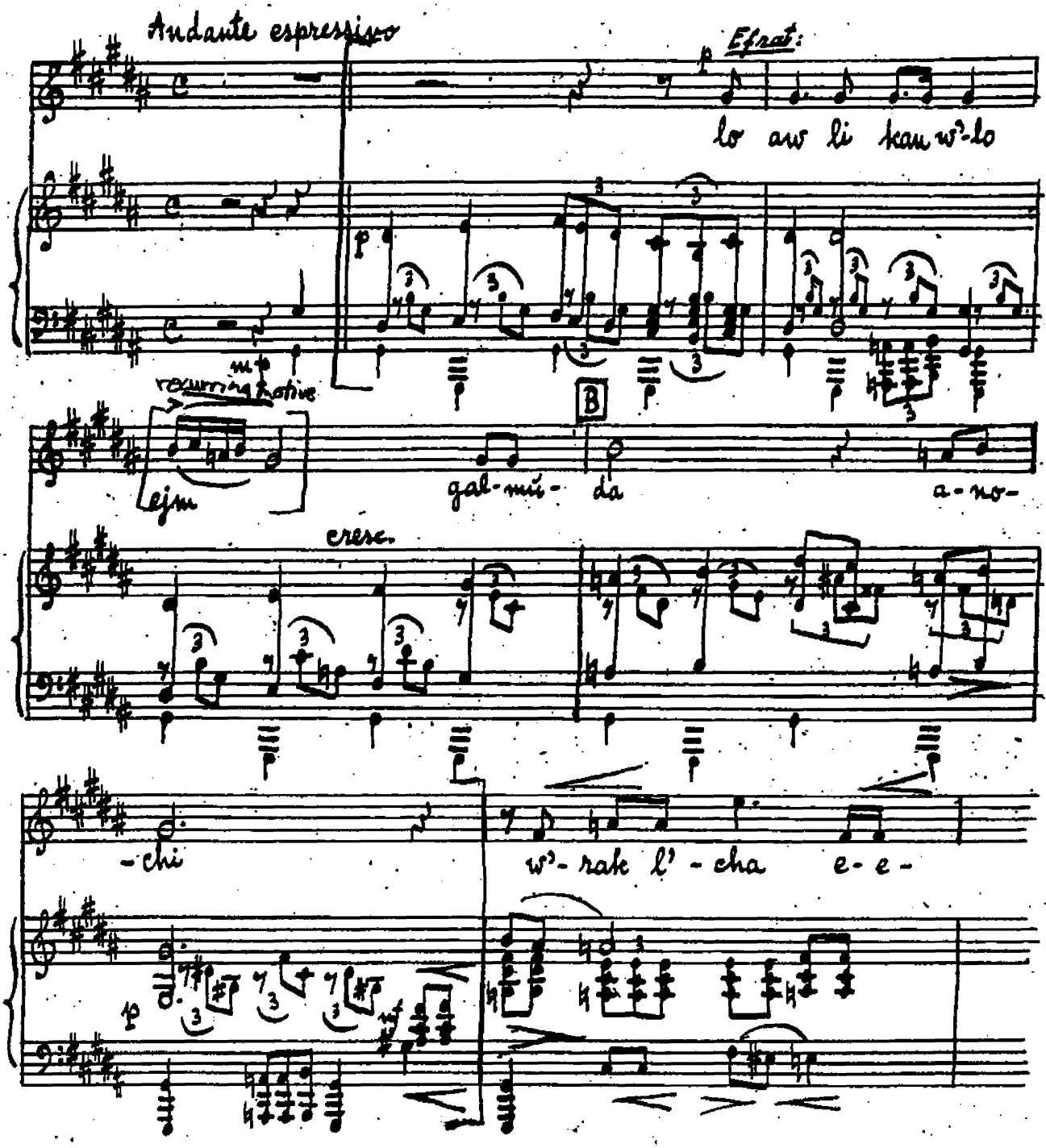
Example 12



Example 13



Example 14


Andante espressivo
Efrat:
lo aw li kan w'-lo
returning motive
B
ejm
gal-mú- da
a-no-
cresc.
-chi
w'- rak l' - cha
e- e-

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