SYNAGOGUE COMMUNAL TRAUMA AND MUSIC IN THE HEALING PROCESS

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Introduction

This repertoire guide has been created as a labor of love. My interest in creating this type of project comes out of my personal experience with synagogue communal trauma and pastoral care. I grew up in a synagogue that dealt with a significant communal trauma; Congregation M'kor Shalom in Cherry Hill, NJ. In 1994, a few months after my bat mitzvah, the wife of our senior rabbi was murdered by two hitmen the rabbi hired. The rabbi was having an affair with a local radio personality and decided that divorce was not an option, and so he had her murdered. This rabbi not only officiated at my bat mitzvah but also officiated my father's funeral. My congregation and I were rocked to our core. Early in the healing process our cantor taught the choir a piece of music that became an anthem around which the congregation rallied. In addition, I am drawn to the pastoral side of the cantorate in a significant way. I find deep fulfillment in helping people through crises and challenges in their lives. I have used music to personally help myself heal and help patients and congregants heal.

We are living through a challenging moment in history. Communal traumas seem to be more and more common. Clergy are called upon to help their communities heal on a more regular basis. When the trauma hits home for the clergyperson, their own emotional responses can make it challenging to be at their best. This project can serve as a resource for congregational clergy who are dealing with a communal trauma. The sheer number of things that cantors have to deal with during a crisis is significant. My hope is that this guide can be pulled off the shelf during these moments of trauma to help make cantors' musical decisions

easier. I hope that this project will help cantors find the music that may touch their congregation and help them start on the path to wholeness.

This project employs multiple methods of research including interviews, study of relevant literature, and study of selected pieces of music. Interviews were conducted with cantors and rabbis. Research was conducted through social media, including Facebook, to identify articles and conversations by cantors in response to contemporary communal traumas. Initial research was completed by taking screen shots of conversations in the ACC Facebook group regarding musical selections for communal gatherings after the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA and the Camp Fire and other wildfires in California. These conversations were filled with questions and answers regarding how cantors made their musical selections and what worked for their communities. Research was also conducted by looking at Jewish newspapers published close to the occurrence of a communal trauma to identify cantors/congregations who had either written an article or advertised a special service or event. In addition, colleagues and teachers identified individuals to be interviewed. Another method included the study of literature from the psychological community and pastoral counseling literature on trauma as well as literature that discusses music as means to address trauma and promote healing. Music therapy literature was used as well. These sources were primarily found through catalogue searches. Literature discussing disaster spiritual care was also used, including resources from the American Red Cross and the National Association of Voluntary Organizations (VOAD). Pieces of music selected for inclusion in the repertoire guide were studied in depth. This included researching the history of each piece, including the composer, lyrics, arranger, and performer(s). Research was also conducted on settings in which the piece of music has been

used, including healing environments, non-healing environments, as well as an explanation of the reasoning behind those choices. Performance practices were also addressed.

There are a number of guiding questions that informed this project and served as the backbone of my research and final product. These include:

• What is it about music that has the power to help us feel better?

• How can we, as cantors, use existing repertoire in times of trauma to help our congregations process what they have experienced in the early days after the trauma?

• How can we utilize psychological and trauma literature to guide us when selecting repertoire?

• Which aspects of the healing process have been the focus of repertoire selected for communal gatherings?

The repertoire guide has been created to be as user friendly as possible. The first part of the guide presents three introductory chapters. The first chapter addresses the cycle of trauma including typical human responses as well as the role of the chaplain and religious community during these times. The second chapter explores the way religion can be a source of coping during a traumatic event. Specific methods explored include: looking to the familiar as comfort, gathering as a community, an opportunity to step back from the world, music and physical ritual, and naming what has happened. The third chapter presents the role of music in facing trauma. This chapter specifically discusses: music and brain chemistry, music therapy, music as a means to provide structure in chaos, music as an emotional release, and music as something familiar during chaos/post-trauma.

The second part of the guide includes information regarding 10 pieces of music that can all be used in a communal gathering in the aftermath of a trauma that was felt in the Jewish community. Each is a vocal piece with varying published accompaniments. Each entry includes the following information: source for the song's text, composer(s), publication source, recording source, either context first introduced or concept (sometimes both), suggestions for potential use, and the authors suggested musical considerations. The hope is that having this information in one source will make these pieces more user friendly.

PART 1

Chapter 1: The Cycle of Trauma

Traumatic incidents and the trauma they leave behind exist in every corner of society. The incident can occur once or reoccur with varying regularity. The American Psychological Association defines trauma as a person's emotional response to an extremely negative event. This event can impact an individual, a family system, subsets of a community, the community as a whole, the country or world. Each affected person or system may experience the event differently and react to the same event in entirely different ways. The range of possible reactions are vast and require specific and individualized responses. Within the synagogue system there can be numerous types of trauma which affect individuals, groups within the congregation, and the synagogue system as a whole. Trauma can come from internal sources, i.e. the death of a president or prominent member, clergy misconduct, or external sources, i.e., school shooting, natural disaster. No matter their origin, their impact can be felt.

When faced with a sudden trauma, the human body has physical, emotional and spiritual reactions. Clinical psychologist Patti Levin put it best when she said, "These are NORMAL reactions to ABNORMAL events."[1] Physically, the human body reacts with a reduced capacity to deal with anything outside of the ordinary. Its defenses are down which can cause the smallest disruption in health homeostats to become an issue. According to Levin physical symptoms can include, "aches and pains… changes in sleep patterns…[being]

[1] Patti Levin, "Common Responses to Trauma-and Strategies," DrPattiLevin.com, June 23, 2015, https://drpattilevin.com/)

more susceptible to colds and illnesses [and] increased use of alcohol or drugs…"[2] The body rarely separates physical reactions from emotional ones. In the aftermath of a trauma, a range of emotional reactions are common. These may include the full range of typical grief reactions: shock, guilt, anger, denial, depression, etc. Levin also comments that some may have flashbacks and "feel like the trauma is happening now." Some people may go into states of "hyper-alertness or hypervigilance [while others may show] anger towards religion or belief system(s)."[3] In a study of Presbyterian clergy following the September 11th attacks, "hyperarousal was the second most commonly experienced symptom"[4]

In times of trauma or disaster, it is not only the physical and emotional aspects of a person that can be injured, the spiritual self may also suffer. Signs of an unhealthy spirit include, "…reconsidering core tenets of religious beliefs; asking questions such as 'Why did God do this';…closing oneself off from loved ones;…wondering about life and death; feeling shame."[5]

Chaplains and trained clergy are uniquely suited to provide disaster spiritual care. "After a disaster people tend to turn to religion to help stabilize their lives. Religious care

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[2] Levin, "Common Responses to Trauma-and Strategies."

[3] Levin, "Common Responses to Trauma-and Strategies."

[4] Janice Bell Meisenhelder and John P. Marcum, "Responses of Clergy to 9/11: Posttraumatic Stress, Coping, and Religious Outcomes," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 4 (December 4, 2004): 551, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2004.00255.x)

[5] Stephen Roberts and Willard W. C. Ashley, "Introduction: Disasters and Spiritual Care," in *Disaster Spiritual Care: Practical Clergy Responses to Community, Regional and National Tragedy* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths, 2008), xx

after a disaster is focused on helping people access this important element in their lives by providing:

- Access to religious worship
- Access to sacred scripture and texts (in a way that others will not find proselytizing)
- Access to food that meets a person's religious needs
- A multifaith sacred space that can be used for meditation and prayer[6]

While chaplains work with people of all religious backgrounds, congregational clergy provide victims, who are their congregants, with a different type of support. They can offer faith specific prayer and gathering opportunities in the hopes of bringing comfort to those who are suffering. By virtue of their function in many congregants' lives, houses of worship can serve as a "second home." This designation means that the religious space may become a de-facto gathering place during times of joy and sorrow. When this happens, clergy and staff can partner with local organizations and professionals to bring recovery services and support professionals to the house of worship, making it a one-stop-shop for recovery.[7]

Clergy interact with their congregants at each stage of disaster recovery. According to Rabbi Stephen B. Roberts, BCJC, the disaster cycle includes: 1) The Pre-Disaster Phase-Threat and Warning; 2) The Impact Phase; 3) Rescue/Heroic/Miracle Phase; 4) Honeymoon/Remedy Phase-Community Cohesion; 5) Disillusionment Phase-Coming to Terms, Working through Grief; 6) Reconstruction Phase-A New Beginning.[8]

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[6] Ashley and Roberts, "Introduction: Disasters and Spiritual Care," xviii

[7] Paul Kipnis (Rabbi) in-person conversation with the author, December 16, 2019.

[8] Stephen B. Roberts, "The Life Cycle of a Disaster," in *Disaster Spiritual Care: Practical Clergy Responses to Community, Regional and National Tragedy* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLights Paths Publishing, 2008), pp. 3-13)

The Pre-Disaster Phase is just that. It is before the disaster happens, when there is a warning that a threat is imminent. It is then an individual's option to take pro-active steps to be prepared. In this phase, congregants will experience fear, confusion, and worry, which they may or may not express or show. Clergy can help spread information about how to be best prepared and urge their congregants to follow local government instructions, and to help those in need get extra assistance. Clergy support congregants by helping them talk through their anxiety and concerns about the unknown and to normalize their reactions.

During the Impact Phase, the disaster is happening. Congregants and clergy have no clue what is happening. Outside of their personal microcosm, they have no idea what is going on. This often feels like a complete lack of control. This phase can, depending on the situation, be a matter of life and death. Unlike most concerned citizens, clergy can have access to the site of a disaster to offer direct care to the victims. They can listen, try to meet their immediate needs, and try to help them feel safe physically and emotionally. They can help victims communicate with their loved ones or communicate with them themselves.

In the Rescue/Heroic/Miracle Phase survivors feel grateful that they made it through. Their adrenaline is still pumping, and a type of euphoria can set in. Clergy, at this stage, can help people identify the source of their gratitude. In particular, we can often lead them to prayers and rituals to express it.

In the Honeymoon or Remedy Phase individuals are feeling enough distance from the disaster to begin to think about the future. While they are past the initial shock phase, they may not have fully processed the traumatic incident enough to live the new version of their lives post-trauma. Clergy can offer opportunities to gather for people to share their feelings. We can provide community rituals. We can offer counseling opportunities. People often feel

a need to “do something constructive and helpful” and congregations and communities can provide them with these opportunities. In this phase, people may not feel comfortable seeking out mental health support, but if it is provided in a familiar and non-threatening environment, such as the synagogue, they may be more open to such a conversation with a mental health professional who is available on-site.

The Disillusionment Phase occurs shortly after the traumatic incident when much of the attention has shifted away from the event, though individuals likely are still dealing with its ramifications. Individuals are dealing with loss and experiencing grief and are realizing that the life they had pre-disaster will not be the same as their life post-disaster. They are trying to come to terms with this reality. This is what clergy train for. Clergy can respond to the grieving of the loss of what was before and will never be again. Clergy have tools to work with their congregants and to help counsel them to work through this. In this phase there is a tipping point of assessing the need to refer out. For congregants who are experiencing this phase, the community can continue to check in on people and reduce their sense of isolation.

The Reconstruction Phase occurs when the individuals affected and the community-at-large have worked through the majority of their grief and loss and are ready to move on. Clergy can help the community figure out how they want to mark this new phase by, for example, creating a memorial or commissioning a piece of music. It is important, during this phase, to remember that anniversaries can be triggers. Clergy can help prepare congregations for an upcoming anniversary by approaching it in a deliberate way, creating rituals and marking it in ways that feel appropriate. They can offer counseling on a continuous basis to those who are still struggling or still feeling a trauma that may never fully go away.

Chapter 2: Religious Coping

During and following a traumatic incident, religious coping is one practice victims and communities use to survive. Senior professor of psychiatry at the University of Jaffna, in Sri Lanka, Somasundram suggests that, "Communities under stress manifest with social disorganization, unpredictability, low trust, fear, high vigilance, low efficacy, low social control of antisocial behaviors and high emigration which lead to anomie (the breakdown of social bonds between an individual and the community), learned helplessness, thwarted aspirations, low self-esteem and insecurity."[1] The presentation of these symptoms is a sign that clergy need to be involved in the immediate aftermath of a trauma to help their community come together and begin to process what they've experienced from a religious framework. While the literature shows that not all religious coping yields a positive result, the majority does in the following ways: "(i) religion and spirituality are usually, although not always, beneficial in dealing with the aftermath of trauma, (ii) traumatic experiences may lead to a deepening of religiousness or spirituality, and (iii) positive religious coping, religious openness, readiness to face existential questions, religious participation, and intrinsic religiousness are typically associated with posttraumatic growth."[2] Religious coping can be broken down into categories. These include: looking at the familiar for comfort,

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[1] Daya Somasundaram, "Addressing Collective Trauma," *Intervention* 12 (2014): 50, https://doi.org/10.1097/wtf.0000000000000068)

[2] Julio F. P. Peres et al., "Spirituality and Resilience in Trauma Victims," *Journal of Religion and Health* 46, no. 3 (September 6, 2007): 347, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-006-9103-0)

gathering as a community, using words/liturgy to express emotions, providing opportunities to step back from the world, using music and physical ritual, and naming what has happened.

Looking for the familiar as comfort

In the middle of chaos, humans yearn for something familiar, something to anchor them that is nearby. A child at summer camp and a student away at college for the first time may each experience a yearning for the familiar, a yearning for home. A phone call from home or a camper in their bunk from home are a great reminder of where they come from and a way to anchor themselves in the middle of the unfamiliar. Physically, the human body relaxes and anxiety levels lower when a person feels at peace and comfortable. In the midst of a trauma, people yearn for the familiar to help find order in the midst of chaos, to feel more at peace and comfortable. The scholarly discussion limits itself to discussing belief in God and how that belief can help victims find comfort through difficult times. "For example, Loewenthal, Macleod, Goldblatt, Lubitsh, and Valentine (2000) found that the effects of general religiousness on the outcomes of stressful situations were mediated through beliefs that God is enabling the individual to bear his/her troubles, that God is in ultimate control, and that the stressor was all for the best."[3] At the same time Meisenhelder and Marcum state that "positive religious coping (looking to God for strength, support, and guidance) was both the most common and the most frequently used [coping] strategy.[4]

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[3] Kenneth I. Pargament, "God Help Me: Advances in the Psychology of Religion and Coping," *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 24, no. 1 (2002): 50, https://doi.org/10.1163/157361203x00219)

[4] Janice Bell Meisenhelder and John P. Marcum, "Responses of Clergy to 9/11: Posttraumatic Stress, Coping, and Religious Outcomes," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 4 (December 4, 2004): 553, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2004.00255.x)

In a congregation thrown into the middle of a traumatic event the mantra is, "stick with what's familiar." This was repeated over and over again as each cantor the author spoke with recalled the trauma they faced. Rabbi Hazzan Jeffrey Myers was leading Shabbat morning services on October 27, 2018 when a gunman entered his sanctuary in Pittsburgh, PA and started shooting. Eleven people were killed. To this day, the congregation's building is still unusable, but Myers is keenly aware that restoring some sense of normality and creating an environment of comfort is key to the healing process.

> …what I've tried to do, despite our displacement, is to help people to restore a sense of whatever pieces we can--that were the normal part of it. In other words, to be reacclimated to our services… the things that we regularly do. Because I felt deep down that people really needed powerful anchors to hold onto during the storm. And the familiar is a really important piece. Specifically, when you're displaced; you're praying in a different synagogue, your world is shaken. There's a new normal that we're still redefining...I tried to just reacclimate everyone to what we were regularly doing so they could grab onto that and take hold of that.[5]

Cantor Anita Hochman discussed the use of Beged Kefet's *Makom Shelibi Ohev*, composed by Cantor Leon Sher, in the hours, days and months after the murder of her senior rabbi's wife. As Hochman recalls, the piece was already in the congregation's cannon. "Sometimes something you already know takes on a new, more passionate, relevant meaning and that's what happened…. It's a really well-crafted song and really goes to the heart of so many situations. That song never stops being meaningful. That's big."[6]

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[5] Jeffrey Myers (Rabbi Hazzan) in telephone discussion with the author, July 29, 2019.

[6] Anita Hochman (Cantor) telephone conversation with the author, November 6, 2019.

Gathering as a Community

Faith communities are just that, communities. These communities function to provide support to their members during times of joy, sorrow and everything in between. Gathering as a community in the immediate aftermath of a trauma is an important way for victims to begin processing what has happened. Gathering can help victims not feel isolated in their feelings, find support, and share their stories. In their chapter called, "From Honeymoon to Disillusionment to Reconstruction," in *Disaster Spiritual Care*, Ashley, Samet and Hatim reference Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen's book *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal.* Dr. Remen writes, "Real stories take time. Life rushes us along and few people are strong enough to stop on their own. Most often, something unforeseen stops us and it is only then we have time to take a seat at life's kitchen table, to know our own story and tell it, and listen to other people's stories."[7] Interpersonal relationships are key when gathering. Established relationships between congregants and clergy and among congregants themselves can help begin a conversation. Having trauma in common can just as easily be a relationship starter.

Cantor Malcolm Arnold jumped into action when students began running into the synagogue. They were trying to escape the February 14, 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, taking place about one mile away. The students were Arnold's congregants who knew that the synagogue was a safe space for them, "…which tells us already that we had laid a foundation that not only is it a place that's safe, but it is a place of gathering and a place of comfort and a place of familiarity. So, we already were on the road

[7] Willard W.C. Ashley, Roberta L. Samet, and Muhammad Hatim, "From Honeymoon to Disillusionment to Reconstruction," in *Disaster Spiritual Care: Practical Clergy Responses to Community, Regional and National Tragedy* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths, 2008), p. 143)

to providing healing for our students."[8] By Arnold's count, at least 100 students showed up at the synagogue looking for support.

Cantor Joel Colman's congregants were forced to flea when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. The flooding was devastating for so many people, including the cantor whose own home was damaged. While Colman's congregants may have yearned for the familiar to regain some sort of normalcy, gathering as a community was not possible. It was a challenge given that New Orleans was mostly uninhabitable for many months after the hurricane. Rosh Hashanah fell a little more than a month after the disaster but there was no way Colman's congregants could all gather for a service. Colman and his rabbinic partner, who were in Baton Rouge, got creative and held an abbreviated service over the phone for anyone who called in. Additionally, a Baton Rouge congregation was going through a rabbinic transition and so Colman and his senior rabbi stepped in to lead Rosh Hashanah services. He recalls that not only were that congregation's members in attendance but many of Colman's displaced congregants drove in to be part of the community and find a piece of home.[9]

Cantor Michael Shochet serves a congregation in Virginia. He and his clergy partners began planning their community gathering hours after the shooting in Pittsburgh occurred. He could not have anticipated what happened.

> It was shortly…after the incident and we put the word out. And we had more people in our synagogue than we've ever had in my 20 years here…all these people that came… we ended up having four spaces in our building, where people sat to watch the service via streaming. And that in itself was healing. Knowing how many people cared about us, from the community, was an incredibly great healing moment, not just for me, but for our members. You know, people said they couldn't believe so many clergy came, because we invited all the clergy up at the end for the closing song. And,

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[8] Malcolm Arnold (Cantor) in FaceTime discussion with the author, August 7, 2019**.**

[9] Joel Colman (Cantor) in FaceTime discussion with the author, August 5, 2019.

> you know, our bimah was full of interfaith clergy, and it was just a real healing moment.[10]

Opportunity to step back from the world

Gathering as a congregation can give trauma victims an opportunity to step back from what they have experienced. As Meisenhelder and Marcum note, "Seeking time with family and friends, by increased prayer, were the coping strategies most strongly related to all stress responses."[11] The opportunity to regain some sort of normalcy, even for a moment, is precious when dealing with trauma. This can come in the form a familiar location, seeing someone you trust, etc. in an environment that isn't the site of the trauma.

Cantor Colman's congregants desperately needed to take a break from what Hurricane Katrina had done to their lives.

> It's doing something normal…It's doing something that helps you – it's not just being in the space in that sacred space, but it's the people that are in that sacred space. It's connecting up with other people who have been in the same similar situation. People you haven't been able to see and because everyone was just so dispersed.[12]

Colman also notes that children ended up going to different schools because they were displaced. Being able to gather with their friends again was so meaningful. This opportunity to step back from their current situation was an important step of their recovery.

Music and Physical Ritual

Religious rituals are one way to create a sense of normalcy in the aftermath of a disaster. Religious rituals help to ground people in space and time. "They function as

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[10] Michael Shochet (Cantor) in Zoom conversation with the Cantor, July 26, 2019.

[11] Janice Bell Meisenhelder and John P. Marcum, "Responses of Clergy to 9/11: Posttraumatic Stress, Coping, and Religious Outcomes," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 4 (December 4, 2004): 551

[12] Colman, 2019.

formularized interactions that affirm our relation to each other and to powers beyond ourselves."[13] Rituals during a trauma, especially those known to the participant from pre-trauma times, can help show that life has not stopped despite the disaster. Rituals can also, "…give opportunities for expression of communal emotions, provide relief from the grief and guilt, create faith, meaning and social support and networks. Wilson (2007,1989)"[14]

The summer after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, URJ Camp Coleman's community created The Tallitot Project, comprised of seventeen tallitot designed by the teens, one representing each of the victims of the shooting. The following Rosh Hashanah, the two Reform congregations in close proximity to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School were gifted the talitot. Each community created their own ritual of healing using these ritual items. In a letter to Camp Colman's director, Temple Beth Orr's leadership recalled, "We then created a healing *chuppah* down our center aisle with the *tallitot*. Anyone impacted by the Parkland tragedy – and any other person in need of healing – was invited to stand underneath the *chuppah*. Under the *tallitot*, people held each other and cried as we sang the *Mi Shebeirach*. The moment was holy and powerful."[15] Congregation Kol Tikvah, Cantor Arnold's Congregation, took a different approach. The Tallitot Project lined the walls of the sanctuary, enveloping everyone in the room with a sense of healing. "Rabbi Bradd Boxman,

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[13] Stephen Roberts, Hasan Yusuf, and Willard W. C. Ashley, "Anniversaries, Holiday, and Other Reminders" in *Disaster Spiritual Care: Practical Clergy Responses to Community, Regional and National Tragedy* (Woodstock,VT: SkyLight Paths, 2008), p. 191)

[14]Somasundaram, "Addressing Collective Trauma," 53.

[15] Bobby Harris, "NFTY: The Reform Jewish Youth Movement," *NFTY: The Reform Jewish Youth Movement* (blog) (Union for Reform Judaism, February 17, 2019), https://nfty.org/2019/02/17/the-tallitot-project-how-urj-camps-sent-support-and-love-to-parkland/)

the synagogue's spiritual leader, called the service 'very symbolic and very beautiful.' The idea was to have everyone together at one time to be able to offer the blessing of healing and to begin a hopefully better new year for all of us at Parkland."[16]

A ritual object can have a profound impact outside of a prayer service. For Cantor Colman's congregants, mezuzot for their new homes after Hurricane Katrina was what they really needed. Colman put out a call to his cantorial colleagues and they came through. "…when we had our first Passover at the temple after Katrina, hundreds of mezuzahs [arrived] for our congregants to take, to bring back home and that was very well received."[17] Colman's congregants had reached the reconstruction phase in the cycle of trauma. They had worked through the majority of their grief and were ready to move on with their lives. They were ready to create something new. Putting a mezuzah on a repaired, reconstructed or new door is a big step towards the future.

Naming what has happened

Words are powerful. Words can harm and words can mend. The way words are used and crafted into sentences can be the difference between life and death. People turn to their faith leaders during times of struggle and trauma. These faith leaders have an opportunity to help by naming both what people are experiencing emotionally and what has happened to the community at large. By doing so, "Using language to 'name' is one way of touching and creating new 'realities.' This new reality is the beginning of the healing process in the case of

[16] Sergio Carmona, "Synagogues Provide Healing Services During Rosh Hashanah," *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, September 14, 2018)

[17] Colman, 2019.

trauma." Bloom continues by assigning the clergy the role of witness to uncover what is being masked when interacting with congregants.[18]

During the author's research trip to Pittsburgh it became clear that there is a naming issue surrounding their trauma. Each person the author spoke with about the Tree of Life shooting seemed to have given the incident a different name: October 27th, the shooting, the trauma, the tragedy, that day. Rabbi Hazzan Jeffrey Myers expressed strong feelings when asked what name he assigns to the mass shooting he survived in his own synagogue.

> So, when the Steelers didn't make the playoffs, that's a tragedy to the people of Pittsburgh. You can equate that with what we want to try to refer to. So, I've been blunt in saying, no, it wasn't a tragedy, it's a massacre. I know that can upset people. I think I've earned the right to say it because I was there. And so, I make a distinction. And I recognize some people are uncomfortable with the harshness of my language. But I'm trying to make the point that we overuse the word tragedy so much that we become numb to it. And we just throw all tragedies into one box. And we just move on to the next one and the next one… I will not permit what happened in my synagogue to become mundane. This is not mundane. It would never be. So that's why my language will be a little more descriptive. Perhaps there will be ones uncomfortable with it. I respect that, as long as they equally respect my point of view on it. So yeah, I'll call it a massacre.[19]

Cantor Colman is also specific in what he calls the disaster he experienced. He said that if someone called it a natural disaster people would not be pleased in New Orleans. "We call it a man-made disaster because the levees failed. It wasn't the weather system itself that caused disaster, it was the levees that failed that caused the city to be 90% flooded. I don't know…that screws you up…but that's the reality here."[20]

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[18] Jack H Bloom, "Witnessing, Naming, and Blessing," in *The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar: By the Power Vested in Me* (New York, NY: The Haworth Press, 2002), pp. 201-221)

[19] Jeffrey Myers (Rabbi Hazzan) in telephone discussion with the author, July 29, 2019.

[20] Colman, 2019

Chapter 3: The Role of Music in Facing Trauma

Much of the scholarly research on trauma and traumatic incidents asserts that one way to avoid Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD is to find effective coping mechanisms. As discussed in the previous chapter, among these are religious coping. Another is the use of music. It alters brain chemistry in a positive way, provides structure during a chaotic time, serves as an emotional release, provides a familiar anchor, and touches the soul.

Music and Brain Chemistry

Listening to an upbeat piece of music may make a person feel happy, while listening to a slow, sad song may make a person feel down. These changes in mood are not coincidental. Music effects brain chemistry. It can help someone feel better or worse depending on what they listen to. Neuroscientist Kiminobu Sugaya says, "Music can be a drug — a very addictive drug because it's also acting on the same part of the brain as illegal drugs. Music increases dopamine in the nucleus accumbens, similar to cocaine."[1] Landis-Shark and her colleagues speak more technically regarding the connection between emotion and brain chemistry.

> Emotional responses to music correlate with physiological functioning, a response that has been measured by changes in the sympathetic (Iwanaga & Tsukamoto, 1997) and parasympathetic nervous systems (Krumhansl, 1997), and by changes in neural activity (Panksepp, 1997). Studies have also shown that music activates changes in the mesolimbic dopaminergic system, an area of the brain that mediates the experience of pleasure, reward, and arousal (Goldstein, 1980; Swanson, 1982; Wise, 2004). Indeed, fMRI neuroimaging studies have found that music increases the cerebral blood flow to areas of the brain associated with reward and reinforcement of

[1] "Music and the Brain: What Happens When You're Listening to Music." n.d. Pegasus Magazine. University of Central Florida. Accessed January 2, 2020. https:/www.ucf.edu/pegasus/your-brain-on-music/.

pleasurable behaviors (e.g., nucleus accumbens and ventral tegmental area; Goldstein, 1980; Menon & Levitin, 2005; Swanson, 1982; Wise, 2004)[2]

Music Therapy

Music therapy is one tool used when working with individuals who have gone through a disaster or other trauma events. As part of a larger approach to an individual's recovery, "music therapy may be considered a resilience-enhancing intervention as it can help trauma-exposed individuals harness their ability to recover elements of normality in their life following great adversity."[3] Music therapists are required to go through extensive training which may include an undergraduate degree, graduate studies and professional licensing. Their training includes the study of the human body and brain chemistry. Once licensed, music therapists have a wide variety of techniques they can employ while working with patients. These include making music in a group setting, singing with one individual, asking individuals about the meaning behind lyrics, composing music, improvising, etc. These tasks may seem easy to complete which is part of the appeal of music therapy. As opposed to traditional forms of therapy, these tasks may seem more accessible. Landis-Shack

[2] Nora J Landis-Shack, Adrienne O Heinz, and Marcel Bonn-Miller, "Music Therapy for Posttraumatic Stress in Adults: A Theoretical Review," Psychomusicology (U.S. National Library of Medicine, December 27, 2017), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5744879/)

[3] Landis-Shack, et al., 9.

and her co-authors assert that these are tasks individuals can do in an everyday environment without the stigma of therapy being assigned.[4]

Creating musical compositions is one tool music therapists have used with documented success.

> In a case study of 8–11 year old children who had survived a tornado in the Southeastern United States, for example, music was used to assist the children in expressing feelings and to help them make the transition back to school (Davis, 2010). The children created a musical composition based on their feelings about the tornado, enabling them to acknowledge and process their emotions in a healthy and healing way.[5]

In Australia, two music therapists worked with young people after fires tore through their country. The victims worked together to create musical compositions. "…participants indicated that playing music with others who had been through similar experiences and who understood them, was important. The musical experiences were reported to have helped people to "hear one another," bond with others also experiencing loss, and regain confidence.[6]

Music therapist Elaine Morgan asserts that, "a music experience can be viewed as a replication of a life experience."[7] She structured her in-patient setting into three phases:

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[4] Landis-Shack, et al., 4

[5] Sandra Garrido et al., "Music and Trauma: the Relationship between Music, Personality, and Coping Style," *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (October 10, 2015): p. 2, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00977)

[6]Garrido, et al., 2.

initial—when patients are "confused and chaotic" as they begin therapy, middle—when "interpersonal relationships are of fundamental importance." and final—with its goal for a patient "to reinforce his independence and his self-esteem."[8] Landis-Shack and her colleagues agree that group music therapy can have social benefits.

> Group music making, accessed via group music therapy, can serve as a stand-in social process to address avoidant behavior and provide positive corrective experiences… Ultimately, group music therapy can allow patients to increase their social engagement in a safe space. The intended effect is to help patients, in-vivo, become comfortable with social experiences until they can eventually rejoin their community in a functional way (Carr et al., 2011; Bensimon et al., 2008).[9]

Music as a Means to Provide Structure in Chaos

Music can help to provide structure during a time of chaos. As Morgan points out with her hospitalized patients, "The structure of music is a particular benefit when the patient first enters the ward, arriving as he does in a state of crisis-with all the disorganization and disorientation that a crisis can bring. The structure, and especially the rhythm of music, can be used to bring some sort of order out of the chaos that the patient finds himself in."[10] A part of what clergy can do during these times of chaos is choose music and create ritual that will bring a sense of order. "For instance, music can help ground someone in the present moment when faced with an intrusive or distressing reminder (Carr et al., 2011), and is commonly used a grounding technique in Dialectical Behavior Therapy, a therapeutic

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[7] Elaine Morgan, "Music—a Weapon Against," *Music Educators Journal* 61, no. 5 (January 1975): p. 38, https://doi.org/10.2307/3394697)

[8] Morgan, 38.

[9] Landis-Shack, et al., 5

[10] Morgan, 39.

approach that specifically targets emotion dysregulation (Brantley, McKay, & Wood, 2007)."[11] Garrido and her colleagues assert that order is brought to the chaos by a type of,

> …resource replacement based on a conservation of resources model of stress (Freedy et al., 1992; Hobfoll, 2001). Here we recognize that the perception of a net loss of resources accompanying a traumatic event (objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies which have value to us) engender the destabilizing and overwhelming "black hole of trauma" (Bloom, 2010, p. 1). This sense of loss needs to be offset by other resources.[12]

If music is able to act as this "replacement," the possibilities for regaining stability are powerful.

Music an Emotional Release

While religious leaders are not neuroscientists or music therapists, they have been utilizing music in therapeutic ways that are consistent with the findings in these fields. Music has the ability to bring people to tears and to bring people to their feet in joy. For example, Debbie Friedman's *Mi Shebeirach*, has become the standard melody for the healing prayer in many synagogues across North America. Friedman's melody, paired with the introduction or *iyyun* given, set the mood for this healing moment in a Jewish prayer service. This paper's author has witnessed congregants openly weeping as the prayer is sung by the cantor and congregation. The power of this piece of music as an emotional release is clearly evident. "Music is one of the few areas in which the hands and the voice can really "let go" with feelings. Even just listening to music can bring great emotional release, because so much emotion is built into the music by the composer."[13]

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[11] Landis-Shack, et al., 5

[12] Garrido, 2.

[13] Morgan, 39.

Music = Familiar in Chaos/Post-Trauma

In the wake of a trauma how does one go about deciding which music to select to help those who are trying to cope and heal? Cantor Seth Warner, who shepherded his congregation through Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, says that sticking with what is familiar is the best course of action. Consistent with the studies done by Garrido and others, Cantor Warner notes, "…it's not that they don't want to be challenged by liturgy or music, it's that they've been challenged enough already."[14] Warner's congregation was displaced for months, including the High Holy Days, so they rented out an auditorium on Rice University's campus for Yom Kippur morning services.

> What I think is so interesting [about that service] is that it was very easy for people to be moved because of what they experienced. So, the old handholds that they were used to -- the Nurit Hirsch *Oseh Shalom*, Debbie Friedman's *Oseh Shalom* -- the pieces that they knew the liturgy they related to, it wrapped around them. And sometimes it wrapped around them without their help and other times they felt like they were grabbing it and pulling it around as a blanket. Those pieces offered the most comfort because of the trauma, I think. All they wanted was something normal…in this case, the people who were able to tell me, they felt that their hearts were open in a way that they've never been opened before, because of the unique situation that they've been through.[15]

Warner points directly to the power of music to touch something deep in the soul. In his essay "The Vocation of the Cantor", Abraham Joshua Heschel sees music's role in the synagogue as a tool to delve deeper into one's self. "Within the synagogue music is not an end in itself but a means of religious experience. Its function is to help us to live through a moment of confrontation with the presence of God; to expose ourselves to Him in praise, in self-scrutiny and in hope." He continues by suggesting, "Song is the most intimate

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[14] Seth Warner (Cantor) in FaceTime discussion with the author, August 6, 2019.

[15] Warner, 2019

expression of man. In no other way does man reveal himself so completely as in the way he sings. For the voice of a person, particularly when in song, is the soul in its full nakedness. When we sing, we utter and confess all our thoughts."[16]

[16] Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Vocation of the Cantor," in *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), pp. 244, 251-252

PART 2

"Adonai Adonai…"

Text: Exodus 34:6-7

Composers: Meara Lebovitz

Publications: Unpublished manuscript available for purchase through the composer Meara_Lebovitz@yahoo.com

Recordings: A video of the premier performance is available at https://livestream.com/accounts/6110137/events/8842593/videos/199125462 beginning at 19:00.

Context first introduced: This piece was written initially as an assignment for a composition class as part of the composer's training at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. It was premiered in her senior recital.

Concept: The composer explains, "In 1994 my home synagogue became one of "those" congregations - one of the unfortunate congregations to experience a profound communal trauma. This is one of those places that when you mention the name, or the town, or the name of the former senior rabbi, it usually rings a bell. In November of 1994, my senior rabbi's wife was murdered. What the congregation and the rest of the came to learn was that she was killed by a hitman hired by the rabbi himself. The congregation was devastated while simultaneously it was thrown into the limelight. The murder made national news as did the trial and then the mistrial. The rabbi was expelled by the CCAR and is currently in prison. "*Adonai Adonai, el rachum v'chanun"* God, God, compassionate and gracious…Each high holy days the rabbi would approach the ark, with hundreds of people in the congregation watching and listening, as he chanted these words. As a child I remember feeling mesmerized

and understanding the importance of this moment without comprehending all of the words. Years later, as I began my studies at HUC, and learned different settings for these words, it became clear that he conflated 2 or 3 melodies. My goal since then has been to overwrite his voice in my head, and by doing so, reclaim that powerful liturgical moment. I composed this new setting of "Adonai Adonai," in the hopes that it will live out its intended purpose**,** and beyond.

Potential Uses: As is traditional, Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur Service. This piece can also be used during a healing service to give congregants an additional way to interact with God.

Music Considerations: While this piece is written for voice, cello, piano and clarinet, it can be done with the piano playing the cello and clarinet parts if necessary. The melody line could be extracted from the piece and done a cappella. A voice could substitute for the clarinet, if necessary, in an a cappella setting but the cello line would need to be omitted.

"Al Tira"

Text: Proverbs 3:25, Isaiah 8:10, Isaiah 46:4

Composers: Ganchoff-Alter, arranged by Cantor Israel Goldstein

Publications: Tefillot Moshe: Accompanied and Unaccompanied Recitatives for the Hazzan

Recordings: Two recordings may be helpful when looking at this piece:

1. Cantor Moshe Ganchoff singing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsd3bzddS1k
2. Meara Lebovitz Senior Recital, HUC-JIR Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, beginning at 43:40 https://livestream.com/accounts/6110137/events/8842593/videos/199125462

Concept: Whatever trauma or challenge we have faced, this piece is forward looking towards the future, towards justice and hope. This piece sets a lofty goal: "*Al tira mi pachad pitom*" Proverbs 3:25 says "Do not fear sudden terror!" The text continues, this time from Isaiah: "for God is with us." In other words, trust and hope in God, in the Godly gifts we have been given.

Potential Uses: This is a concert piece. Despite the relevance of its message, it is hard to see it sung as part of a vigil or community gathering during the immediate aftermath of a trauma. This piece could be used during a concert to mark a specific time period related to an incident.

Music Considerations: This piece is written for keyboard and treble vocal. While it was originally written for the male voice, the sheet music from Tefillot Moshe writes it in the

treble clef using C4 to G5. While the accompaniment can be done on piano or organ, there are some 16th notes that may lose clarity if rendered on organ.

"Gesher (The Bridge)"

Text: R' Nachman of Breslov (Hebrew), Yosef Goldman, (English)

Composers: Rabbi Yosef Goldman

Publications: Available through Transcontinental Music from the Chazak V'ematz: Jewish Songs of Protest and Hope songbook

https://www.transcontinentalmusic.com/PDS-chazak-vematz-grp-77687

Recordings: Found on the album Open My Heart from Rising Song Records

htpps://store.cdbaby.com/cd/yosefgoldman2

Context first introduced: While discussing the creation of this piece as part of his debut album Goldman wrote, "I also wrote this music as a seeker yearning for growth, healing, and connection- for me, for my community, and for our world. As a pastoral caregiver living with chronic illness, some of the music–such as the song Gesher–written in the context of the suffering and isolation of illness, not only as medicine for me but with a desire to reach out and connect, to offer a healing salve for others…These songs are meant to be sung, and I feel humbled knowing that several of the songs on this album, including Gesher, are already being sung in communities across the country- in synagogues, at camps, at rallies, and around Shabbat tables."[1]

Potential Uses: This piece is a turning point in the narrative of a communal moment. After songs that acknowledge anger, pain and loss, this piece, especially through its English lyrics and upbeat outlook, shows that there is a way through the darkness and

[1] Yosef Goldman, "Open My Heart - Yosef Goldman's Debut Album," Open My Heart – Yosef Goldman's Debut Album (Jewcer), accessed January 14, 2020, https://www.jewcer.org/project/open-my-heart-album/)

into the light. This song can be highly effective when used at the end of a community gathering or during a Shabbat service within a few weeks of a traumatic event. It is not recommended for use immediately after an event. The piece may feel too positive for the situation if used too close to the precipitating event.

Music Considerations: While the sheet music is printed as a lead sheet with guitar chords, the possibilities for this piece are significant. The recording on Goldman's album includes three backup vocals, electric guitar, violin, piano, electric bass, percussion and drums. This arrangement has not been published but could be created with some arranging work by a music director or cantor. Also, any stripped-down version of this ensemble could work nicely with a volunteer or professional group of musicians.

"Ki Chilatzta Nafshi"

Text: Psalm 116:8

Composers: Rabbi Simkha Weintraub

Publications: Kane Street Synagogue Shabbat Songster, Compiled and Edited by Joey Weisenberg (Brooklyn, NY: Kane Street Synagogue, 2011), page 99

Potential Uses: This piece has a wide possibility of uses due to its simple melody. First, it can be rendered with the words, which speak of delivering one from death. It can be a powerful text for the first gathering after a trauma has occurred. The piece is in Hebrew so the translation would need to be provided or recited beforehand. It could also be appropriate for an anniversary of a trauma. As a niggun, this piece has the ability to be one of the pieces that weaves through the cycle of a disaster and beyond. It could live in a community both with and without words simultaneously. This piece could be used as a niggun or with the words. It could also begin as a niggun and then add the words.

Music Considerations: The music is not published with chords, but they can be easily added by a musician with basic music theory skills. This piece can be done a cappella as a niggun. Once chorded, it could be rendered with guitar or with a skilled pianist. It could also be used as underscoring, slowly for an emotional moment.

"Makom She Libi Ohev"

Text: Mishnah,Tractate Sukkah 4:3. Translation: *The place that my heart holds dear, my feet will bring me near.*

Composers: Cantor Leon Sher

Publications: Shireinu, available from Transcontinental Music

Recordings: An mp3 is available for download at Oysongs and other places online. The piece was published on Beged Kefet's 1992 album "Go out in joy".

Context first introduced: Cantor Sher composed this piece after being inspired by his experiences at URJ Kutz Camp.

Potential Uses: This piece could be used in many different situations. In 1994, Cantor Anita Hochman began using this piece with her congregation to help them find a sense of togetherness and wholeness after the senior rabbi's wife was murdered. Cantor Hochman explained, "I brought it into the experience. The congregation already knew it (but) it took on a whole new meaning. Sometimes something you already know takes on a new, more passionate, relevant meaning and that's what happened. All of a sudden it was like 'oh my God.' Especially since the funeral was in the synagogue…I find it to be a song with plenty of opportunities. It's a really well-crafted song and really goes to the heart of so many situations. That song never stops being meaningful. That's big."[1]

Music Considerations: The piece begins with the full text of Hebrew and then the full translation in English. This makes it an easy piece for a congregation to follow. The

[1] Anita Hochman (Cantor) telephone conversation with the author, November 6, 2019.

melody is simple, which allows it to be picked up quickly. The recording includes guitar and multiple voices. The piece can be done with any number of arrangements including guitar and solo vocal, guitar and multiple vocal. It could also be accompanied by piano or almost any other instrument that can play create a mellow mood. The melody can also be used as a niggun.

"Mi Shebeirach"

Text: Partial Hebrew text from traditional mi shebeirach and English composed by Levine

Composer: Cantor Lisa Levine

Publications: Available for purchase and immediate download from the following sources (list may not be exhaustive):

- Solo vocal with guitar chords, all in D minor, available at Transcontinental music
    - Cantor's Lifecycle Manual
    - R'fuah Sh'leimah: Songs of Jewish Healing
    - Shireinu (also available for capo 5 with Am shapes)
- Solo voice, 2-part choir, Cello and Keyboard, in E minor, available at Transcontinental music
    - Arranged by Andrea Jill Higgins
- Piano, Vocal, Guitar, in D minor, available on Oysongs

Recordings: A recording of the Higgins arrangement is available at Oysongs. A recording of the solo vocal version is available on Levine's album "Reaching for Peace" which can be found on iTunes of CDBaby.

Concept: The composer shares, "My own version of the Mi Shebeirach was written out of tragedy – the sudden death of a dear colleague and friend – Cantor Stuart Pittle. From the depths of grief and sorrow came a heartfelt melancholy melody, this time in a minor mode, which again invoked the names of our ancestors: mothers and fathers. My version also elaborates with an English interpretation of the text. I approached the prayer with an intention of creating a familiar traditional call and response 'hear our prayer (hear our

prayer)' so that people could learn and sing the prayer easily, and then brought it closer to the congregation by ending with the words 'and bless us as well.'"[1]

Potential Uses: The English composed for this setting has the pray-er call out to God asking for blessing. The words "sh'ma koleinu" ask God to hear our voice. They call out, almost begging God to hear us and respond. The use of the phrase "hear our prayer" evokes a more subdued version of the cry sh'ma koleinu. This longing and crying out gives this piece additional usage outside a typical Mi Shebeirach healing moment. This could be used with a community who has just suffered a significant loss and is struggling to find the words to put to their grief. This could also be used for a community that is feeling anger. Levine's piece could also be used at shloshim, shanah, yartzeit or other markers of time after a trauma.

Music Considerations: These will differ widely depending on the arrangement chosen.

[1] Lisa Levine, "PDF," April 8, 2010

"Olam Chesed Yibaneh"

Text: Hebrew: Psalm 89:3, English: Rabbi Menachem Creditor

Composers: Rabbi Menachem Creditor

Publications: Available for purchase from Transcontinental Music

Recordings: A free recording from the composer may be accessed and downloaded here: https://rabbidavid.bandcamp.com/track/olam-chesed-yibaneh

Concept: "I wrote this song for my daughter, born right after 9/11. This world will be built by love: ours and God's. In the best and worst of moments, non-fundamentalist 'believers' and 'atheists' are reaching for the same hope using different language. *Amen to both.*"[1]

Potential Uses: In a thread from the American Conference of Cantors' Facebook page, the evening of the shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue, Olam Chesed Yibaneh was one of the primary pieces of music suggested when colleagues asked each other what they would be singing in the coming days at vigils. This piece has wide possible usage due to its simple message and use of English and Hebrew. Using this text may help those who feel they have lost their power through a disaster gain some of it back. The words are in the first person and then second. They cause the listener (and then hopefully when that person becomes a singer as well) to reflect on the power they have to make the world better.

Music Considerations: This melody is simple and includes a short "yai lai lai" section after each phrase. This pattern makes the song predictable, which in turn makes it easier to catch onto. There is a zipper song element present in the English text. In terms of arrangement, the

[1] Menachem Creditor, "Olam Chesed Yibaneh (with Newtown in My Heart)," Olam Chesed Yibaneh (with Newtown in my heart), December 19, 2012, http://rabbicreditor.blogspot.com/2012/12/olam-chesed-yibaneh-with-newtown-in-my.html)

piece could be done a cappella or with any arrangement of instruments or voices one would desire. This piece easily can handle whatever musical situation is available. It is published as a lead sheet with guitar chords.

"Out of the Deep (from Requiem)"

Text: Psalm 130

Composers: John Rutter

Publications: Multiple versions of this full requiem score exist. The list below is not exhaustive. Full instrumentation of three versions is listed below with those that apply to this movement in bold.

- SATB + piano. Available from Hal Leonard and most music publishers,
- Soprano solo, mixed choir, and small orchestra (two versions). Available from C.F. Peters.
    - Flute, oboe, 3 pedal timpani, glockenspiel, harp, cello, organ
    - 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets in B flat, 2 horns in F, 3 pedal timpani, glockenspiel, harp, strings

Concept: "The personal (reason for writing this piece) was a time of sadness really, because my father died in 1983 and I wanted to remember him in music in some way and preferably in a way that he might have enjoyed and appreciated. He was fond of music and he had a good ear but never had any musical training. So the kind of work that I wanted to write would be one that if he'd been sitting in the front row, he could have appreciated…I suppose that death is one of the great universals, that sooner of later we all experience a loss. That when people listen to a requiem that they are weaving their own thoughts and memories and

experiences into the music and the words that they hear so it's very much a two-way piece and one to which people will always have a two-way response."[1]

Potential Uses: This piece of music truly reaches into the depths of one's soul and cries out to God from a dark place. It has the potential to acknowledge deep anger, despair and sadness felt by listeners and those who participate in making the music as well. With the right resources, it could be used as part of a retrospective during a concert which shows how far the community has come after a trauma. It could also be used in a Yom Hashoah program.

Music Considerations: Regardless of the arrangement chosen, this piece can only be put together quickly with the use of professional musicians. This may narrow the potential uses. As part of the author's senior recital, an edit was made beginning at, "O Israel trust." The Hebrew text was inserted at this point for the choral parts and continued until the recapitulation. This version is available upon request.

[1] John Rutter, "John Rutter on the 'Requiem' 1: Impulse and Influence," YouTube (YouTube, February 23, 2010), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaHO72_mJzI)

"Psalm 23"

Text: Psalm 23

Composers: Bobby McFerrin

Publications: Transcription by Dan Stolper is available from Hal Leonard

Recordings: Bobby McFerrin's VOCAbuLarieS featuring SLIXS & Friends, live in Gdansk, Poland at the Solidarity of Arts Festival, 17 August 2013

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cn2zKKhhF3I

Concept: The composer explains, "The 23rd Psalm is dedicated to my mother. She was the driving force in my religious and spiritual education, and I have so many memories of her singing in church. But I wrote it because I'd been reading the Bible one morning, and I was thinking about God's unconditional love, about how we crave it but have so much trouble believing we can trust it, and how we can't fully understand it. And then I left my reading and spent time with my wife and our children. Watching her with them, the way she loved them, I realized one of the ways we're shown a glimpse of how God loves us is through our mothers. They cherish our spirits, they demand that we become our best selves, and they take care of us."[1]

Potential Uses: This piece could easily be added or subtracted as needed in an event that is already using choir. The text makes it most relevant for memorial services and funerals. In Jewish settings, Psalm 23 is most often heard in Hebrew but the English in this piece comes

[1] Omega Institute, "Sing Your Prayers: An Interview With Bobby McFerrin," HuffPost (HuffPost, December 7, 2017), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bobby-mcferrin_b_1582043)

from Christian liturgy but has made its way into the mainstream culture. The familiarity with this text across religious spectrums makes the piece suitable for a wider, mixed audience.

Music Considerations: This piece is simple and elegant but will require a few hours of rehearsal with an amateur choir. The notes are easy and create a homophonic sound, but the rhythms are regularly syncopated. An amateur group will require a conductor and rehearsal to master the piece due to this challenge. This piece may require accompaniment underneath to help ensure tonal accuracy with an amateur choir. Additionally, in a Jewish context, some conductors choose to finish the piece before mention of the trinity. This is a way to make it more appropriate for a Jewish audience.

"We Remember…"

Text: adapted from "We Remember Them" by Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Reimer

Composers: Rabbis Ken Chasen and Yoshi Zweiback

Publications: A lead sheet with guitar chords is available at Transcontinental Music either as an individual purchase or as part of the 2019 Biennial songbook.

https://www.transcontinentalmusic.com/PDS-2019-Biennial-Songbook-78289

Recordings: A Youtube recording is readily available as a reference.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjz_mO7DIFw

Context first introduced: This piece was written as a response to the Pittsburgh Shooting on October 27, 2018. A recording of the piece was made by a group of cantors and cantorial students from the greater-LA area. The recording was posted on Facebook on Nov. 6, 2018.

Concept: The composers explain, "The song is a promise that those loved ones who have died are never truly gone so long as we carry them with us."[1]

Potential Uses: By virtue of being in English, it is accessible and can be used by any choir, in a wide range of gatherings, not just Jewish ones: Services in the immediate aftermath of a Traumatic event, Anniversary of a Trauma service or concert, holiday Yizkor service (particularly Yom Kippur).

Music Considerations: This could be done as a solo with guitar or piano. The piece would also incorporate a second voice or choir on the "we remember" parts.

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[1] Mah Tovu, "We Remember," YouTube (YouTube, November 6, 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjz_mO7DIFw)

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Kipnis, Paul. 2019 In-person conversation with the Rabbi, 16 December.

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Shochet, Michael. 2019 Zoom conversation with the Cantor, 26 July.

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