לקראתי מצאתיך

Searching for God in the Twentieth Century Synagogue:

The Music of Isadore Freed and Frederick Piket

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the lives and works of Isadore Freed (1900–1960) and Frederick Piket (1903–1974), two highly influential twentieth century composers of music for the Synagogue. The first chapter considers their biographies and respective journeys from Belarus to America (in the case of Freed), and Constantinople to America (in the case of Piket). In addition, these chapters include information on their education and musical development. The following chapters investigate the craftsmanship in their compositions, alongside their roles as preservers and communicators of our Jewish musical heritage. Their respective views on the question of nusach and the Jewish modes and their place in contemporary music are explored, along with some of the ongoing questions surrounding Piket's perceived antipathy towards nusach. Finally, some of their other works will be considered, both for use within the synagogue, as well as an example of each composer's unpublished piano works, A new score for both are presented as part of this thesis.

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Introduction

Isadore Freed (1900–1960) and Frederick Piket (1903–1974) were two influential composers, who, through their teaching at the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion New York campus, composed Jewish liturgical music for synagogues and cantors throughout the New York and wider area. Their musical contributions played a significant role in creating the sounds of Jewish New York and American Judaism in the twentieth century. Freed and Piket were both immigrants to the United States, and they brought their European cultural influences to the new liturgical compositional style that was developing within Reform Judaism at the time. This new approach to liturgical composition that had begun with the establishment of the first Reform synagogue in Seesen, Westphalia[1] was characterized by a move away from a more individualized style of worship, albeit in a communal setting, to a more formal service with clearly delineated roles for the clergy.

Along with this new approach to Jewish worship, composers of Jewish sacred music brought a wealth of new music to the synagogue, embodying the highest musical aesthetics. They wrote for the organ and choir, employing musicians that were of the highest standards of their day. With the arrival of and subsequent growth of Reform Judaism in New York City, new compositions for old liturgical texts were developed in large numbers, bringing their own imprint of the social and cultural standards of a new, developing identity of the New York Jew.

As European Jews came to live in the United States, and in New York City in particular, many brought with them the idea that they had the freedom to modify both

[1] Lawrence A. Englander, "History of Reform Judaism and a Look Ahead: In Search of Belonging," *ReformJudaism.org*, accessed July 1, 2016, http://www.reformjudaism.org/history-reform-judaism-and-look-ahead-search-belonging.

worship and the music that accompanied it. New York City quickly became a center for Reform Judaism with a number of great synagogues, famous for their music. As such, New York City became the logical home for the School of Sacred Music—an American cantorial school—at which both Freed and Piket would play an important role.

This thesis discusses the lives and music of Isadore Freed and Frederick Piket, examining how they fit into the rapidly growing world of New York Reform Judaism. Their musical lives and stylistic development will be considered, including Freed's determination to ensure that the traditions of the Jewish modes were present in his music, along with Piket's professed, though perhaps not always exercised, determination to avoid the modes.[2] This discussion will be presented within the context of how their musical experiences outside of the synagogue came to influence the music they wrote for the liturgy.

Chapters 1 and 2 describe Freed and Piket's biographies and provide a framework for understanding how their life experiences and education influenced the music they composed. In Chapter 3, I specifically addresses the work they each did to preserve Jewish musical heritage: for example, Freed's publication of a book of the works of Salamone Rossi, and Piket's contributions to a similar work showcasing the music of Eliezer Gerovitch. Notably, both Freed and Piket went beyond simply reproducing these composers' works by updating and rearranging them so that they could be more readily used in the synagogues of their day, while still ensuring that they remained as true as possible to the original composers' visions. Chapter 4 considers one of Isadore Freed's most important contributions to Jewish music, namely, his publication entitled *Harmonizing the Jewish Modes*, for which he drew from his

[2] Piket's attitudes toward nusach and the Jewish modes will be discussed in detail later in this thesis, as his stated opinion that he was "allergic to nusach," which sounds unequivocal, is not substantiated by his writing.

experiences teaching at the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music. Chapter 5 examines liturgical and non liturgical works by both composers in an effort to determine how each composer approached the work of composition. The thesis will conclude with an annotated Appendix, reproducing previously unseen scores by Freed and Piket that have been uncovered through the research that went into this project, including an extract from Piket's unpublished *Sonata in C*, and *Rhapsody*, an unpublished piano piece by Freed.

Chapter 1 – The Lives of Isadore Freed and Frederick Piket

Isadore Freed was a brilliant musician. However, he did not achieve this recognition easily. To be a "Jewish sacred musician," by which I mean a musician who is writing and performing music for use in worship, it is my firmly held belief that we must excel at both composition and performance. A Jewish sacred musician must achieve a deep and personal understanding of the liturgy and its religious underpinnings, and it is also incumbent upon the Jewish sacred musicians to gain a high-level of proficiency in music. Freed took this idea seriously. He was serious about his Jewish identity, and he also achieved success in the wider world of composition. His path, however, was not straightforward. He was born in Brest-Litovsk, Russia in 1900 and came to the United States at the age of three. He began playing piano at the age of seven and was surrounded by music in his early life as a child in Philadelphia, where his father owned a music shop in the city.

Early in his life, he achieved success as a musician, earning his bachelor's degree in music at the University of Philadelphia in 1918 at the age of 18. He studied at the Philadelphia Conservatory where he was awarded a Gold Medal in piano, but any risk of his assuming he had achieved mastery was quickly dispelled by Ernest Bloch, with whom Isadore Freed recorded his first meeting thusly:

> I had earned a Bachelor of Music degree and had also won the Gold Medal in Piano when I was eighteen. Given my extreme youth, I could perhaps be excused for thinking that I must have been pretty good as a musician. When I went to see Bloch for the first time with a cantata under my arm entitled 'Lochinvar,' written for chorus, orchestra and soloists - with a score running to about 150 pages - I received quite a jolt when Bloch's remark to me was, 'Tell me, do they give degrees in America before you learn anything about music?' This floored me but it made a musician out

> of me, for I was determined that no-one would ever be able to say that about me again.[3]

Bloch was, without doubt, a great composer and his valuable contribution to Jewish music is widely recognized. That said, his comments on Freed's musicianship at this point in Freed's life seem overly critical. Unfortunately, the music Freed presented to Bloch seems to be unavailable, but other works from this point in his life do exist, and while study of these compositions may suggest that he had not yet found his sound and place in the musical world, he was already some way along in that journey.

By way of example, Freed's *Rhapsody* (1920), which as far as I am aware has never been published (and is not to be confused with his *Rhapsody for Clarinet and Piano*, which would be published a few years later in 1925), has the distinct feel of a Romantic piano piece. The piece is thematically interesting, but angular in form and jumps between sections without the kind of stable transitions that characterize his later work. This very interesting piece of music will be analyzed in detail later in this thesis, and it is evidence of the early skill Freed possessed. Clearly, he was already an accomplished pianist, but what this piece shows is that he already had a strong understanding of harmony and musical structure.

On June 2, 1923, Freed left New York aboard the ship New Amsterdam to spend five months in Europe. His passport application, included as Figure 1, suggests that he would be visiting Germany for the purpose of study, but it also lists France, Switzerland, Italy and Austria as countries to be visited during his time in Europe. The passport application was completed on the 6th March 1923, so it is possible his plans changed.

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[3] Ephraim Steinhauer, "Isadore Freed: A Biography," in *A Jewish Composer by Choice: Isadore Freed: His Life and Work: A Program Handbook*, ed. National Jewish Music Council and Abraham Wolf Binder (New York: National Jewish Music Council, 1961), 1.

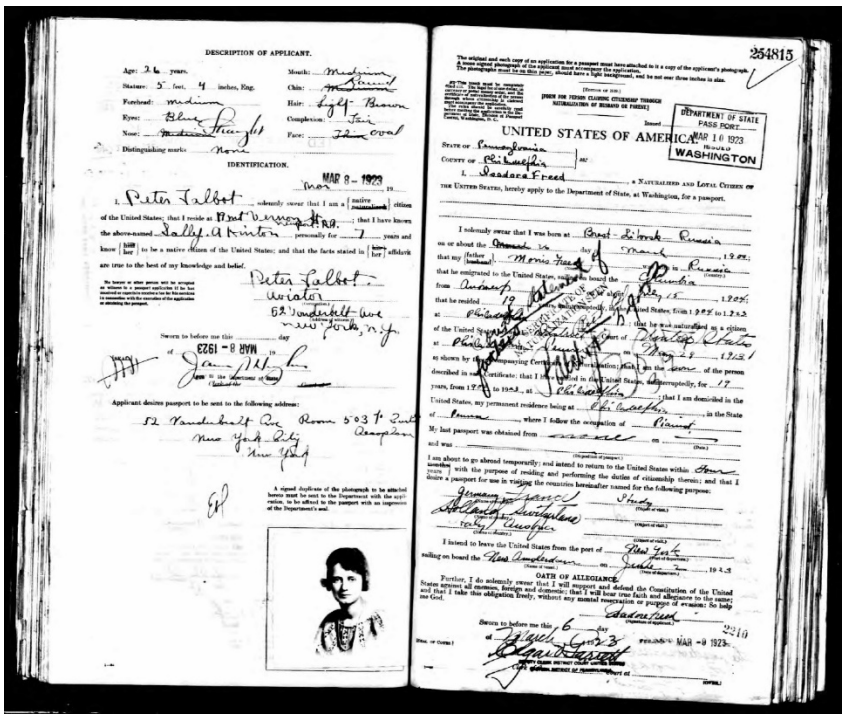

Figure 1 – Isadore Freed's passport application
(Source: *National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington D.C., NARA Series:* Passport Applications, January 2, 1906 - March 31, 1925, *Roll #:* 2194*; Volume #:* Roll 2194 - Certificates: 254350-254849, 08 Mar 1923-10 Mar 1923).

Freed spent several years in Europe between 1924 to 1934. During that time he studied with Vincent d'Indy and Nadia Boulanger, which Freed biographer Ephraim Steinhauer identifies as a key point in Freed's development as a composer.[4] Freed was, as surely all good composers must be, in full recognition of the importance of the contribution others make to the performance of his music. Rabbi Joseph Klein recalls:

> We recalled the people who made up the Temple choir in those days. Isadore had surrounded himself with a group of brilliant young singers, most of whom subsequently achieved successful concert and operatic careers. Isadore remarked that

[4] Ibid., 3.

> he regretted he had never had a recording made of the singing by that choir. I suddenly recalled that I had such a recording; we had both participated in a Church of the Air broadcast around 1945 - I had read the prayers and delivered the sermon while Isadore played the organ and led the choir. The radio station had then presented me with a recording of the broadcast. It became a personal delight for me to present those records to Isadore that evening.[5]

Freed was able to attract excellent musicians to work with him, and singers Brenda Lewis and Lois Hunt both went on to have successful careers at the Metropolitan Opera. Brenda Lewis, born in Pennsylvania, made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in the 1951-1952 season with *Die Fledermaus*, the biggest success of the then Metropolitan Opera General Manager's second season.[6] Lois Hunt, also born in Pennsylvania, sang in prominent lighter roles with the Metropolitan Opera for four years from 1949 to 1953.[7]

In addition to his compositions, Freed contributed to the synagogue music of the time in other ways. For example, he took some of the compositions of Salamone Rossi and reworked them into arrangements that he considered to be the sound of the contemporary synagogue. As beautiful as Rossi's music certainly is, it is written in a harmonic language that is very different to the sound of New York City in the mid-twentieth century. It was also often written for two antiphonal choirs, which would be hard to replicate with the resources available to the modern synagogue. Freed took it upon himself to take Rossi's original works and produce new arrangements of them, rendering them usable in synagogue worship of the time. In these arrangements, he took great effort to preserve the musical integrity of the

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[5] Rabbi Joseph Klein, in *Isadore Freed, His Life and Work*, 14.
[6] Gerald Fitzgerald, *Annals of the Metropolitan Opera: The Complete Chronicles of Performances and Artists*, (Boston: Macmillan Press, 1989), 613.
[7] William Grimes, "Lois Hunt, Half of Popular Operatic Duo, Dies at 84," *New York Times*, 28 July 2009, A23.

pieces, while simultaneously ensuring that they would work with the forces available at the synagogues of the time, and also sound acceptable to the contemporary ear.

Frederick Piket

Frederick Piket (1903–1974) is well known to students at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music through his music, which still forms an important part of the curriculum today. This, however, only represents a small part of his much wider career. Born in Constantinople to Josef and Paula Piket, his life would take him from one side of Europe to the other, before moving to New York in 1940. In his youth, it was not always clear, however, that music would be such an important part of life's work. After high school, and with the encouragement of his father, Piket attended medical college for two and a half years with the intention of following in his father's footsteps and becoming a physician. By this time music was already a part of his life, and he had taken lessons in violin from the age of five, studying at the Vienna State Conservatory while attending high school.[8]

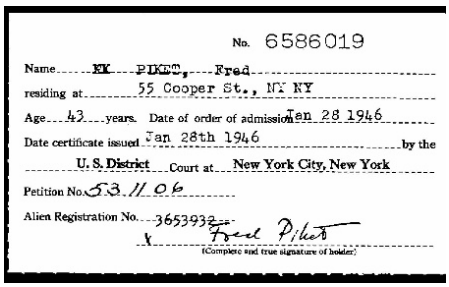
Piket's early career as a professional musician in Europe was spent primarily working as a conductor. However, he also composed during this time, and his family still has boxes of his music that remains unsorted. Piket married twice in his life, first to Erna Galles in 1928.[9] Frederick and Erna came to New York in 1940, and for a number of years he found work in various areas of music within the city, including tutoring work in harmony and counterpoint—courses he would later teach at New York University and Hebrew Union

[8] Roberta Piket, "Biography," *Frederick Piket (1903–1974)*, accessed December, 12, 2016, http://frederickpiket.info/biography.
[9] Jennifer Blum, "Allergic to Nusach," Thesis, HUC-JIR New York, 1998, 4.

College. An advertisement for his musical services is shown in Figure 2, below, which appeared in the *New York Times* on September 18, 1949.

Figure 2 – Advertisement for tutoring by Frederick Piket
(Source: The New York Times, September 18, 1949, p. X6).

Piket's first marriage ended not long after his arrival in the United States, and he married his second wife, Cynthia, on October 19, 1952.[10] Throughout his life, Piket gained considerable recognition as a composer in both Europe and America.[11] He won the Mendelssohn award in Barcelona where he would live his final 7 years in Europe .[12] This marked the end of his musical career and life in Europe, and he spent the rest of his life in the United States. Piket lived in the US for six years before becoming a naturalized citizen. His petition for naturalization, shown below, was issued in January 1946 (See Figure 3).


No. 6586019

Name FK PIKET, Fred

residing at 55 Cooper St., NY NY

Age 42 years. Date of order of admission Jan 28 1946

Date certificate issued Jan 28th 1946 by the

U. S. District Court at New York City, New York

Petition No. 53 1106

Alien Registration No. 3653932

X Fred Piket

(Complete and true signature of holder)

[10] Blum, "Allergic to Nusach," 6.
[11] Ibid, 1.
[12] The location of this prize is unclear. It is recorded in Blum's thesis as Barcelona, however elsewhere it is listed as Berlin. I have been unable to find a record of this prize, however, in my searches through the records of the Mendelssohn prize.

Figure 3 – Naturalization petition for Frederick Piket
(Source: www.ancestory.org).

Figure 4, below, shows an advertisement for a service at Rodeph Shalom in New York from 1973. While it was not uncommon to see services advertised in the press, it is worthy of note that in publicizing the service, Piket's appearances as a guest conductor was deemed as something especially worthy of note.

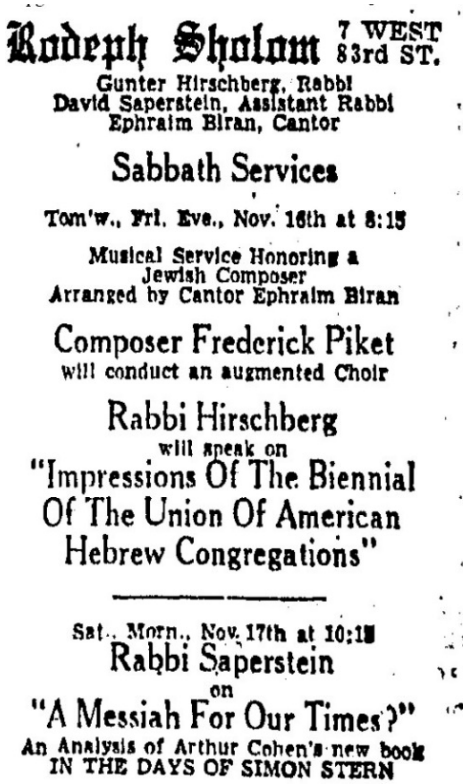


Figure 4 – Advertisement for services at Temple Rodef Shalom from 1973
(Source: The New York Times, November 15, 1973, p. 48).

In researching this thesis, I have had the pleasure of talking to a number of Piket's students about their experiences with him. While individual memories vary, there are a couple of points in common. Those are his seriousness, kindness, and perhaps to a lesser degree, bluntness. Cantor Frederick Hermann, a former student of Piket, recalls the support and encouragement he and other students received from Piket on their assignments in composition class. He fondly recalls Piket's honesty in appraising their work, and the directness of his support.[13] This message is furthered by Cantor Howard Stahl, who recalls the event leading up to the title of Jennifer Blum's 1998 thesis on Piket—"Allergic to Nusach"[14]—where Piket registered his distaste of a composition, suggesting that the use of nusach in compositions was not suitable for the contemporary synagogue[15]. This quote has come to define Piket's approach to Nusach, but it begs investigation for two reasons. Firstly, many of the people with whom I have spoken suggested that Piket was an admirer of Freed and his synagogue compositions, and for Freed, nusach was an important constituent element of the music for worship. Secondly, evidence of the use of nusach can be seen in a number of Piket's compositions. For these reasons, this quotation, and some possible motives behind it, will be considered in detail later in this thesis.

[13] Cantor Frederick Hermann, in discussion with the author, June 26, 2016.
[14] Blum, "Allergic to Nusach," 40.
[15] Cantor Howard Stahl, in discussion with the author, August 1, 2016.

Chapter 2 – Rearranging the Work of Past Composers

Both Freed and Piket created a large body of compositional work, some of which is still in use, and some of which has unfortunately fallen out of use. Much of this music is only available as handwritten, unpublished scores. In today's synagogue services, it can be difficult to include the works of Freed and Piket because of contemporary musical tastes and the inherent complexity of the music. These same challenges have always existed, and both Freed and Piket used their skills in musicianship to rework the compositions of earlier composers to make them accessible to the synagogues of their day. In the case of Freed, he produced a book of works by Salamone Rossi entitled *Salamone Rossi 1750-1628 Sacred Service Transcribed for the American Synagogue*, published in 1954. Piket did some similar work rearranging compositions by Eliezer Gerovitch for the Sacred Music Press's *Liberal Synagogue Series Volume 1*, published in 1955.

Isadore Freed: The Music of Salamone Rossi

Centuries before Freed, Salamone Rossi (1570-1630) had gained a degree of respect for his compositional work in Europe and had undertaken musical training within the Late-Renaissance musical tradition of the time. In the days of Rossi, however, his relationship to the court and the Jewish community was not as straightforward as it would be for Freed. Rossi appeared on three payrolls of the Mantuan Court,[16] and while he was by no means the first Jewish musician to gain some acceptance outside of the Jewish community, he is the

[16] Don Harrán, *Salamone Rossi: Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13.

first of which much is known.[17] What is clear, however, is that he had attained such skill in the eyes of those outside the Jewish community of Mantua that he was excused wearing the yellow badge required of Jews at the time, and served the court of Mantua as a concertmaster. Rossi's music was, and is today, seen as exemplifying the highest musical standards of his time, and importantly, matched the standards of the surrounding music of the Catholic Church. Its place in the synagogue was not so obvious however, and as Hugo Weisgall notes, Rossi composed "a service as thoroughly individualistic and egalitarian as traditional Jewish worship."[18] The work done by Freed on Rossi's compositions is still important from the point of view of the survival of those compositions today.

In Freed's publication of arrangements of Rossi's music, one of the challenges he faced was how to rework scores for what would have been considered a more unusual number of voice parts by the standards of the synagogue choirs of Freed's day. Rossi's setting of "Hashkiveinu" was arranged for five voices, as shown in the excerpt below, taken from Naumbourg's publication of the music of Rossi:

[17] Ibid., 1.
[18] Hugo Weisgall, preface to *Salamone Rossi, Hashirim Asher Lish'lomo (The Songs of Solomon): Thirty-three Psalms, Songs and Hymns set to Music for Four, Five, Six, Seven and Eight Voices, Volume One*, ed. Fritz Rikko (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1967), v.

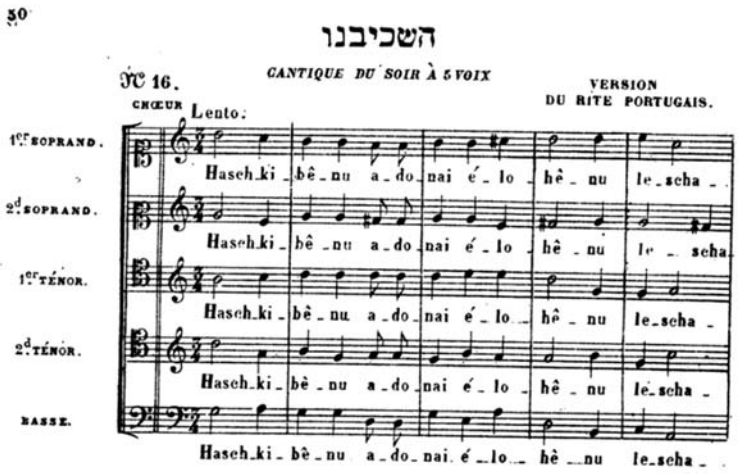


Figure 5 – Excerpt from Salamone Rossi, "Hashkiveinu," edited by Samuel Naumbourg (Source: Samuel Naumbourg, ed., *השירים אשר לשלמה: Cantiques de Salomon Rossi À 3·4·5·6·7 et 8 voix,* New York: Sacred Music Press, 1954, p. 50).

Freed's solution to simplifying the composition was to take Rossi's SATB voicing and to transfer some of it to the organ accompaniment. He took the opening text, "Hashkiveinu Adonai Eloheinu l'shalom," and rather than giving this entire phrase to the choir as with Rossi's original arrangement (shown above in the Naumbourg edition), he wrote this opening line for cantor and organ:

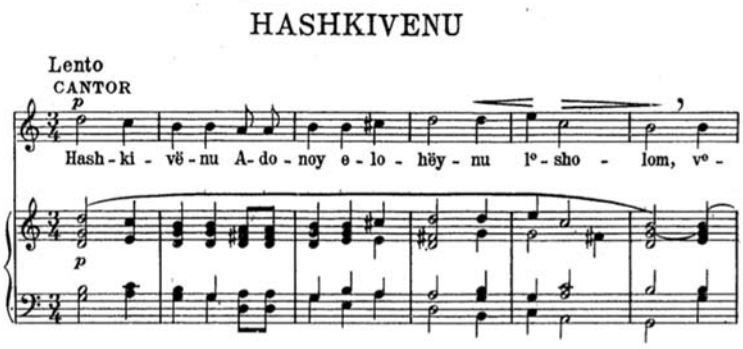


Figure 6 – "Hashkiveinu" by Salamone Rossi, arranged by Isadore Freed, mm. 1–6 (Source: Isadore Freed, *Sacred Service Transcribed for the American Synagogue by Isadore Freed,* New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1954).

As can be seen from the above musical quotation, Freed has been meticulous, even down to the voicing of the individual chords, in his attempt to stay as true to Rossi's vision for the sound of the music. Freed's attention to detail can be seen even as far as reproducing the thinning of the chord on the second chord of the second measure, on the "nu" of "vei-nu" shown below:

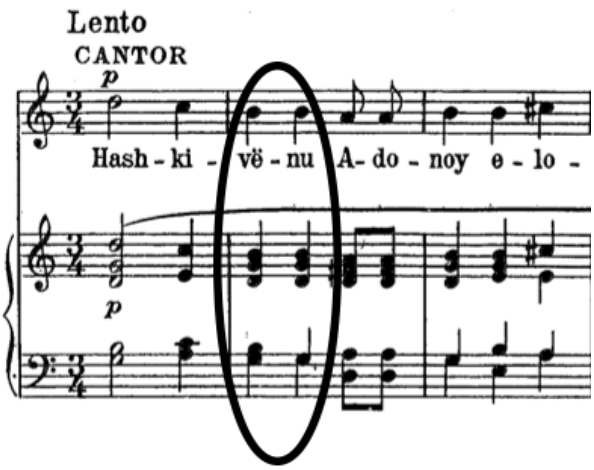


Figure 7 – Rossi's "Hashkiveinu," arr. Isadore Freed, mm. 1–3 (Source: Ibid.).

Such detail is not without importance, as it changes the sound of the chord, and weakens the emphasis on that beat of the measure, in keeping with the stress of the syllables of the word "veinu". The effect is not perfect, and with a move away from a purely vocal sound to a sound with an organ accompaniment, change is inevitable, however within these parameters, Freed has gone to significant effort to remain as true to as much of Rossi's intended sound as possible. It is not until the text, "ufros aleinu sukat shlomecha," that Freed introduces the other voices into his arrangement:

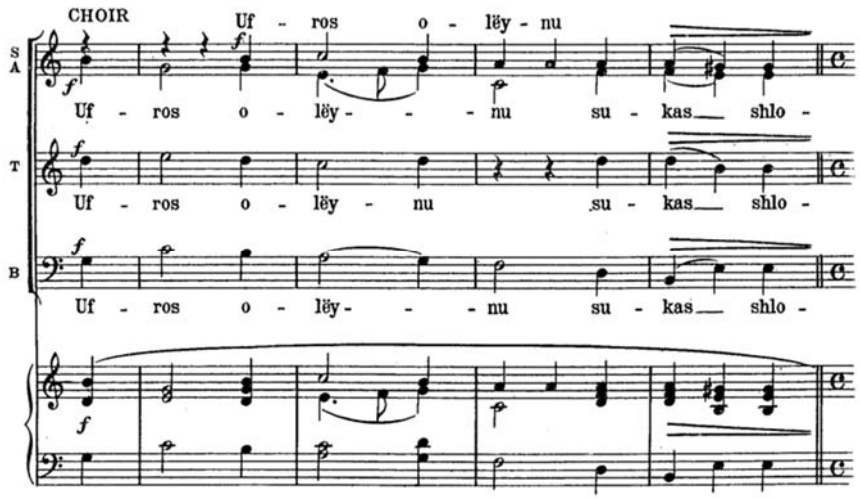


Figure 8 – Rossi's "Hashkiveinu," arr. Isadore Freed, mm. 13–17 (Source: Ibid.).

Freed continues to double the vocal lines in the organ and retains as much of the original vocal writing as possible. The one exception to this, as mentioned earlier, is in the tenor line. Rossi's original composition was scored for Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass. Freed presumably recognized that this added a further level of difficulty in performing the composition, due to the difficulty choirs often have in recruiting tenors. Perhaps this is why he removed this part from the score. Some sections of Rossi's composition were written

for one tenor, and in these instances, Freed simply maintained Rossi's arrangement. Other sections, however, called for more creativity. Take the following example:

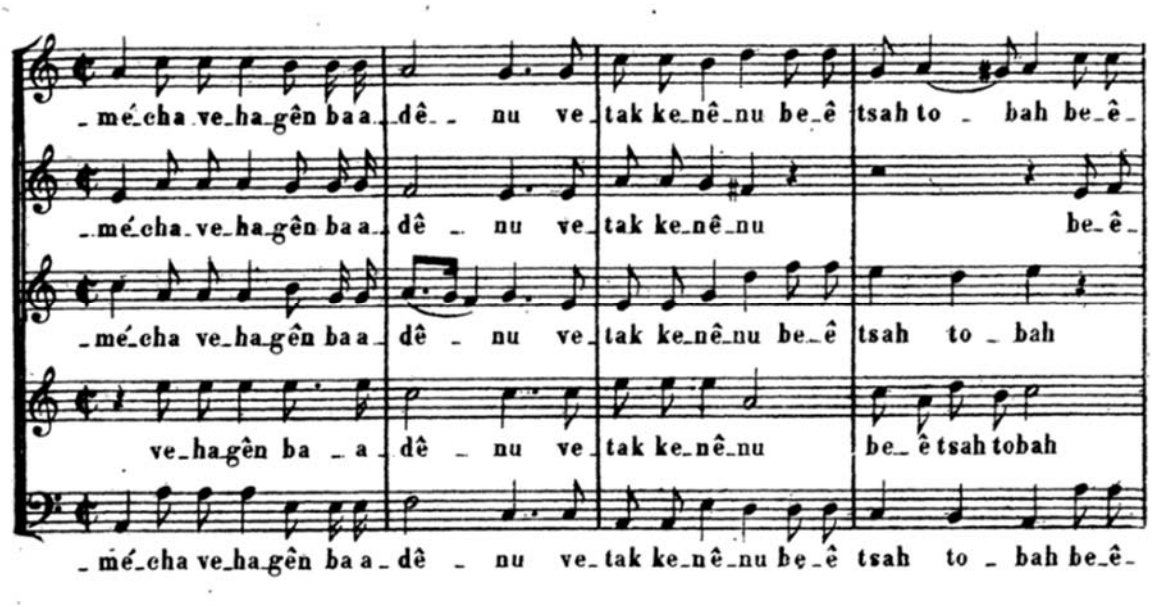


Figure 9 – Rossi's "Hashkiveinu," arr. Isadore Freed, mm. 17–20 (Source: Ibid.).

These four measures provide a good illustration of the challenge of voicing faced by Freed, and a further problem, presented by the text. Rossi used a slightly different text as the source for his setting than that which was used in Freed's time (and today). Rossi's text here appears to be based on Minhag Rome, though with some Ashkenazic influences.[19] Freed alters the underlay of the text to ensure it matches that used in the contemporary prayer book by removing the text "וְהָגֵן בַּעֲדֵנוּ" from its original position in Rossi's score, and repeating "סֻכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ" in its place, in order to remain as close as possible to Rossi's original music.

[19] I am grateful to Rabbi Sonja Pilz for her help in identifying this text.

The second challenge pertains to the fifth voice. Freed's solution to this can be seen in the example below:

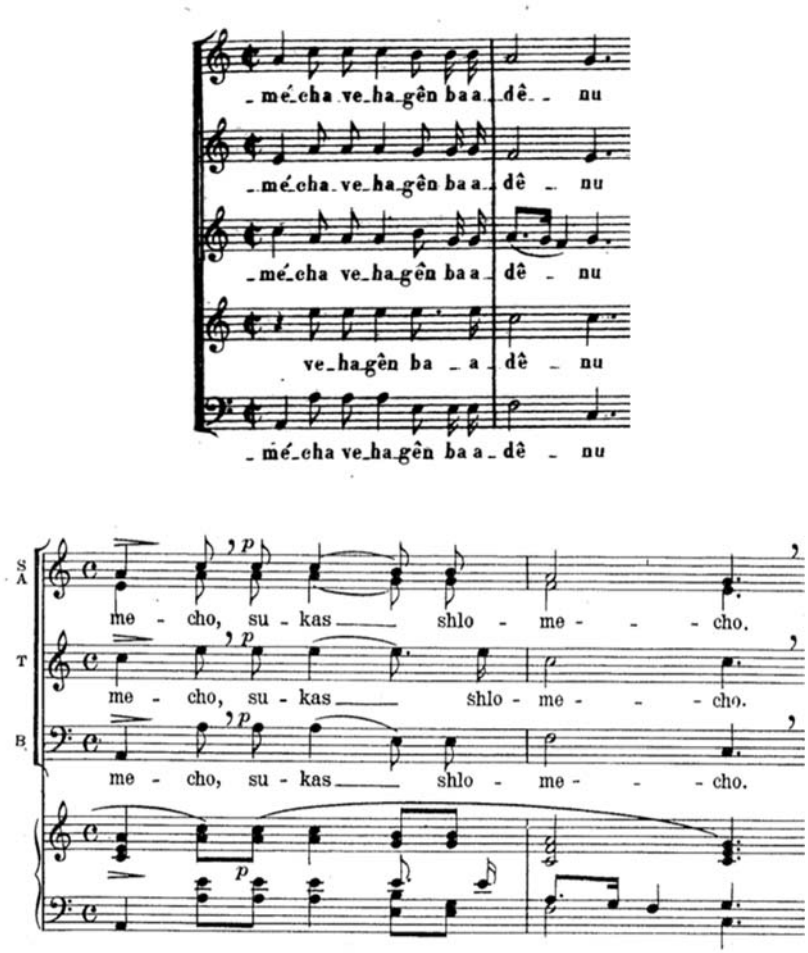


Figure 10 – Rossi's "Hashkiveinu," mm. 17–18, and Freed's arrangement, mm. 18–19 (Source: Ibid.).

The image on top shows Rossi's setting, and the image below shows Freed's arrangement. Freed has made two significant compositional decisions in this rearrangement. He has, as previously discussed, changed the text, and he has also transferred the ornament in the second measure from the first tenor line to the organ line. I assume he made this decision for two reasons. Firstly, without the C in the tenor line in measure two, there will be a C

missing from the F major chord established in beats one and two of measure two, and given that the C is the pivot note between the F major and C major chords in measure two, the C needs to be present. Moving the tenor and alto parts around may have permitted its presence in the voices, but it would not have been as clean as Freed's solution, which was to move this ornament into the organ. This also takes some of the difficulty out of the vocal lines, making them easier to learn and sing.

This is but one example of the type of work Freed did to make Rossi's music usable in the twentieth century synagogue. There will, of course, be those who will disagree with his efforts, suggesting that he has damaged the work by reworking the part arrangements and changing the underlay, and this is a valid point. There is a beauty to Rossi's purely vocal arrangement that is impossible to reproduce once the organ is added. Unaccompanied polyphonic vocal music, however, which is typical of the Late Renaissance style, is musically complex, and was not so welcome stylistically in the synagogue of Freed's time. What Freed did was to take music that would otherwise be unusable without singers of a very high level of musicianship, and produce a version that is not only easier to sing, but also brings elements of Rossi's sound to the contemporary ear, introducing a style that might otherwise simply sound too foreign. The further addition of the organ accompaniment also serves to change the feel significantly.

Frederick Piket: The Music of Eliezer Gerovitch

Like Freed, Frederick Piket also saw the importance of ensuring that synagogue music of the past had a place in the synagogue of his time. Piket arranged a number of works by Eliezer Gerovitch (1844-1914) for the Sacred Music Press's Liberal Synagogue Series

Volume 1, a book of arrangements of Gerovitch's music published with the stated aim to "reintroduce to American worshippers some of the classics of cantorial composition, thereby reestablishing the continuity of our musical tradition."[20]

My first observation on this work is that it is interesting that Piket, along with Wolf Hecker, was chosen as one of the arrangers for this project because of his non-traditional approach to composing Jewish liturgical music. However, this was not Piket's only work in creating contemporary arrangements of what may be considered more "traditional" Jewish melodies. Also worthy of note is the work Piket undertook to arrange for 4-part choir some of the music of Adolph Katchko, who also taught at Hebrew Union College.[21] That said, if the intention was to take music that was difficult to perform, or stylistically unfamiliar and to bring it to a contemporary synagogue audience, Piket may not have been the first choice for such a project, as his music is rarely straightforward. Piket's work, including his harmonization of the melodies of Katchko and settings of High Holy Day nusach is better characterized by its complexity rather than its simplicity. That said, as will be seen from Piket and Hecker's arrangement of Gerovitch's "Adon Olam" below, the outcome of the project was successful.

In the preface to the book, Hecker and Piket recognize their desire for minimal, non-intrusive changes to the original works.[22] They were prepared to make minor edits to the melody where they believed this would either simplify the melody or better reflect how

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[20] Wolf Hecker and Frederick Piket, eds., *Eliezer Yitzchok Gerowitsch: Songs of Prayer: Friday Evening Service* (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1955).
[21] Examples of these can be found in Gershon Ephros, ed., *Special Songster of New Materials for Congregational and Solo Singing* (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1953).
[22] Nelson Glueck and Abraham Franzblau, eds., preface to *Gerowitsch: Songs of Prayer*, ed. Hecker and Piket.

people knew it. They made slight modifications to the harmony, and, of course, they added an organ accompaniment, generally remaining faithful to Gerovitch's original scoring.

Eliezer Yitzchok Gerovitch was born in Kiev, Russia in 1844, and underwent a traditional Jewish training at Yeshiva in Kiev, and this Jewish training contributed to his music later in his life.[23] He showed an interest in, and aptitude for music at an early age; however, he was from a poor family that was unable to support him in his musical development.[24] He did, however, find ways to develop his musical training, and as well as finding his place in composing music for the synagogue, it is also worthy of note that his melody for Adon Olam, which will be discussed here, found its way into the repertoire of the Episcopal Church, and was featured, in *The Hymnal 1982: According to the Use of the Episcopal Church.*[25]

Gerovitch's melody for Adon Olam is straightforward and majestic and has become very widely known among synagogue worshippers. The form in which many synagogue worshippers first and most often encounter the melody, is in the 4-part strophic arrangement found in the *Union Hymnal,* published in 1932, shown below:

[23] Abraham Wolf Binder, preface to *Schirej Simroh, Synagogen Recitative und Chőre*, by Eliezer Gerovitch (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1953).
[24] Geoffrey Shisler, "Eliezer Gerovitch," accessed December 5, 2016, https://geoffreyshisler.com/biographies-2/eliezer-gerovitch/
[25] *The Hymnal According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1985), 425.

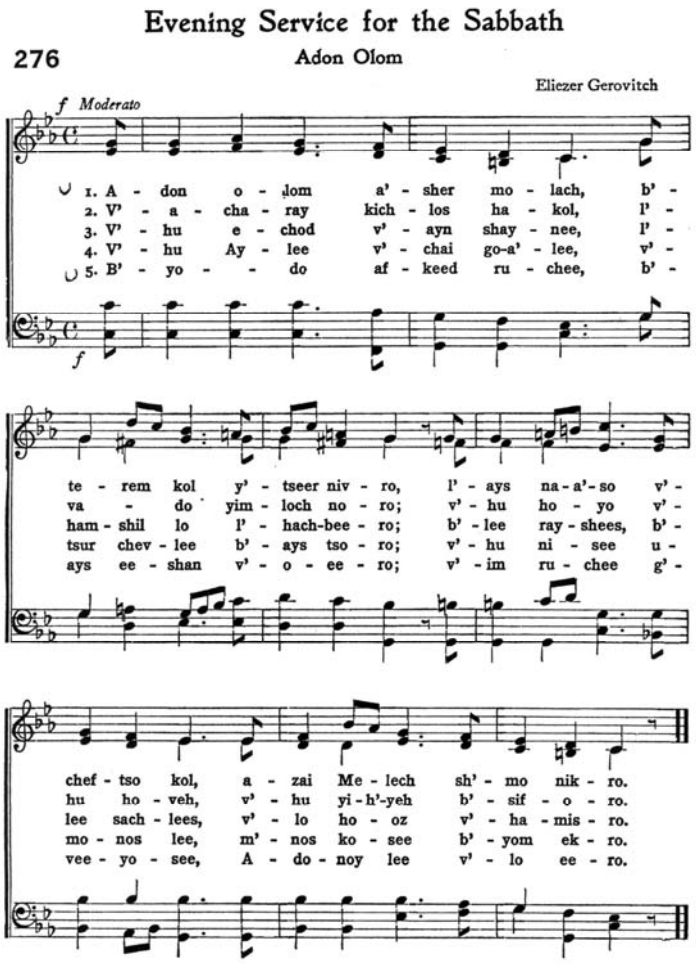

Figure 11 – Excerpt from "Adon Olam" by Eliezer Gerovitch
(Source: Union Hymnal 3rd Edition, 1932).

Gerovitch's setting of the melody appearing in the Sacred Music Press's Liberal Synagogue Series Volume 1, however, is through-composed, beginning in measure 2 with a 4-part vocal arrangement of the melody. This melody appeared strophically in the *Union Hymnal* (1932). Worthy of note is the decision by Piket and Hecker to retain the transposition of the piece from the *Union Hymnal* (1932). The editors of the hymnal transposed the piece down a whole step, from Dm to Cm. It seems probable that the version in the *Union Hymnal* (1932) was altered in this way in order to facilitate congregational participation. In

Gerovitch's original key, D minor, used in Gerovitch's own version, the highest note would have been an E. Transposing the key to C minor, as it appears in the *Union Hymnal* (1932) and in the Piket and Hecker (PH) edition, may have been an attempt to find a more comfortable key for the congregation to more easily sing the melody. However, I am unsure this is the reason as the original was not that high nor difficult for the average congregant to sing. Given that the PH edition does not seem to have been intended for congregational use, their decision to retain the lower key may also have been due to the different feel of C minor as opposed to D minor, which they may have preferred. In addition, there is an interesting melodic alteration in the PH edition, which is not found in Gerovitch's original arrangement or in the arrangement found in the *Union Hymnal*. This is found in the first two lines of the text, and is covered in more detail below.

It is interesting that the melody so associated with Gerovitch's setting appears only once in the full piece, though elements of this melody can be heard in the final lines of the text, בְּיָדוֹ אַפְקִיד רוּחִי בְּעֵת אִישַׁן. In the PH edition, even though they must have been familiar with the *Union Hymnal* (1932) arrangement, Gerovitch's through composed structure was maintained. The form of the piece is identical, with a choral setting of the first lines, then solo choir alternating, and finally closing with the choir. The PH edition does, however, make more use of the solo voice, including using it as a descant for the text in measures 12 through 18. This will be explained in more detail later.

It is interesting to note the minimal impact the *Union Hymnal* (1932) arrangement had on how Piket and Hecker approached the text. Although the aim of the rescoring of Gerovitch's music does not seem to be to for the purpose of adapting it for congregational use, the *Union Hymnal* (1932) arrangement showed how the melody could be used in this

way. In the PH edition, the choir parts vary throughout the composition, again adding interest, but also at the cost of adding to the complexity to the music. While this would not present a challenge for a professional choir, it would add extra time required for an amateur choir to learn the music as they would be unable to simply repeat the same melody.

The most obvious addition in the PH edition is the introduction of accompaniment. The PH edition also added an introduction to the music:

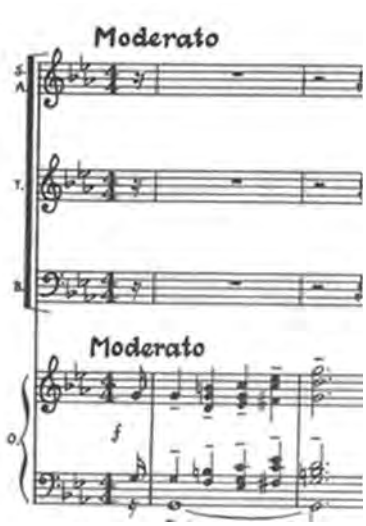

Figure 12 - Introduction to the PH edition of Eliezer Gerovitch's "Adon Olam" (Source: Wolf Hecker and Frederick Piket, eds., *Eliezer Yitzchok Gerowitsch: Songs of Prayer: Friday Evening Service*, New York: Sacred Music Press, 1955.

There are a couple of characteristics already present in this introduction that make me think of Piket's compositional style. Firstly, by the second note in measure 1, there are already accidentals in the music, and secondly, in all the music I have seen, Piket was meticulous in his use of accents. It is unusual to see a measure without some form of articulation present. Following this introduction, the voices begin with what appears at first glance to be a straight copy of Gerovitch's voice writing:

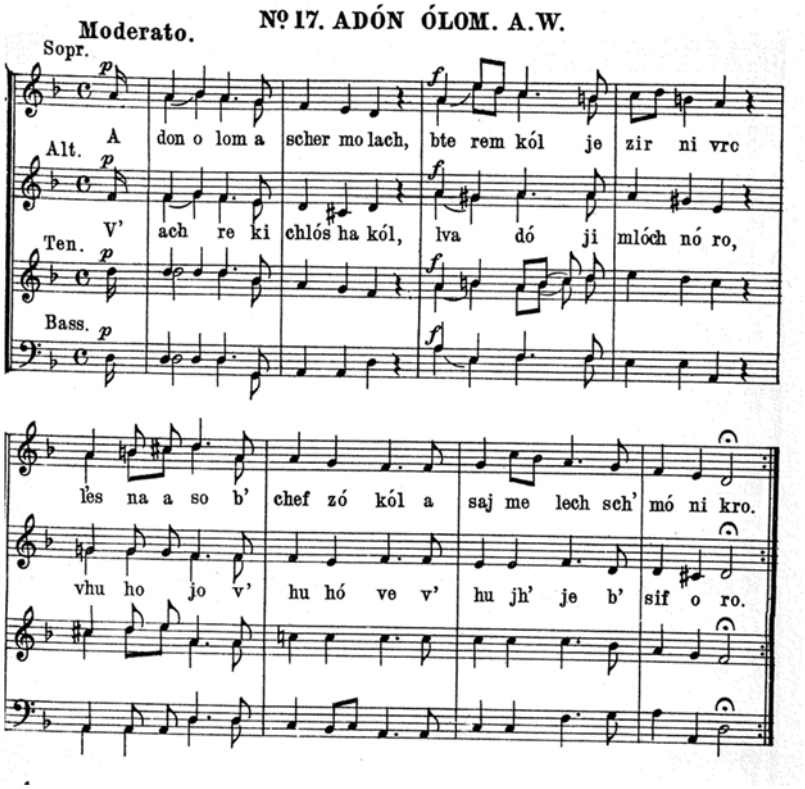

Figure 13 – PH edition of Gerovitch's "Adon Olam," mm. 1–8 (Source: Ibid.).

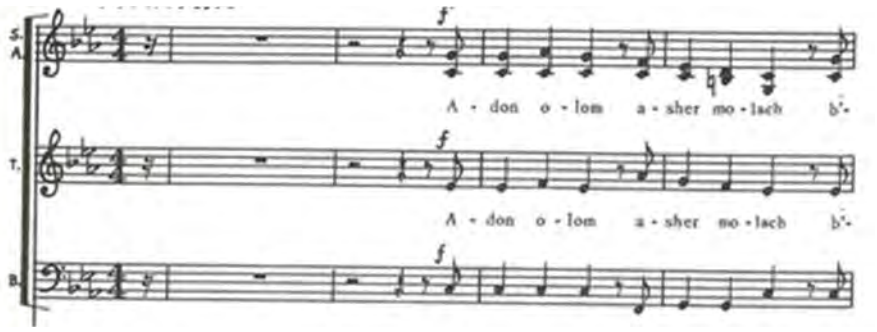

Figure 14 – PH edition of Gerovitch's "Adon Olam," mm. 1–4 (Source: Ibid.).

Except for minor alterations, such as the alto voice completing the chord on the second syllable of "molach" with a G rather than a C as in the original arrangement, the part writing has been retained. True to Piket's attention to detail, rather than notating it as Gerovitch chose to with the two syllables of "b'te(rem)" on one note in the PH edition, the syllables are separated, with the addition of an eighth note in the previous measure to accommodate the first syllable. This serves to ensure that it is clear where the two syllables fall and to avoid any ambiguity that could unnecessarily increase rehearsal time. It is shortly after this, however, that the first major change to the melody is introduced.

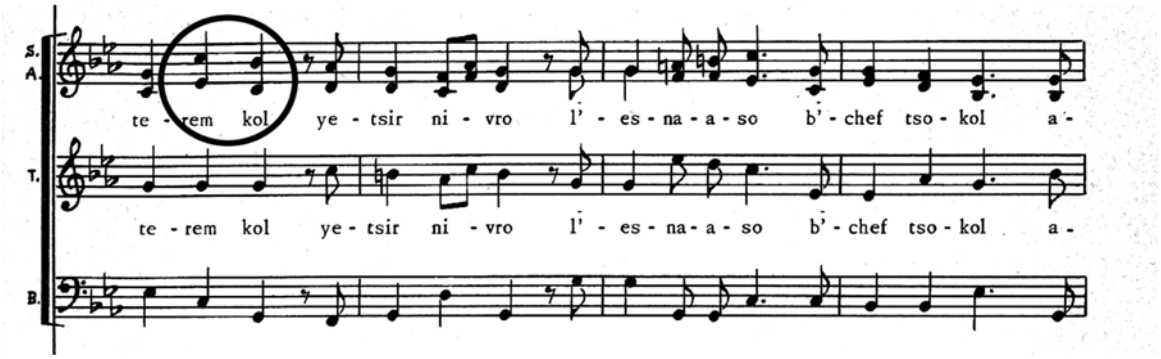

Figure 15 – Alteration to the melody found in the PH edition of Gerovitch's "Adon Olam," mm. 6–9 (Source: Ibid.).

In the example above, the second and third quarter notes in the upper vocal parts in mm. 1–4 have been highlighted. This represents a change to the melody from Gerovitch's original setting, shown below:

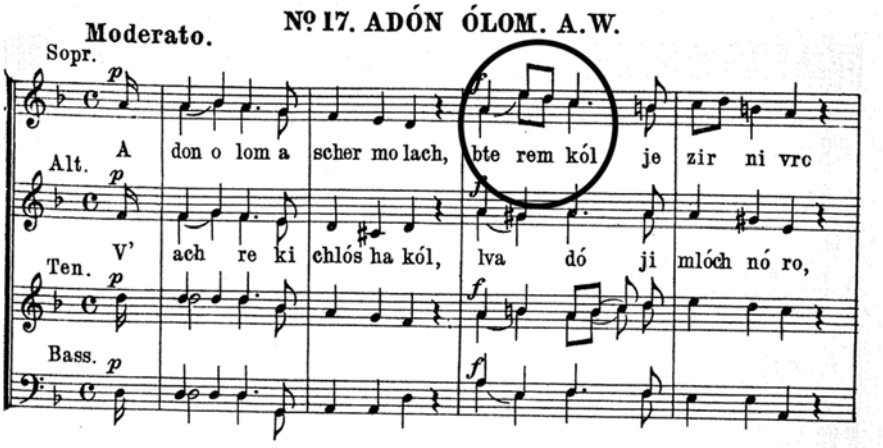

Figure 16 – Original melody for Gerovitch's "Adon Olam," mm. 1–4 (Source: Union Hymnal 3rd Edition, 1932).

In Gerovitch's original setting, he writes a unison A in beat 1 of measure 3 before briefly settling on an F minor chord on beat 3, measure 3. In the modified version, the soprano does not ascend the scale as far as the E, rising only to the D. To permit this change, in the PH edition, allowing for the fact the score is in Cm rather than Dm, the melody is altered, moving from C to a Bb in measure 5, never touching the D. This smoothing of the melody is interesting as it seems to match the version of the melody known by most. It causes me to wonder whether this was a change introduced by Piket and Hecker, if it is from their work that the altered version of the melody has became so well known, or if the change was already heard in common practice, which they chose to reflect in their arrangement of the music. Whatever the initial source of this change, it has become sufficiently ingrained as the popular melody. For example, when Congregation of Emanu-El of the City of New York use this setting in services, there are always congregants who wish to sing the revised melody, rather than Gerovitch's original version.

A further addition made to this arrangement is the addition of a descant in some of the verses, as shown in the following image:

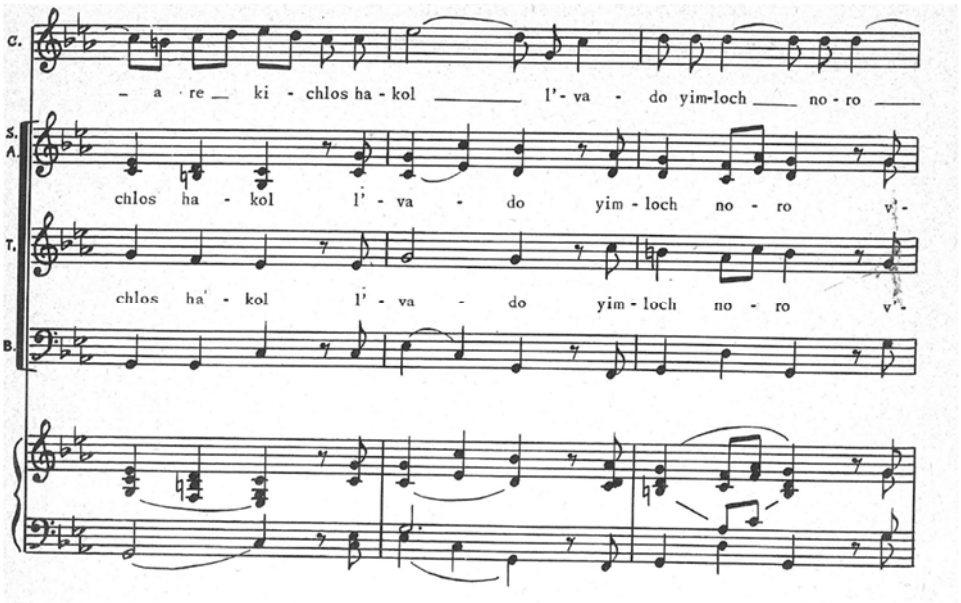

Figure 17 – Descant in PH edition of Gerovitch's "Adon Olam," mm. 12–14 (Source: Hecker and Piket, *Gerowitsch: Songs of Prayer*).

This descant line is intended to be sung by the cantor, adding interest through the elaboration of a solo voice separate from the choir parts. However, at the same time that it adds a further level of complexity to the piece, it seems to have been recognized as a potential problem by Piket and Hecker, who marked it as optional in the score. If a soloist is not available, the part could be skipped. In addition, the first verse was written for unaccompanied choir (as per Gerovitch's original score), however, for this second entry, an organ line has been added in measure 10. This would further my belief that the piece is intended to be sung by a professional choir rather than amateur singers because an amateur choir might stay in tune with each other, but nonetheless drop in pitch as a whole. The organ, a tempered instrument, would make such an unintended change of key very obvious.

The PH edition retains Gerovitch's solo line for cantor, which is now introduced in measure 19. This element is shown below:

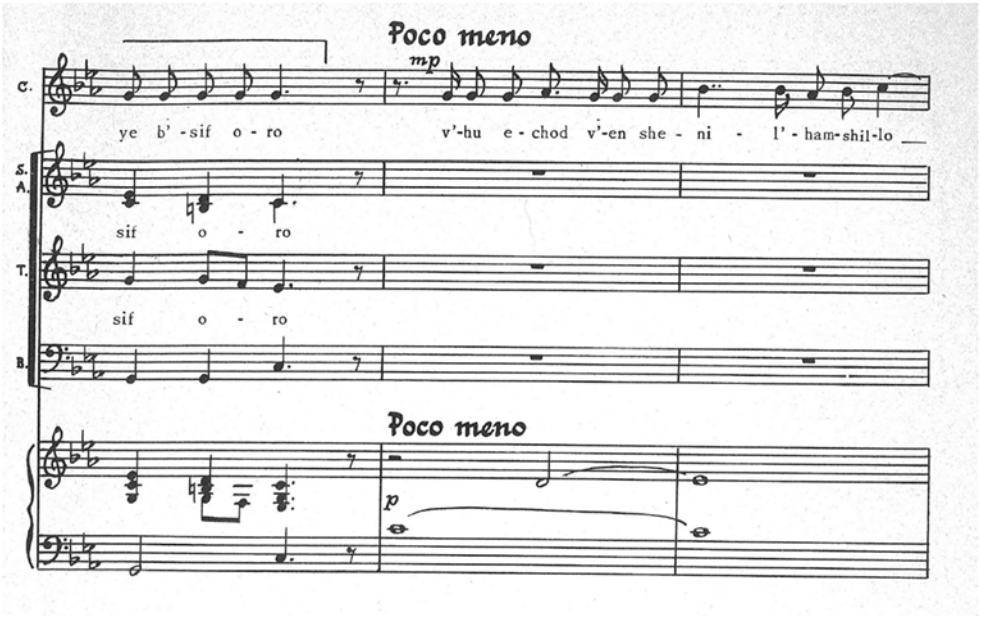

Figure 18 – Cantor solo in PH edition of Gerovitch's "Adon Olam," mm. 18–20 (Source: Ibid.).

In this section, the organ accompaniment is retained, a difference from Gerovitch's version for which there is no accompaniment. In contrast to the accompaniment for the choral section in mm. 12-14, the accompaniment here becomes sparse, but still carries a hint of the melody with the rising scale in measure 19. As this melody continues, it becomes more distant from the original sound of the Gerovitch melody, though it still carries hints of the original, notably the rising minor 2nd on the second syllable of "echod" on beats 2 and 3 in measure 19.

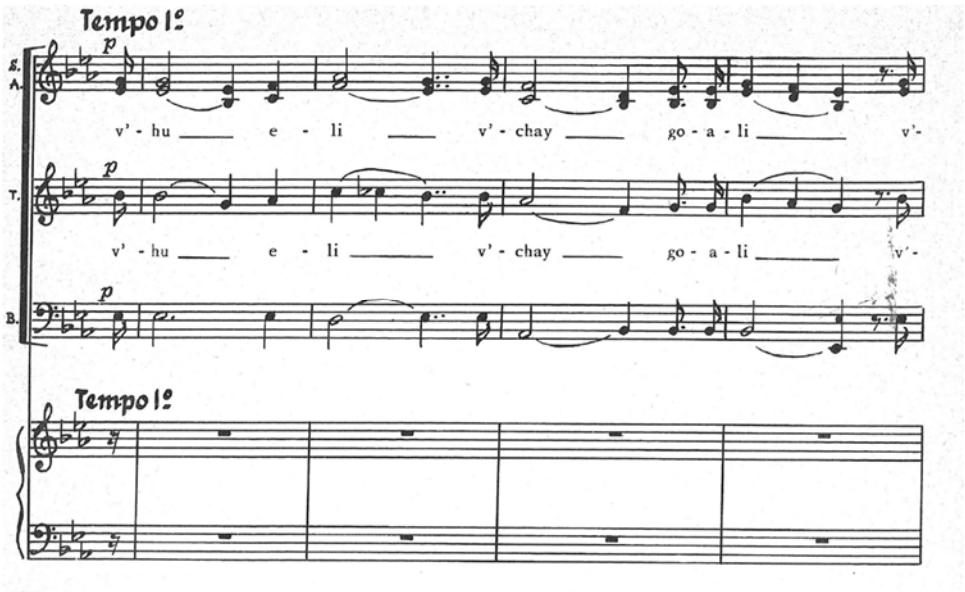

Figure 19 – New melody in the choir in PH edition of Gerovitch's "Adon Olam," mm. 27–30 (Source: Ibid.).

The PH edition retains the original melody for the next part of the text, " וְהוּא אֵלִי וְחַי גּוֹאֲלִי," with the re-introduction of the choir (See Figure 18). The melody and harmonies remain the same as in Gerovitch's own score, though again the PH edition has clarified some of the underlay, and it is clearer exactly where the words fall. An alternative model would have been to keep the choir lines the same at the first choir entry in mm. 27 – 42, and to use the solo line to create contrast with the opening, thereby reducing the difficulty level for the singers, yet allowing for melodic development in the music. In addition to the melody itself, the harmonic pattern of these measures also differs from the original. It is easy to see why Hecker and Piket would want to retain the extra variation in the piece, but to have repeated the choir lines from the opening measures 3 – 11 with a solo at measure 19 rather than a whole new choral passage would have been a simpler way to maintain contrast without making the music more difficult for the choir. The model had been set with the *Union Hymnal* (1932) version, but Piket and Hecker chose not to follow it.

In the same way as Freed retained, as closely as possible, Rossi's original setting of Hashkiveinu, Hecker and Piket were careful not to alter too much of Gerovitch's work, except for a melodic change at the opening. In the "Hashkiveinu," Freed was careful to retain the original compositional material to ensure that the prayer text fit the melody and that the melodic and harmonic ideas remained as similar as possible to Rossi's original setting. Hecker and Piket did not have text changes to deal with, but they did, nonetheless make a noteworthy melodic change. This determination to stay true to the original remains throughout the work, and it is interesting to note that that original melody never returns in either version. The PH edition retains the ending, but this is one instance where some liberty has been taken with the harmonization. Below is Gerovitch's original harmonization of the concluding phrase of the "Adon Olam" setting:

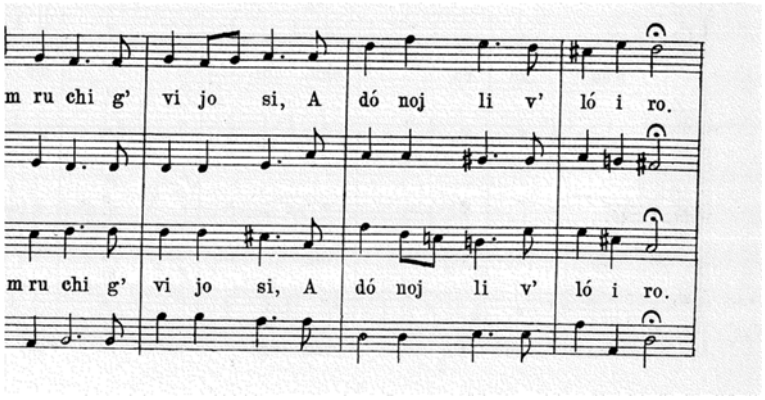

Figure 20 – Gerovitch's ending for "Adon Olam," mm. 36–39
(Source: Union Hymnal 3rd Edition).

There is nothing jarring or uncomfortable about Gerovitch's ending, finishing as it does with a V7-I cadence and some fairly straightforward part-writing. Piket and Hecker, however, add more harmonic interest to these final two measures:

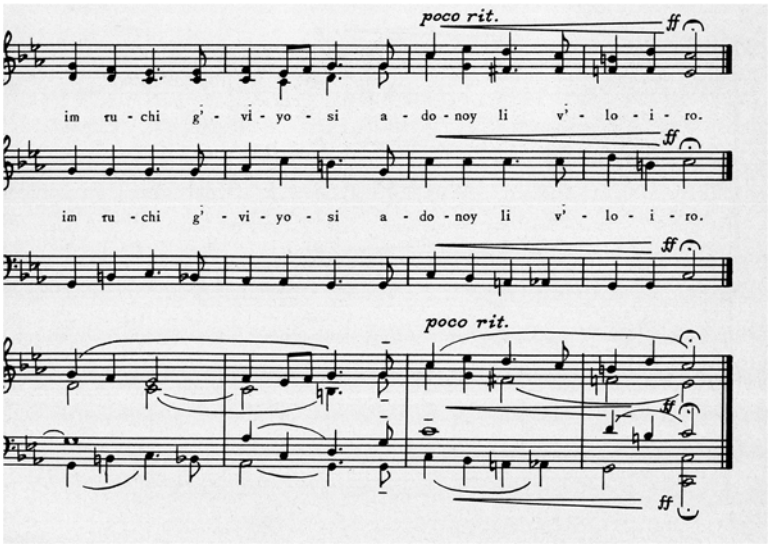

Figure 21 – PH edition ending of "Adon Olam," mm. 57–50
(Source: Hecker and Piket, *Gerowitsch: Songs of Prayer*).

My guess as to why they chose to add more complexity to the final cadence along with a crescendo, poco ritardando, and fermata on the final two beats of the last measure, is simply that given that the music was written as a full service and this was the closing song, Piket and Hecker wanted to emphasize a sense and sound of finality. In comparison, this was not Gerovitch's compositional goal. Again, one can see clear elements of the original melodic ideas in this final section, sometimes repeated, such as the opening of the line above for the test "v'im ruchu", and sometimes inverted or otherwise altered, such as the rising Eb, F, G on the word "g'vi-yo-si."

As I have discussed in this chapter, Freed and Piket (with the help of Hecker) were very careful in their work to preserve music that would have otherwise fallen from use in the synagogue. Arguably, the challenge faced by Freed arranging the Rossi "Hashkiveinu" was

greater than that faced by Piket and Hecker, as the Gerovitch already sounded more harmonically and melodically familiar to the contemporary ear. The Rossi "Hashkiveinu" is very much a product of an earlier stylistic period, sounding like the polyphonic choral music Late Renaissance Italy. This may have given Freed less incentive to try to alter the music too heavily, as without major reworking, it would always sound less familiar to the congregants for whom he was writing. In arranging the Gerovitch, Piket and Hecker knew that this was a familiar melody to American Jews in the mid-twentieth century. As the closing prayer of the Shabbat Evening service, Hecker and Piket seemed to capitalize on its familiarity, altering less of the familiar elements of the setting.

My analysis demonstrates two contrasting approaches to reworking and rearranging the music of "the liberal synagogue" for a twenty-century American audience. The first, as shown in my discussion of Freed's arrangement of the Rossi's "Hashkiveinu" setting, involves remaining as true to the original composer's notation as is possible, while only making alterations where absolutely necessary to ensure that the music can best fit the text and is suitable to be performed by available musicians. In my second example, Piket and Hecker retained much of the original structure and harmony, but introduced an accompaniment and made a significant change to the melody to perhaps match what they were hearing in synagogues of the time. Piket and Hecker have retained the original feel and ensured, as much as possible, that the original music is retained. By introducing instrumentation, they also adapted and modified the harmony where they felt it could be improved.

Chapter 3 – Harmonizing the Jewish Modes

Freed's approach to traditional Jewish music can be seen in *Harmonizing the Jewish Modes*, published in 1958 by the Sacred Music Press. Rather than being conceived as a book from the outset, it was constructed from materials Freed used in his modal harmony classes at Hebrew Union College.[26] He set himself a complex task in assembling the book, with the stated aim of "organizing the harmonic practices of composers who have worked with the Jewish Modes."[27]

The first task Freed attempts in the book is to situate modal harmony within the contemporary world of Western musical harmony. This represents an important shift in how one thinks about the cantorial modes; giving them a place within Western musical thinking, rather than thinking about them as belonging to an outside ethnic system. It also opens up the possibility of adapting Western musical language to the modes. Freed devotes considerable space in his introduction to establishing the important place of dissonance in 20th century harmony. While noting that dissonance was by no means previously absent in harmony, he stresses the importance of its change of status from a passing point to consonance, to a fundamental musical feature in its own right.[28] He notes that earlier Jewish liturgical compositions, which attempted reference to the Jewish modes in some form, already contained hints of a more dissonance-based harmonic language, including the compositions of Gerovitch mentioned above, though Freed viewed their harmonic usage as "crude and

[26] Isadore Freed, *Harmonizing the Jewish Modes* (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1958).
[27] Ibid., Acknowledgements.
[28] Ibid., 9.

ineffectual."[29] In Freed's view, composers working with the Jewish modes had not been creating a harmonic sound that would complement the modes per se, but trying to find a way to harmonize modal sounds in a way that would not damage the music. This is one of the most illustrative sections of Freed's introduction to the book, and very much in keeping with his view that his role as a music re-creator rather than music preserver. It would seem that he is suggesting that the work of earlier composers who had created harmonized music while attempting to remain true to the Jewish modal heritage, was hamstrung by the fact that they were not thinking in terms of creating a harmonic system that would be compatible with the modal idea. They were taking modal melodies and trying to harmonize them within an existing western-classical style.

I think he is absolutely correct in this assessment, and it also says something very interesting about how these respective composers viewed their place in society. To take Gerovitch as an example—a composer writing in a world where post-Emancipated Jews were interested in establishing their place alongside the best of the time—may have been more interested in showing how Jewish 'ethnic' music could work within a Western harmonic structure. Freed, on the other hand, was living in a society where people and music came from all over the world, and the value of their identity was less dependent on their music sounding like that which surrounded it, and more on finding a way for the music itself to become the best version of itself. In a paragraph of his "Introduction" to *Harmonizing the Jewish Modes*, Freed articulates, albeit using some troubling racial terminology, what he was trying to achieve in his book:

[29] Ibid., 9.

> …just as the sculptor has abandoned realism in favor of primitivism (as in […] sculpture, etc.) with the net gain of a new area of expressive plasticity; so too, the composer gains a new and colorful tonal expressivity in being forced to abandon his reliance on the Tonic Dominant system of the 18th and 19th Centuries.[30]

While the phraseology in this quotation is uncomfortable, it is interesting to see how Freed views the musical form. It suggests Freed sees the synthesis of the Jewish modes and the harmonic system that must be created to deal with them, which would allow the composer to enter a new world of musical expression, free them from constraints of contemporary musical harmony. Again, this seems in keeping with how one might view Reform Judaism of the period. Previously, it had suffered from the constraints imposed by the desire for a decorous model inherited from Germany in the 19th century, whereas now tastes had shifted, and Freed was free to experiment with the new freedoms of music and expression encountered in America.

Freed gives a detailed introduction to the three modal scales he associates with the Jewish modal system, and situates them within the context of the Church modes with which they are most closely related. His concern for detail can also be seen in the need to recognize their origins insofar as he can. He also recognizes that this only tells part of the story, and it is important to frame the use of the scales within the idea that the music is also fundamentally characterized by the utilization of free rhythm in synagogue chant from which it is derived. In consideration of the modes, it would be all too easy to gloss over this important facet of the music. That said, while Freed acknowledges this idea of rhythmic freedom, he does not actually embrace the idea in the musical examples he gives,

[30] Ibid., 10.

demonstrating how the modes can be used, which are better characterized by strict rhythmic writing.

The organizational structure of *Harmonizing the Jewish Modes* is interesting as well. He begins by looking at the Ahavoh Rabboh scale, its constituents, chordal underpinnings, and associated cadences. A similar process is followed for the Mogein Ovos and Adonoy Moloch scales. While it is certainly a logical structure to follow from a musical point of view, it is nonetheless imposing a Western Classical music thought process on a style of music that did not develop within this mindset. Likewise, he then proceeds to a chapter on mixed modes.

It is an understatement to say that Freed merely harmonized the modes. In fact, he took a modal style that had become associated with an outdated, "non-decorous," and otherwise 'in-the-past' form of worship, and taken elements of the music that he could weave into a new stylistic form for use in the synagogue of his time. To structure a study of the Jewish modes in this way is helpful in understanding aspects of the practical construction of Jewish modal music, but in so doing, Freed changed the nature of the music he studied. This was necessary as language inevitably translates and transmits ideas, but there is an element of discomfort in framing the book as *harmonizing* the modes, when what Freed did was more in line with coopting the modes and creating something new.

Chapter 4 – The School of Sacred Music

Freed's work on *Harmonizing the Jewish Modes* was, in large part, a publication of work he produced for use in his teaching work at Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music. The School of Sacred Music provided an institutional home to both Freed and Piket, and gave them an opportunity to be part of the training of cantors. The school provided both composers with the opportunity to teach and publish music for the synagogue, which would have been unlikely without the school's support.

In 1940, the Jewish Music Forum, co-founded by Lazar Weiner in 1939 with a view to advance "Jewish scholarship and the performance of Jewish Music,"[31] held a meeting to develop a full conference on the question of Synagogue Music in America, from which emerged the idea for the creation of an American cantorial school.[32] The war delayed its eventual opening, however, the School of Sacred Music was opened at Hebrew Union College in 1948. While this was an important event for Freed and Piket, it was also an important indicator of how the music of the synagogue was perceived at the time. To open such a school requires confidence that music for the synagogue was considered important enough that people would wish to undertake a course of formal study in it. Fortunately, this confidence was well placed, and it provided both Freed and Piket with the opportunity to teach.

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[31] Marsha Bryan Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 162.
[32] Irene Heskes, "A Biographical Sketch of Abraham Wolf Binder," in *A. W. Binder: His Life and Work*, ed. Irene Heskes (New York: National Jewish Music Council, 1965), 7.

It was in this setting that an important event in how Piket is now perceived took place. In his compositions for the synagogue, Piket espoused the view that it made little sense to confine oneself in the search for some form of authenticity. For Piket:

> Music cannot, artistically and technically, connect [to] or accompany pieces of poetry or drama that are not integrated with its inner life… An attempt to accomplish this must, by necessity, lead to superficial descriptive "music"… using ready-made, actually extramusical, effects of volume, color or harmony.[33]

This quotation reveals a critical nuance in Piket's thinking about setting text to music. Although he is generally believed to have disapproved of the use of nusach in liturgical settings, his words and work suggest that he objected not to nusach per se, but to its use where it is neither organic nor complementary to the text. In so doing, Piket highlights one of the great dangers in trying to compose music and incorporate a "Jewish sound." In the hands of a composer such as Freed, however, it is possible for nusach and modes to be used in clever and new ways of which a 'lesser' composer might not be capable. For example, consider Piket and Freed's setting of the Friday night Kiddush. As Judah Cohen notes, Piket used "a melodic line with similarities to traditional Kiddush melodies, regardless of harmonic content."[34] Piket's setting of the Friday night Kiddush is a case in which he clearly felt that it was meaningful and appropriate to reference what one might call a "traditional Jewish sound." In a similar vein, "Freed attempted to create a *new* melody that was 'modally'

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[33] Letter to "Irving," August 10, 1952, Piket Home Collection, quoted in Judah Cohen, "Modes of Tradition? Negotiating Jewishness and Modernity in the Synagogue Music of Isadore Freed and Frederick Piket," *Jewish Culture and History* 5, no. 2 (2002): 38.
[34] Judah Cohen, "Modes of Tradition? Negotiating Jewishness and Modernity in the Synagogue Music of Isadore Freed and Frederick Piket," *Jewish Culture and History* 5, no. 2 (2002): 38.

authentic for his Kiddush" an effort of which Piket would surely also have approved. [35] Put simply, Piket considered music worthless unless it served a clear purpose for those who heard it. Familiarity counts as a purpose under that definition, and it is logical that he would not be so concerned to write a piece in a mode that people were not familiar with, but to begin the Kiddush with a recognizable opening phrase:

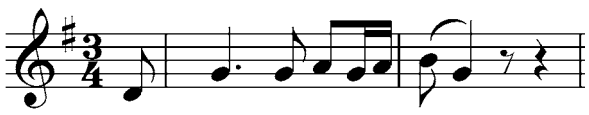

Figure 22 – Opening phrase from Piket's Kiddush (Source: *The Seventh Day,* New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1961).

As Piket stated:

> I firmly maintain that a composer should write for the ears of an audience, not in pursuit of intellectual goals or fallacious theories. Applied to our synagogue music, this means that the composer should not write in a vacuum. Rather, he should watch the reaction of the congregation. Specifically, he should refrain from abstruse idioms, complicated forms and inaccessible structures. He should write melody first, and think harmonically second.[36]

Piket was a composer for whom writing music for the synagogue was something he came to later in life, after many years of compositional work in the wider world of Classical music. Given his extensive compositional experience, Piket's insight here is extremely valuable. Cohen records an incident with one of Piket's students who noted the presence of elements of

[35] Ibid., 40.
[36] Frederick Piket, "Music of the Synagogue: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow," lecture given at Hebrew Union College (1961–1964?), Piket Home Collection, New York.

nusach in Piket's compositions. Piket was allegedly uncomfortable hearing the musical idiom referred to as nusach, preferring to treat them as merely melodic elements rather than nusach per se.[37] This idea, in conjunction with Piket's use of a familiar sounding melody for his setting of the Kiddush, makes it seems possible to conclude that Piket's views on the use of nusach is not that he hated it per se; but that his concern was in its use as a simplistic musical proxy for something of true value in the music.

In trying to understand this distinction, it is helpful to consider the circumstances of Piket's involvement with his students who were writing Jewish music in his courses taught at Hebrew Union College. The nature of these interactions, that is to say, his work with compositional students at the School of Sacred Music, meant that he would be interacting with a group of students working on musicianship and composition without the same formal training that he and others like him, had developed over many years working as a composer and conductor for the concert and opera stage. Piket's years of immersion in the world of classical music gave him a different perspective on music in comparison to those who may have interacted with the world of non-Jewish music, but who had not studied and experienced it to the same extent. Herein lies a possible reason for Piket to be so circumspect in his comments on the use of nusach. It is not that he did not see the value of it, or that he did not wish to see it used. Instead, he was more concerned about it becoming a proxy for real composition, that it may, in Piket's words, "lead to superficial descriptive 'music'

[37] Judah Cohen, "Modes of Tradition? Negotiating Jewishness and Modernity in the Synagogue Music of Isadore Freed and Frederick Piket," *Jewish Culture and History* 5, no. 2 (2002): 38.

...using ready-made, actually extramusical, effects of volume, color or harmony."[38]

[38] Ibid.

Conclusions

In Jennifer Blum's 1998 thesis on Frederick Piket, one of the conclusions that she suggested was that Piket's music did not get the attention that it deserved.[39] Moreover, she suggests, correctly, that even though he may have intended to write music that was relevant to the congregants of his day, the complexity of his musical language unfortunately achieved the opposite effect.[40] Having spent the last several months living with a range of his repertoire, both synagogue music and secular music, vocal music and also piano music, I find myself very much in agreement with this conclusion. His seriousness in approaching compositions for the synagogue comes as little surprise given that his compositional work for the secular world up to that point, and I find myself drawn to the conclusion that the acceptance of his music was hampered by the fact that considerable musical understanding and work is required to appreciate it.

Isadore Freed's work also suffers from its inherent complexity, though it achieved far wider acceptance and use than that of Piket. Throughout his work, Freed tried to combine nusach and the modes with the sounds he heard around him to synthesize a Jewish past and Jewish present that could bring meaning to the services for which he wrote. Notwithstanding the above comments on Piket's complex relationship with nusach, Piket seems to have been less intent on ensuring its survival and more concerned with establishing a sound that would bring meaning to the text of the liturgy, using whatever musical idiom he felt best suited its purpose. Where Freed may have erred on the side of nusach, Piket would use it only ever to incorporate it into his compositions when there was a clear and strong justification to do so.

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[39] Jennifer Blum, "Allergic to Nusach," Thesis, HUC-JIR New York, 1998, 68.
[40] Ibid.

Both of these models have merit, and both have lessons for composing for the twenty-first century synagogue. There is no perfect model for writing synagogue music, and just as we experiment with liturgy today, we experiment with the music that we use to experience it. Just as the future will bring new exciting sounds and models to integrate into worship, the past can bring comfort, familiarity, and connection. A question for the future, however, is whether it will be possible to rework the music of Freed and Piket for the twenty-first century synagogue in the same way that these two composers were able to rework the compositions of Rossi and Gerovitch respectively. Freed and Piket found a way to retain much of the original composers' musical styles while modifying and simplifying and the music where necessary. Both Freed and Piket created a path to compose, hear, and otherwise experience Jewish liturgical music in the 20th century. It would be a challenge to undertake the project of finding a place for Freed and Piket's work in the contemporary synagogue, but it would be a project of great value.

Appendix A – Annotated Works by Isadore Freed and Frederick Piket

Piket's Setting of Ahavat Olam

Piket's setting of Ahavat Olam, in seemingly B-flat minor, is an important piece to me in my thinking about his music because it was the first of his liturgical settings that I sang in my second year of study at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. From the outset of this piece, it is clear that this is a nonstandard setting, beginning, as it does, with a Bb in the base and a C natural and Db in the treble. Piket quickly resolves the C to a B-flat, adding an F in the bass to find a more comfortable harmony, but he does not let this resound for long, returning quickly to a C in the right hand. In the first measure, Piket has already established that there will be something mysterious about how he presents the text.

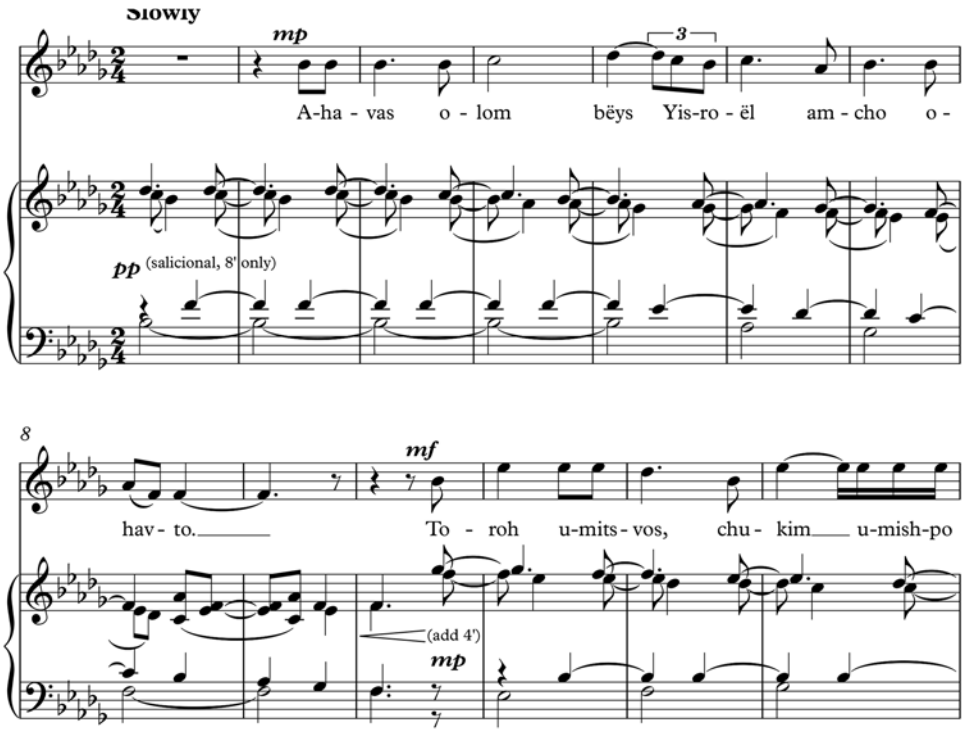


Figure 23 – Piket's *Ahavas Olom*, mm. 1–13 (Source: Frederick Piket, *Ahavas Olom*, New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1965).

The voice enters in the second measure with the rising passage landing on a D flat on the word “bëys” of “bëys Yisroel,” before completing the phrase with a descent to an F on the syllable “to” of “ohavto.” While this does appear to be the end of the first vocal phrase of the piece, it is something quite different than a straightforward cadence before the beginning of the next phrase. If we are to accept that the first two beats of the piece are indeed a B-flat minor chord, then one could accept a return to the B-flat minor chord beneath the F in measure 9. Piket, however, chooses to do something very different. Rather than write a B-flat minor chord in measure 9, what we find is a unison F minor chord.

It is also worth noting that Piket envisaged this pieces to be accompanied by an organ rather than a piano. Without the percussiveness of a piano, the gentler attack of each note, and the ability to sustain notes longer on the organ, the effect of the sustained notes in the left-hand becomes far more pronounced. On a piano they would quickly decay (even with the aid of a sustain pedal), but with an organ, they sound the same on the fourth beat as they did on the first. This allows for a gentle movement through the harmonic changes of the piece, an effect that Piket uses to great effect.

A lesser composer than Piket may well have done something similar for the next part of the text: “Toroh umitzvos chukim umishpotim osonu limad’to,” with the move to a higher part of the voice for the words “Toroh umitzvos,” and almost an implied moved to the 4th scale degree of the implied B-flat minor opening phrase. For the word “ohavto” in m.8 of the piece (with a pickup in m.7), Piket uses a falling minor third between in A-flat and an F. For the word “limad’to” in m.16 (with a pickup in m.15), we find another instance of an incomplete sounding end to a phrase. The word “limad’to” is set to a rising passage, and a simplistic interpretation could suggest that there was an attempt to imply that the teaching of

the commandments and ordinances helped people "to raise themselves up," but the lack of finality inherent in lack of tonal resolution, complicates this idea. This complication is furthered by the fact that the organ passage underscoring this section lands, finally, on a B-flat a couple of measures later. It is worth noting at this point that Piket made use of this shift to the fourth. It certainly works within the wider context of the tonality of the piece, but it is also worth noting that such a move is one strongly associated with the sound of Jewish music—with the constant chromaticism in the harmony making any such change harder to discern.

The next section of text, "Al kën Adonoy elohëynu b'schochvëynu uv'kumëynu nosiach b'chukecho," marked "un poco mosso," has more of the feeling of a litany about it. Piket maintains the falling passage in the left-hand, but with much sparser harmonic accompaniment throughout this section. This makes a degree of sense given the content of the text at this point. The opening of the text recognizes what God has done for Israel and the value placed on the decrees, commandments, and ordinances to which the text refers. In this second section, the responsibility of those receiving these commandments and ordinances is outlined. This section of the text is a statement of responsibilities for everyday life. This may be initially presented as something of a litany, but through that litany comes fervor, and Piket uses the music in this section to give a sense of incompleteness, suggesting that merely speaking of these ideas is not sufficient. He does this by placing the word "chukecho," "God's law," to what feels like a fifth chord in the currently established key of Eb-minor. Starting with the text "V'nismach," "and we will rejoice," the music begins to build to a climax. This climax comes on the words "l'olam voed," forever and ever, and the word "voed"—extended for a number of beats longer than pretty much anything else so far in the

piece—maintains the idea of something being eternal. This climax, however, turns out to be false. On the final syllable of "voed," Piket writes the following:

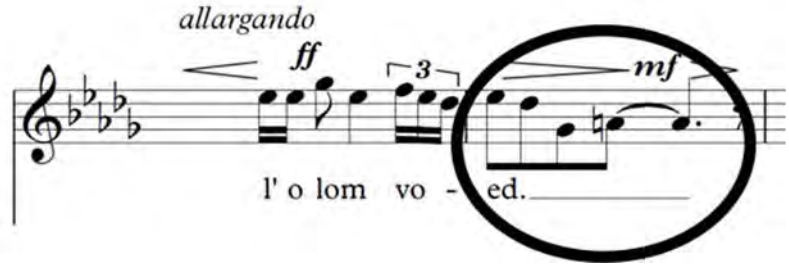


Figure 24 – "L'olom voed" in Piket's *Ahavas Olom*, mm. 28–29 (Source: Ibid.).

Piket uses an E-flat, D-flat, and G-flat followed by an A natural in the setting of this text, shown highlighted above. This is an example of what appears to be Piket's compositional approach to this piece of liturgy in this setting. He has taken an idea that should be comforting and important to us in our approach to the Shema, the heart of this section of the evening service, and he has musically denied that sense of completion and comfort. Quite apart from this idea that we will rejoice with words of God's Torah and God's commandments forever, the underlying feeling is that this 'forever' is not a comfortable word of conclusion. Piket does not leave it there. In fact, this descending melodic passage is also marked with a diminuendo. The only example of repeated text in Piket's setting follows, with a repetition of the words, "Ki heim chayënu," "for they are our life":

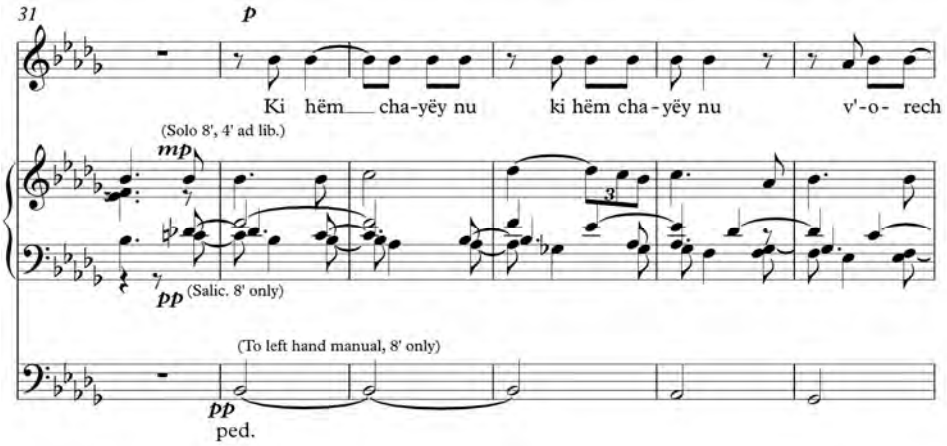


Figure 25 – "Ki hëm chayëynu" in Piket's *Ahavas Olom*, mm. 31–36 (Source: Ibid.).

At this part of the music, the organ accompaniment plays the opening melody, but the voice sustains a single pitch. It is almost as if the idea of these words is so deeply ingrained that the idea cannot develop. He furthers this emphasis with the introduction of a B-flat pedal in the organ. A further climax in the music now appears, on the text "Uvohem nehgeh yomam valaila," "and about then we will meditate day and night," with another unexpected musical cadence.

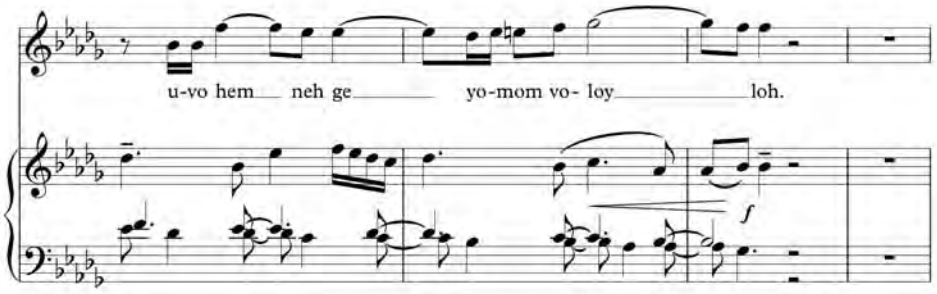


Figure 26 – "Uvohem nehgeh" in Piket's *Ahavas Olom*, mm. 41-45 (Source: Ibid.).

Piket finishes the word "loyloh," or "night," with another unsettled, unclear cadence. In so doing, he leaves the listener with a sense of discomfort surrounding the idea of contemplating

God's statutes and ordinances day and night. Once again, what should be ideas of comfort become something more uncomfortable. The composition then changes considerably in the next section of text starting at measure 46, almost pleading: "do not remove your love from us forever":

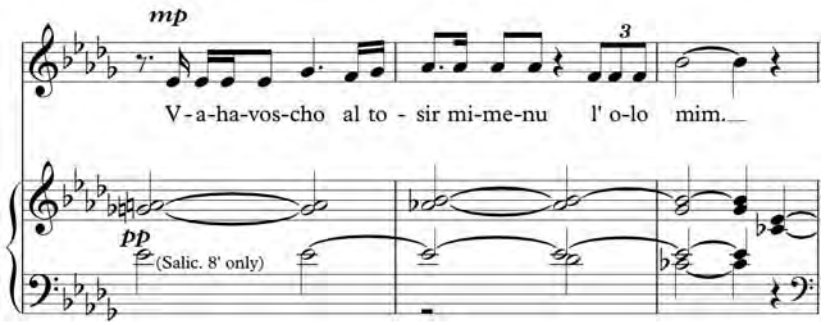


Figure 27 – "V'ahavoscho al tosir mimenu" in Piket's *Ahavas Olom*, mm. 46–50 (Source: Ibid.).

In the above quotation, suddenly there is a new sense of urgency in the music, brought forward by the dissonant clash of the G and the A in the right hand of the organ and the use of a dotted rhythm in the vocal line. While this is not the first instance of the use of a dotted rhythm in the vocal line, it is the first time that the use of syncopation is so rapid. The word "forever" continues this sense of discomfort with a clash of a B-flat in the voice and right hand of the organ, and a C flat, a half step away in the left-hand of the organ. We now arrive at the closing of the blessing: "blessed are you, Adonai, who loves His people Israel." One would think that this should be some final point of comfort requiring a familiar closing cadence. However, in keeping with the rest of this setting, it is anything but comforting. The cadence does finally resolve, but this resolution does not come from the vocal line. Having just paused on uncomfortable chord for the word "forever," the voice now jumps to a low E flat, and the final text is set on a single repeated tone. This may well have been intended as a

recitation tone in Piket's setting. After the text is complete, the harmony finally lands on a stable E flat major chord. Such stability cannot be found anywhere else in the piece.

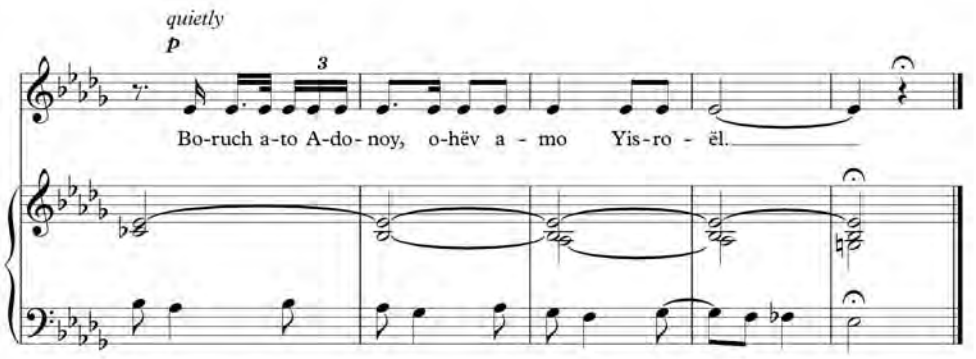


Figure 28 – End of Piket's *Ahavas Olom*, mm. 52–56 (Source: Ibid.).

There are many settings of this text and many different ways to set it. Piket has chosen to treat it as something of an art song. This setting has made some very clever use of harmony and melody to take what one could (perhaps mistakenly) see as a fairly straightforward part of the evening liturgy and disrupt much of the comfort associated with the prayer. One comes away from this setting wondering what that eternal love, presented with such an unworldly beauty at the outset of the piece, means in this new musical context. Piket ends the piece by contrasting this unworldly beauty with the monotony of the repeated Eb in the voice. It is up to the accompaniment to finally resolve the harmony to an Eb major chord at the end of the piece. An interpretation of this may be that the eternal love referred to in the text surrounds the actions of people, but that our actions, quite apart from furthering its impact, serve to interrupt it. This is in keeping with the difficult relationship between God and humanity, which seems to have pervaded Piket's life.

***Sonata in C,* Second Movement, by Frederick Piket**

For my research for this thesis, Roberta Piket kindly provided me with a copy of Piket's unpublished *Sonata in C*. Like Isadore Freed's *Rhapsody,* which is analyzed below, this piece shows the work of both a skilled composer, and also a highly skilled pianist. This piece is a 14-minute sonata written in three movements, the first marked "allegro moderato ma con brio," the second, shorter movement is marked "andante," and third is "allegro vivace." The second movement will be considered here. It begins with a piano exposition of the theme that will form the basis for the development that will come throughout the rest of the piece. Piket's *Sonata in C*, Second Movement begins with the passage shown in Figure 29:

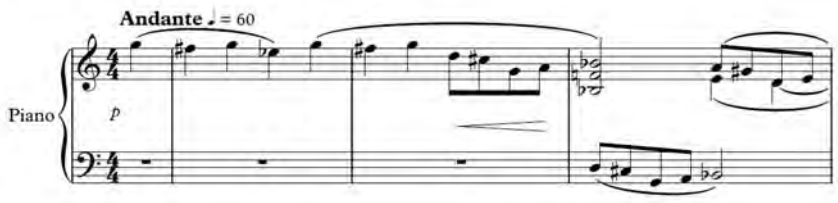


Figure 29 – First 3 measures of *Sonata in C*, Second Movement by Frederick Piket (Source: Roberta Piket).

The theme in the right hand from mm. 1–4 will be repeated and developed throughout the piece. At this point in the piece it is risky to make too many assumptions; however, in the first two measures, he establishes a strong sense of the key of G, though exactly what scale of G is constantly changing. He is establishing an interesting tonality for this line of music, made of the following scale:

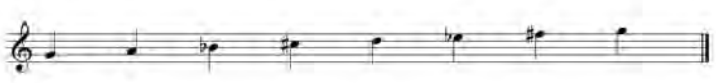


Figure 30 – Piket's scale from *Sonata in C*, Second Movement (Source: Ibid.).

This is almost a minor scale, with the exception of the raised 4th from a C to a C#. Having established this scale, however, Piket does not remain in it for long. A few measures later, in mm. 6-8, we find the first repetition of this theme, this time presented as follows:

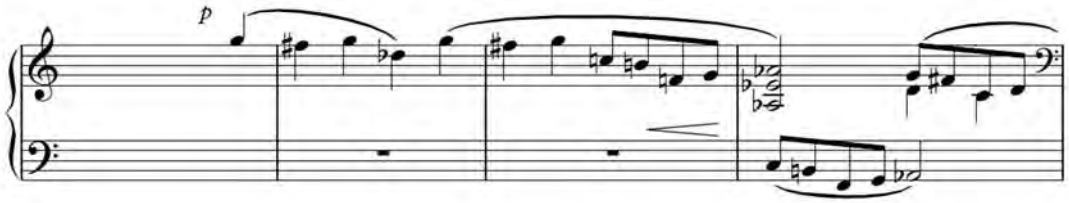


Figure 31 – Second repetition of Piket's initial theme in *Sonata in C*, Second Movement, mm. 5–8 (Source: Ibid.).

While the general pattern repeats, it is not an exact copy. The rhythmic pattern and subsequent imitation of the theme in the third measure remains, even though the scale has been altered (see Figure 32):

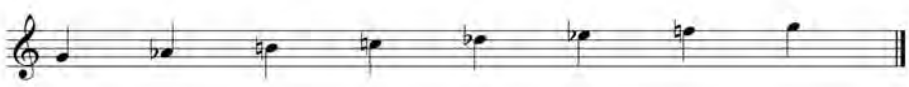


Figure 32 – Altered scale used in Piket's *Sonata in C*, Second Movement (Source: Ibid.).

In comparison to the original scale, Piket has flattened the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th scale degrees. In so doing, while keeping the same rhythmic and overall melodic pattern, the feel of the second repetition shifts. While the chromaticism of the piece may suggest that this is little more than coincidence, it would be remiss not to observe that in the second repetition, within the first five scale degrees there is something of a slight hint of the Ukrainian Dorian mode,

frequently used in Jewish music. Yet, there is another way to interpret this second repetition. In mm.3-5, a shift in harmony takes place.

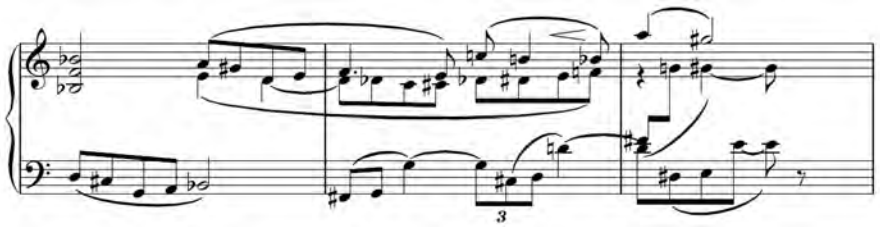


Figure 33 – Harmonic shift in mm. 3–5 of Piket's *Sonata in C*, Second Movement (Source: Ibid).

What is clear from this excerpt is that in the first measure (third measure of the piece), Piket has introduced an E natural in the third beat of the right hand. This does not exist as a simple passing note, as evidenced by the fact that in the following measure in the second half of the third beat in the right hand, Piket uses a D# rather than an E flat, further emphasizing that the E now functions as a natural in this piece. The strongest piece of evidence for this, comes at the end of the passage quoted above, where the G, formerly a G natural, has now been sharpened, meaning that we finish this section of the music on an E major chord. I am not convinced by this, however, as while it is true to say that we have modulated to an E major chord, it is brief, and all the way through this process there is still a strong feel of G. Moreover, we return to G almost immediately.

From the beginning of this piece, Piket establishes a downward feel, beginning on a high G, moving down the scale toward the B-flat chord at the beginning of the third measure until m. 4 of the piece. He then returns the high G in m. 6, for the second instance of the theme highlighted above, before continuing that motion into m. 8. This time, however, he does not stop with the end of this theme, continuing through until m.11. It is not until this point in the piece that it settles into a particular octave range of the piano, though even here it

varies. A further point of interest is Piket's use of a descending melodic pattern in the second movement of the *Sonata in C*, with associated repetition and mirroring in the other hand. This which Piket also uses in his "Ahavas Olom," where throughout the harmonic development of the piece, Piket makes great use of a falling pattern in various forms in the music. Piket's *Sonata in C* is a complex piece of music, and it serves to illustrate the complex melodic and harmonic language of Piket's non-liturgical compositional output. That said, there are examples to be found where there are parallels between the two, as above.

***Rhapsody*, by Isadore Freed**

There are particular sounds associated with Freed's music that are characteristic of many of his compositional works for the synagogue. For instance, parallel 4ths and 5ths are common in his work, and he pays close attention to textual detail. His music was not confined to the synagogue, however, and it is interesting to see how he approached non-liturgical compositions.

I found *Rhapsody* by Isadore Freed in the boxes of Isadore Freed's papers held at the New York Public Library. I did not find any rough scores of the music, only a beautifully handwritten, though incomplete copy, which I used as the basis for producing an edited and simplified version. The original version is not easy to play and requires a lot of octave work. As well as being a very gifted composer, Freed was also a very accomplished pianist, and this piece, which I featured at my final senior recital at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's School of Sacred Music, sounds totally different to any of Freed's other work that I had encountered up to this point. As will be seen, it sounds like a composition from a composer who has not yet found his true sound.

There are a number of themes Freed uses in the composition:

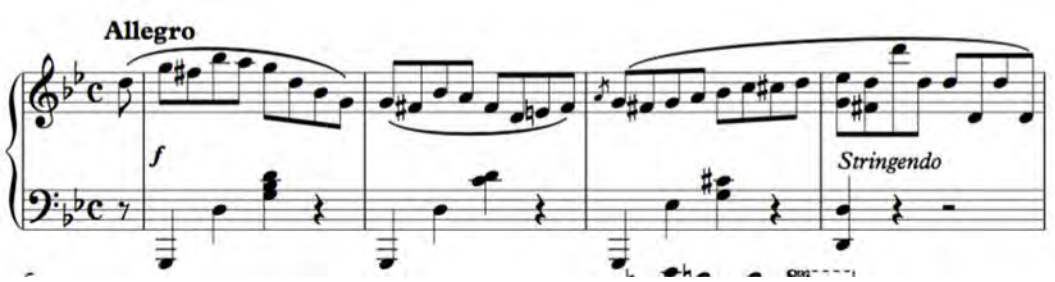


Figure 34 – Opening theme from *Rhapsody* by Isadore Freed, mm. 1–4 (Source: Papers in Performing Arts Research Collections – Music, New York Public Library).

Figure 34 above shows the opening phrase form the piece**.** The piece begins in the key of G minor, and by the 4th measure, has traced a I-V-I-V pattern, with the fourth measure sitting on the dominant, made up of a G and Eb in the right hand, landing on an octave D functioning as an unmarked pause to pivot to a repetition and development of the opening phrase in measures 5-8. Already, though, Freed has established an interesting feel for the piece. By the third measure, we also have the introduction of a C#, albeit as part of a chromatic scale, producing an interesting tonal feel.

The opening passage then repeats, and at measure 7, Freed introduces an ascending chromatic passage, before pivoting on an F7 chord to a Bb major chord—the relative major key of G minor. This feels like the end of the first half of the opening section of the piece because the three quarter note, chordal pattern is maintained in the left hand, while the right hand plays a response to the opening eight measures. Rhythmic and tonal hints of this opening section will appear again in the music; however there will be no clear recapitulation of the opening. At measure 17, Freed transitions into section that sounds more urgent—a

sensibility achieved through the use of 7th chords, which create suspense, and triplet 8th notes in the left hand emphasizing duple time.

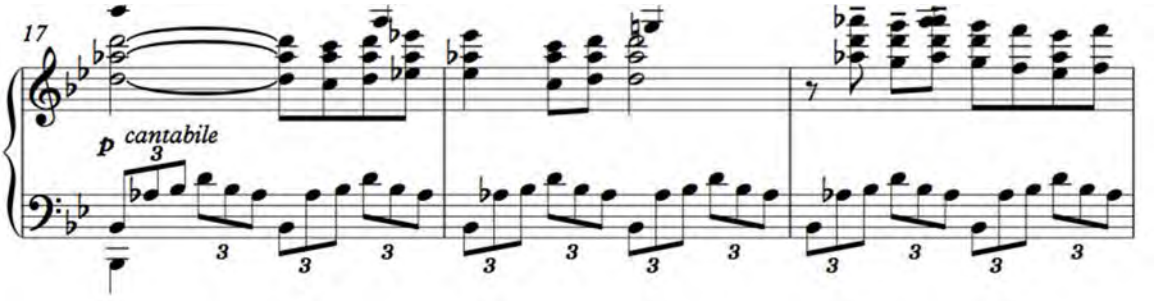


Figure 35 – Measures 17–19 from *Rhapsody* by Isadore Freed (Source: Ibid.).

Freed begins this section in Bb7, creating tension for the eventual resolution to Eb which will come in measure 21, for only a short period. Unlike some of the other sections of the music, the above right hand with the Ab pedal sits comfortably for the pianist, though the bass line involves a considerable amount of jumping around with the left hand, particularly with the second voice on Bb2 at the beginning of measure 17. Freed is not consistent with his pedal markings in the piece, but I would be surprised if he did not envisage the use of the pedal at this point as the harmony remains fairly constant, and it is difficult to see how the bass Bb2 at 17 could be sustained without this help. This section from mm.17– 25 feels transitional, and Freed uses the *mezzo forte* interjections such as measure 19 in a way that feels to be furthering the tension.

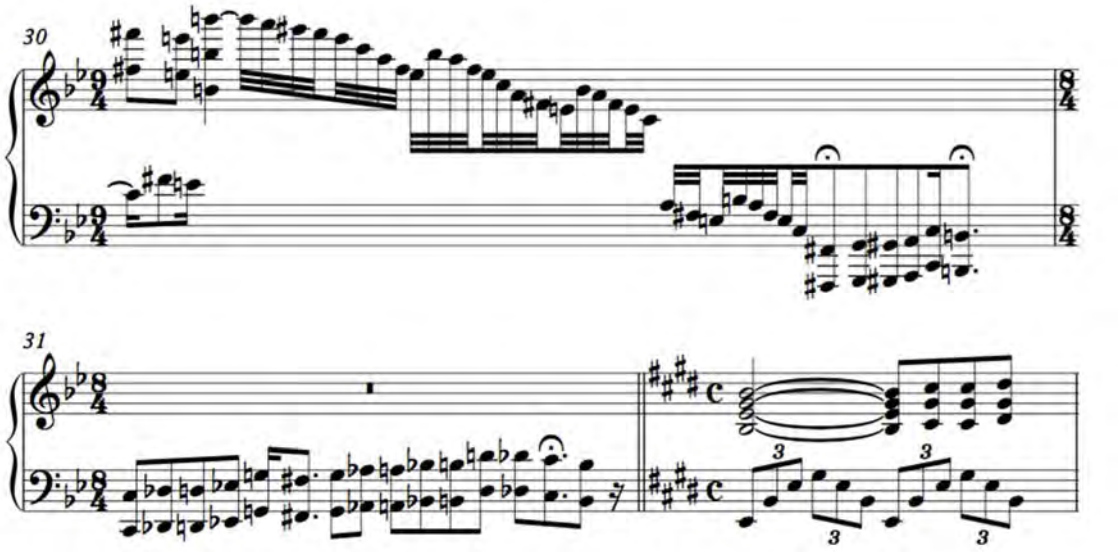


Figure 36 – Measures 30–33 of *Rhapsody* by Isadore Freed (Source: Ibid.).

In this section, from mm. 30 to 31, Freed has set up a climax in measure 30 with the B spread over 3 octaves, followed by a transitional passage in m.31 (that does what) akin to the method used by Franz Liszt to separate sections in "Liebesträume No. 3, S. 541" shown below:

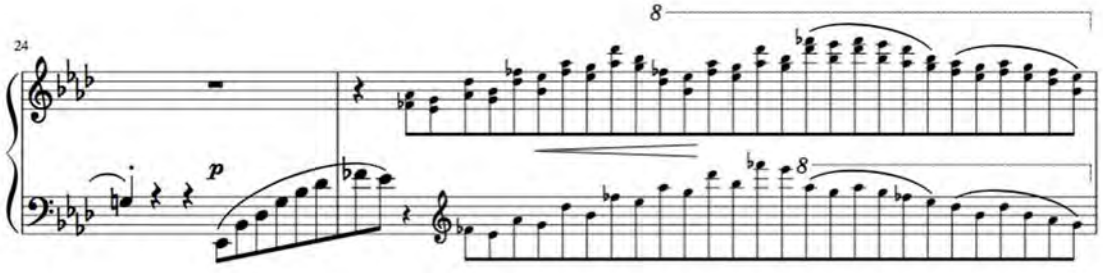


Figure 37 - *Libesträume No. 3* S541 by Franz Liszt, mm. 24–25 (Source: Franz Liszt, *Liebesträume: 3 notturnos für das Pianoforte*, Leipzig, Germany: Fr. Kistner, 1850).

In both of these selections, Freed and Liszt create a functional pause in the music to open up an opportunity for a complete change of idea. Interestingly also, in both cases, what comes after the transition is a heavily developed version of the original theme.

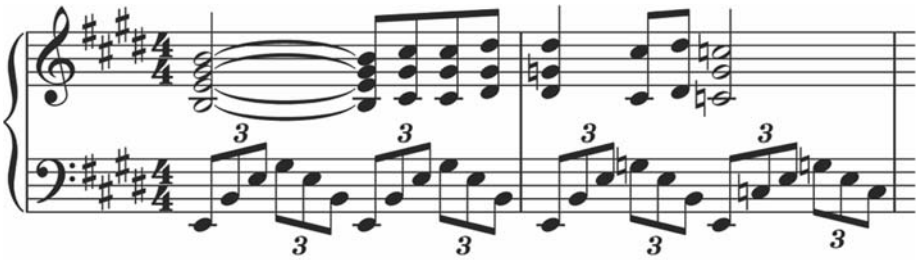


Figure 38 – Transition in Freed's *Rhapsody*, mm. 32–33 (Source: Source: Papers in Performing Arts Research Collections – Music, New York Public Library).

This idea is based on the earlier theme Freed used in Figure 23 above, but this time he begins on an E major with a sudden shift down a 3rd to C major in measure 33. The introduction of the G natural in measure 33 is both surprising and effective. What felt like a landing point to E major still retains the unsettled nature of the piece until this point. Liszt also uses the post-transition measures to represent a modified version of an earlier theme, but in his work, he is using it to present a version of the earlier theme with a more extended harmonic foundation, and resultant different feel with no change (at this point) to the melody itself. However, Freed is still not finished with this melodic idea, adding a third version of the melody at measure 48:

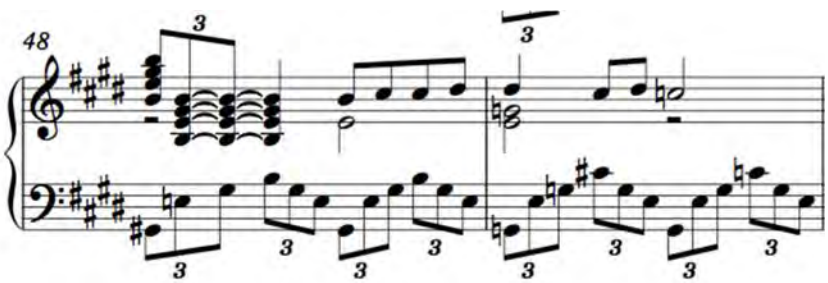


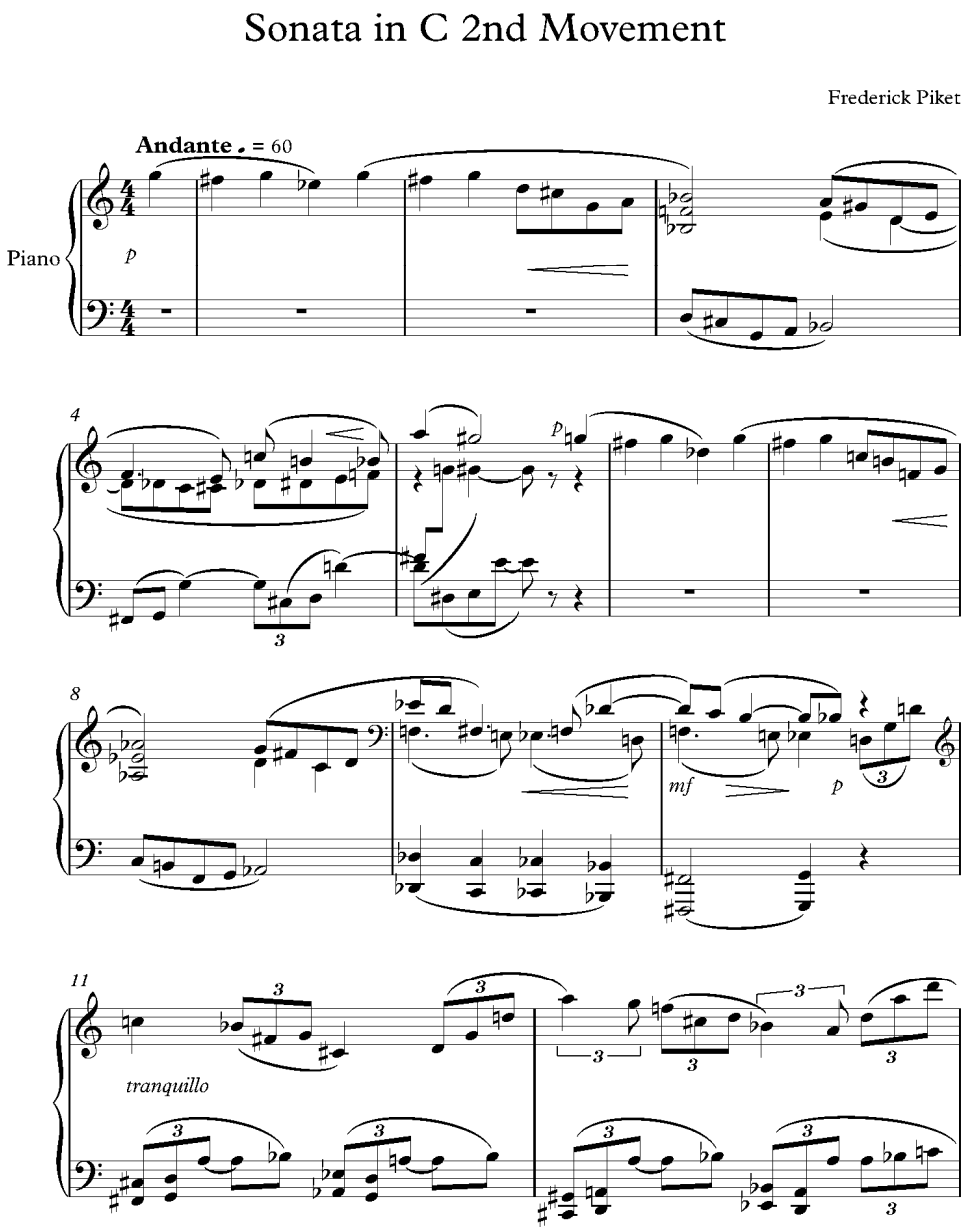
Figure 39 – Development of theme in Freed's *Rhapsody*, mm 48–49 (Source: Ibid.).

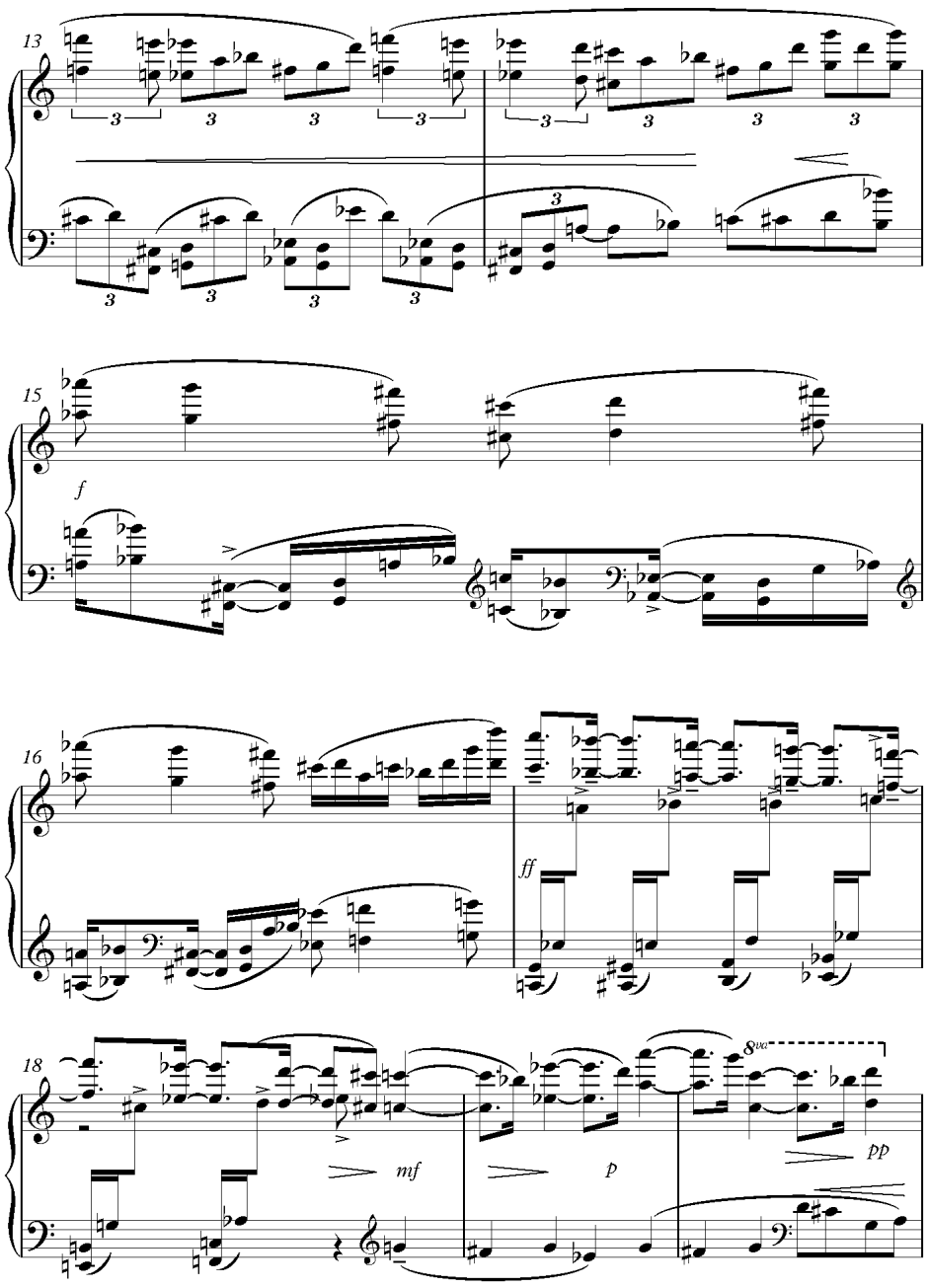
In this version of the theme, the fundamental melodic pattern remains, this time with the addition of the triplet pattern in the right hand at the start of measure 48 (akin to the rhythmic pattern introduced at m. 17). However, rather than moving straight to C major in m.49, Freed retains the C# initially in the measure, moving to a C natural in the right hand on the third beat

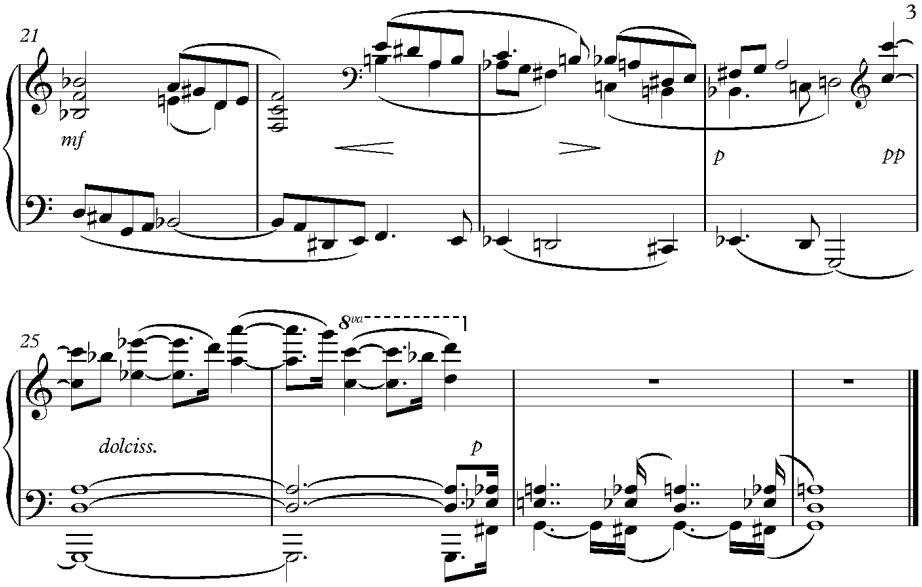
The problem with Freed's *Rhapsody* is that the tension he creates never really resolves. The entire piece is included in Appendix B, and while Freed takes the themes he creates, changes and develops them, it is difficult to figure out why he is doing what he is doing. This is a complex piece of music, but the overall feeling is one of experimentation rather than clear structured development. This is felt most strongly at the end of the piece when almost out of nowhere Freed repeats the opening theme. The transition feels very sudden; the closing section is impressive. It is my belief that part of the music is missing, however I have not as yet been able to confirm whether is the case or not.

Appendix B – *Sonata in C*, Second Movement by Frederick Piket

Obtained from Roberta Piket, edited by R. Newman

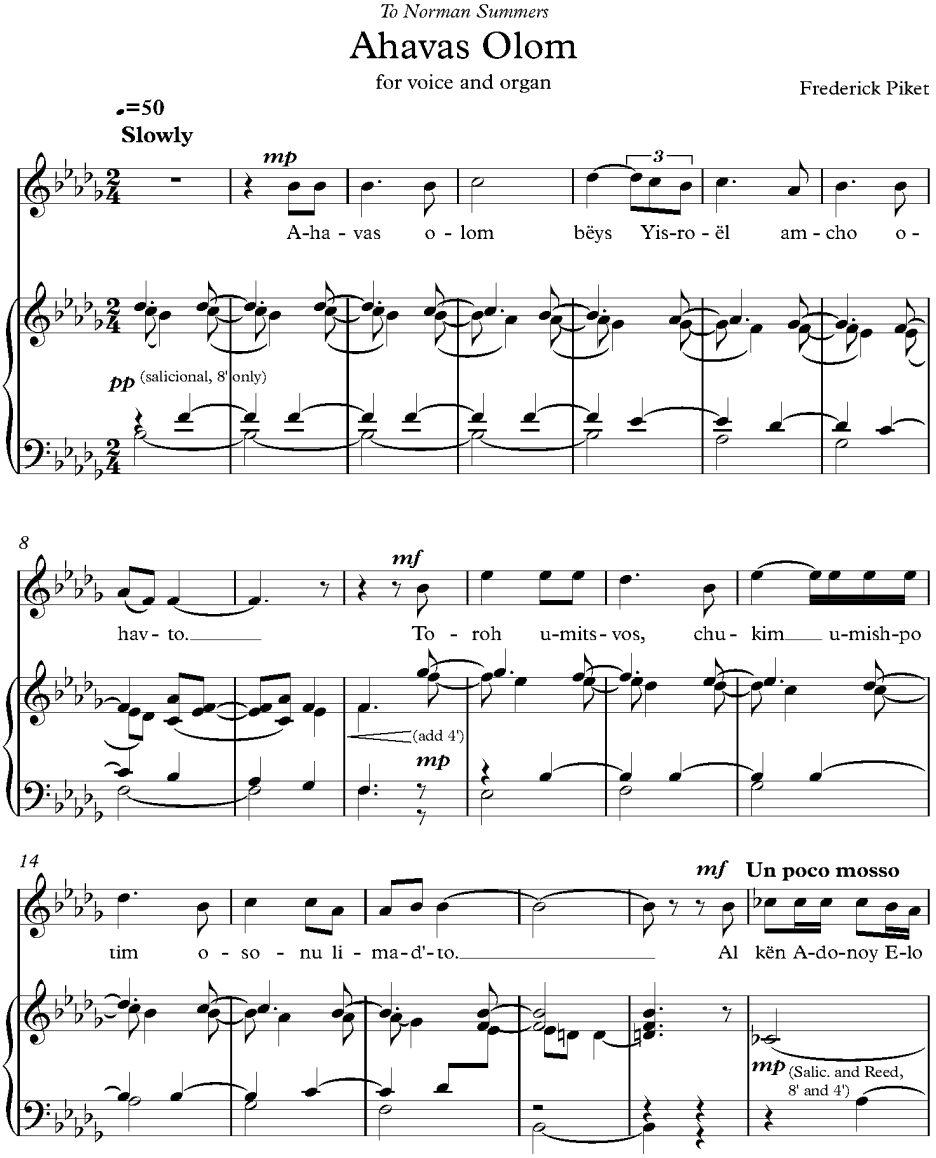


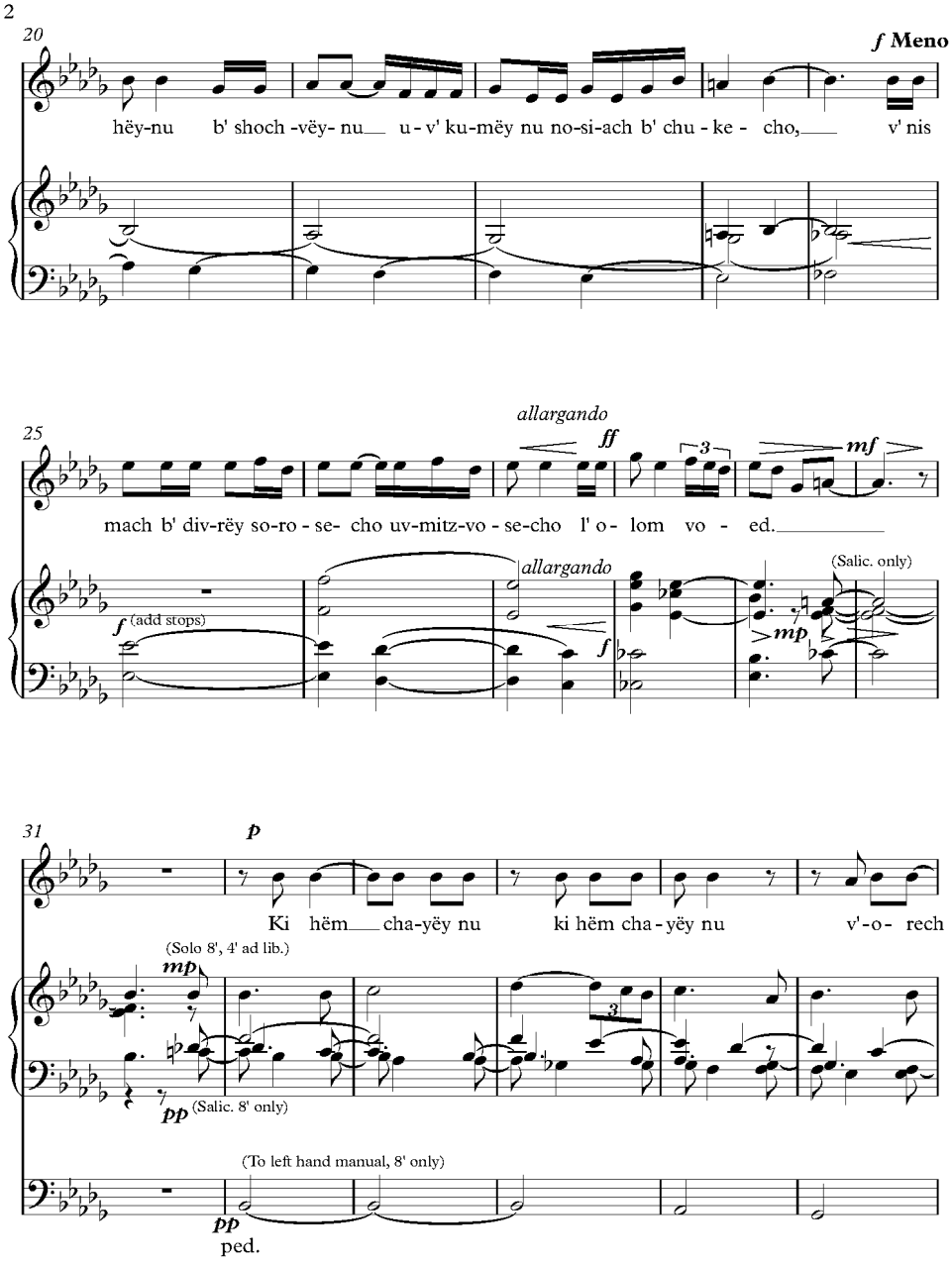

13
15
f
16
ff
18
8va
mf
p
pp

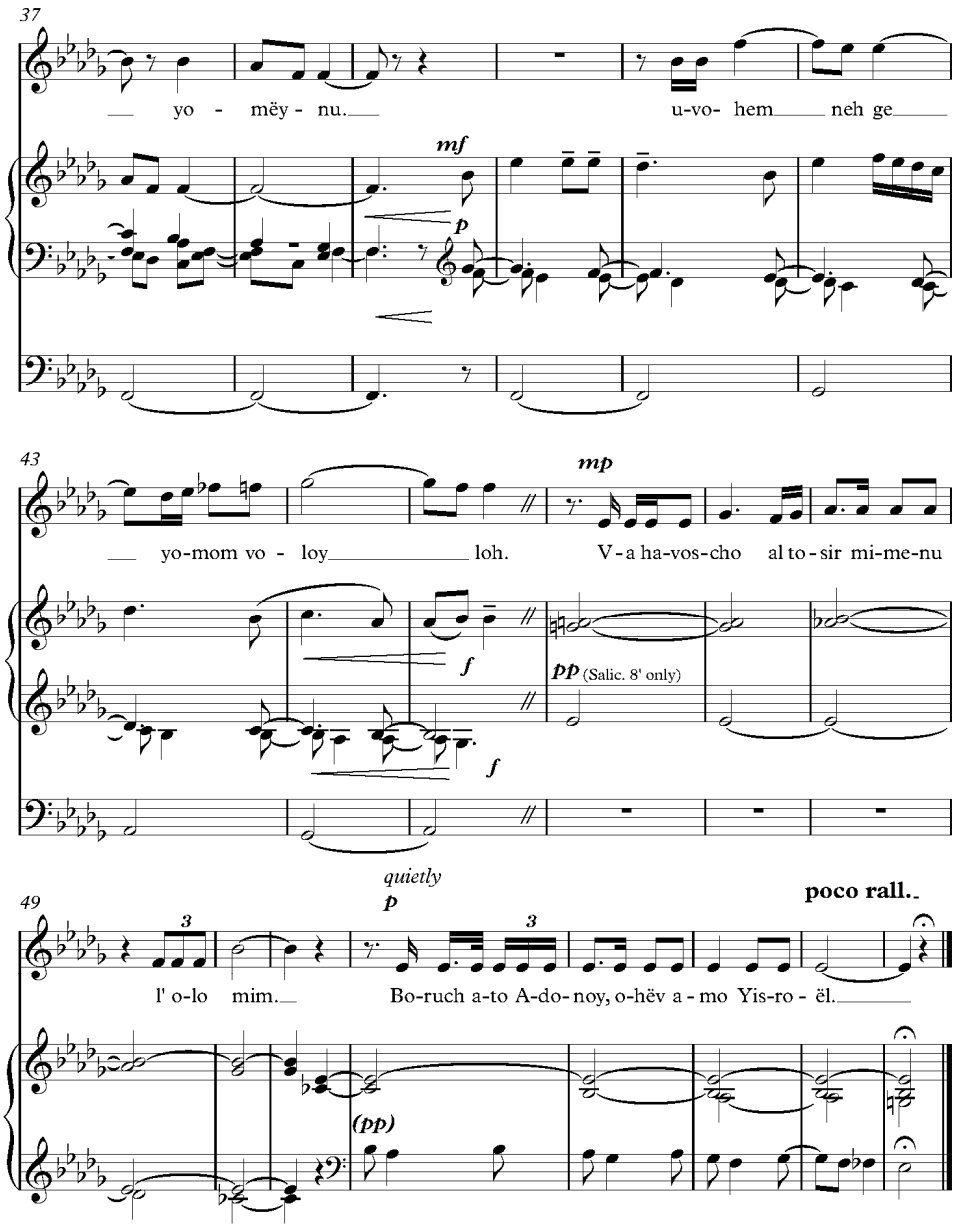

21
3
mf
p
pp
25
8va
dolciss.
p

Appendix C – "Ahavas Olom" by Frederick Piket

Transcontinental Music Publications, 1965

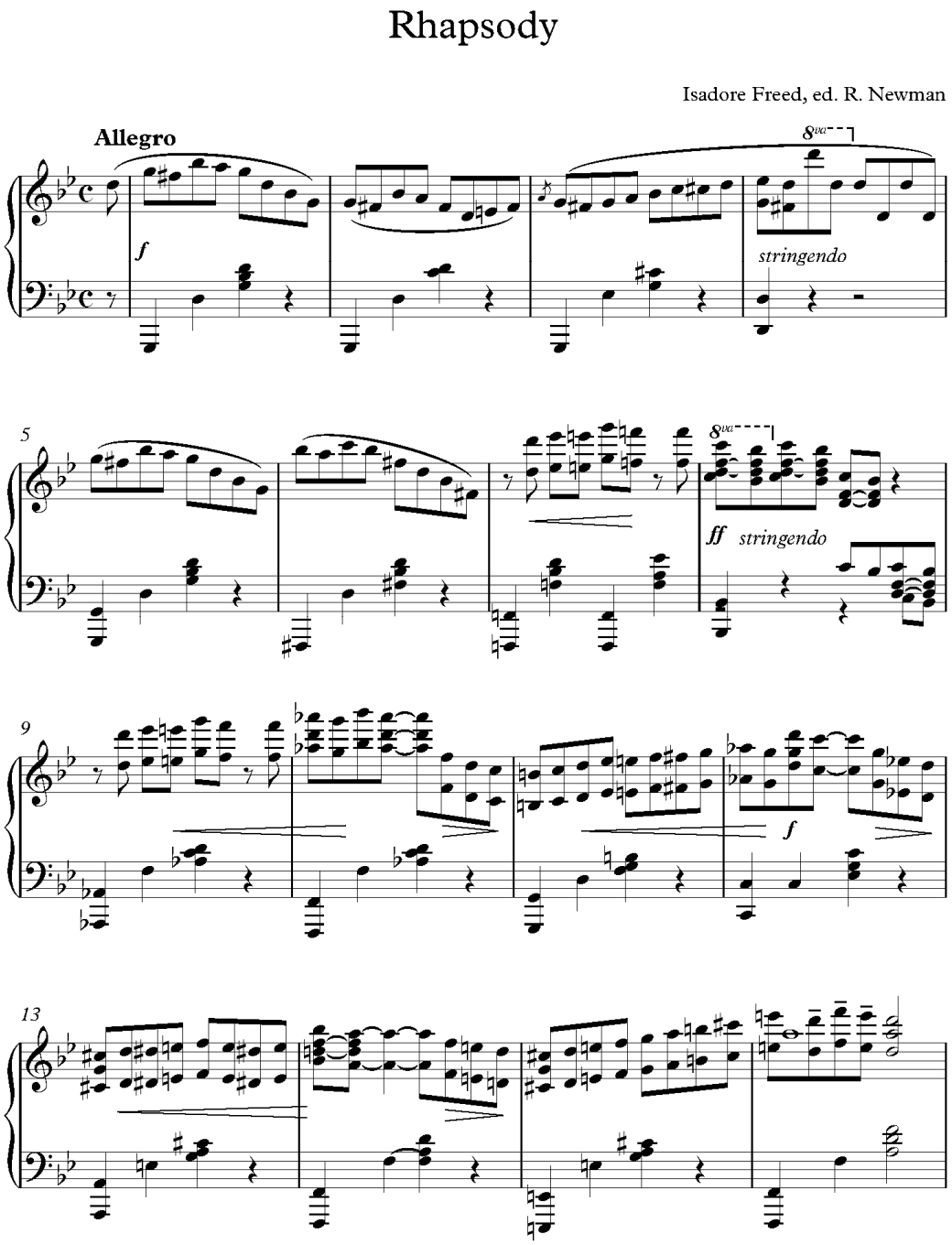


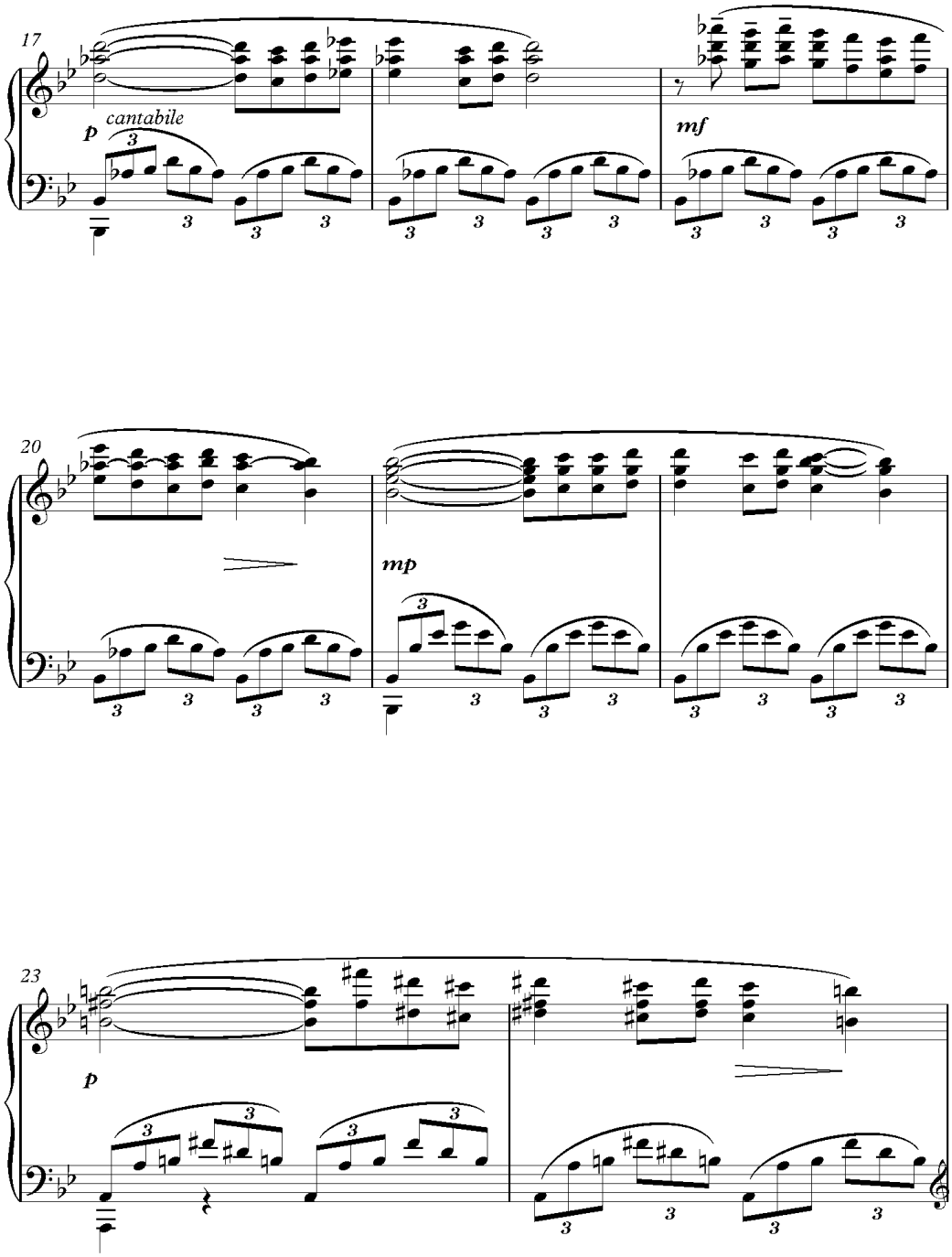

20
f Meno
hëy-nu b' shoch -vëy- nu u - v' ku-mëy nu no-si-ach b' chu - ke - cho, v' nis
25
allargando
ff
3
mf
mach b' div-rëy so-ro - se- cho uv-mitz-vo - se-cho l' o - lom vo - ed.
f (add stops)
allargando
f
(Salic. only)
mp
31
p
Ki hëm cha-yëy nu ki hëm cha - yëy nu v' - o - rech
(Solo 8', 4' ad lib.)
mp
3
pp (Salic. 8' only)
(To left hand manual, 8' only)
pp
ped.

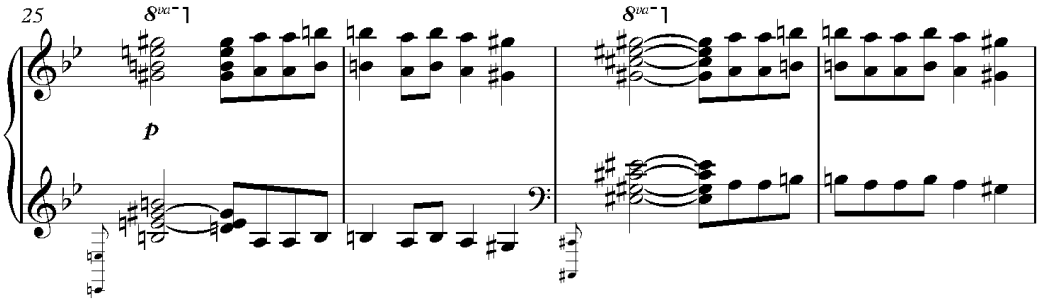

37
yo - mëy - nu.
u-vo- hem neh ge
mf
p
43
yo-mom vo - loy loh.
V - a ha-vos-cho al to - sir mi-me-nu
mp
f
pp (Salic. 8' only)
f
quietly
p
49
poco rall..
l' o-lo mim.
Bo-ruch a-to A-do-noy, o-hëv a - mo Yis-ro - ël.
(pp)

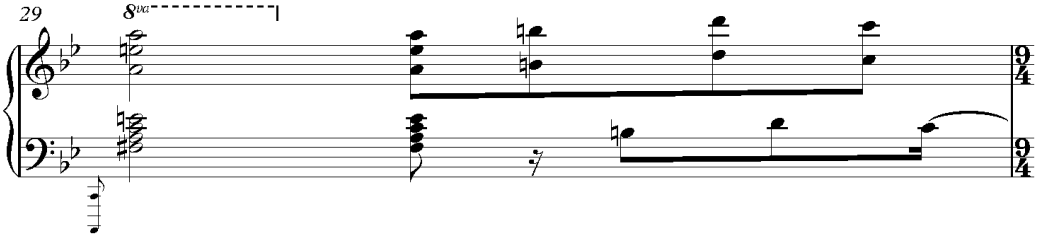
Appendix D – *Rhapsody* by Isadore Freed

Obtained from New York Public Library, edited by R. Newman

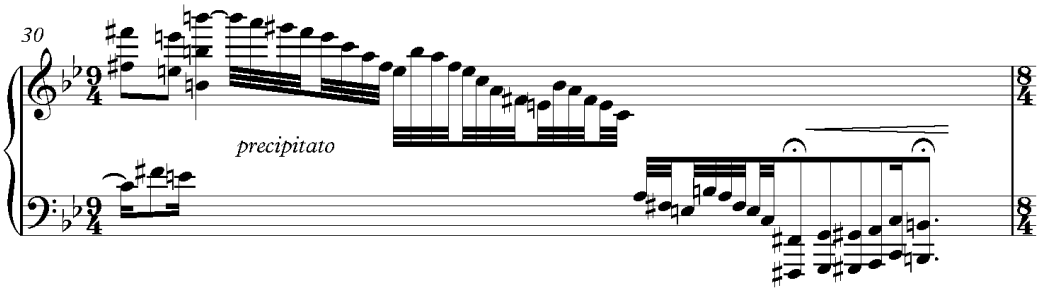


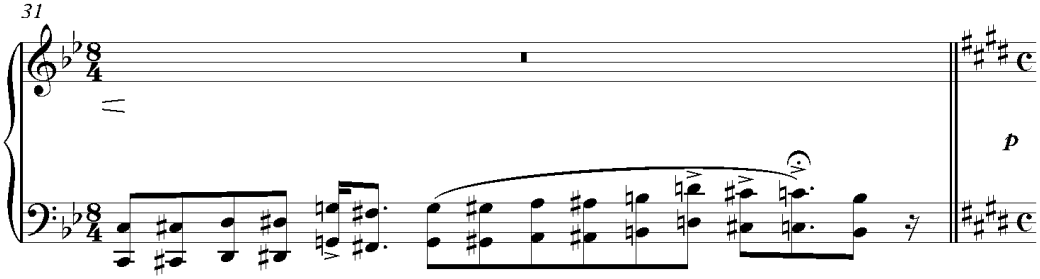

17
cantabile
p
mf
20
mp
23
p

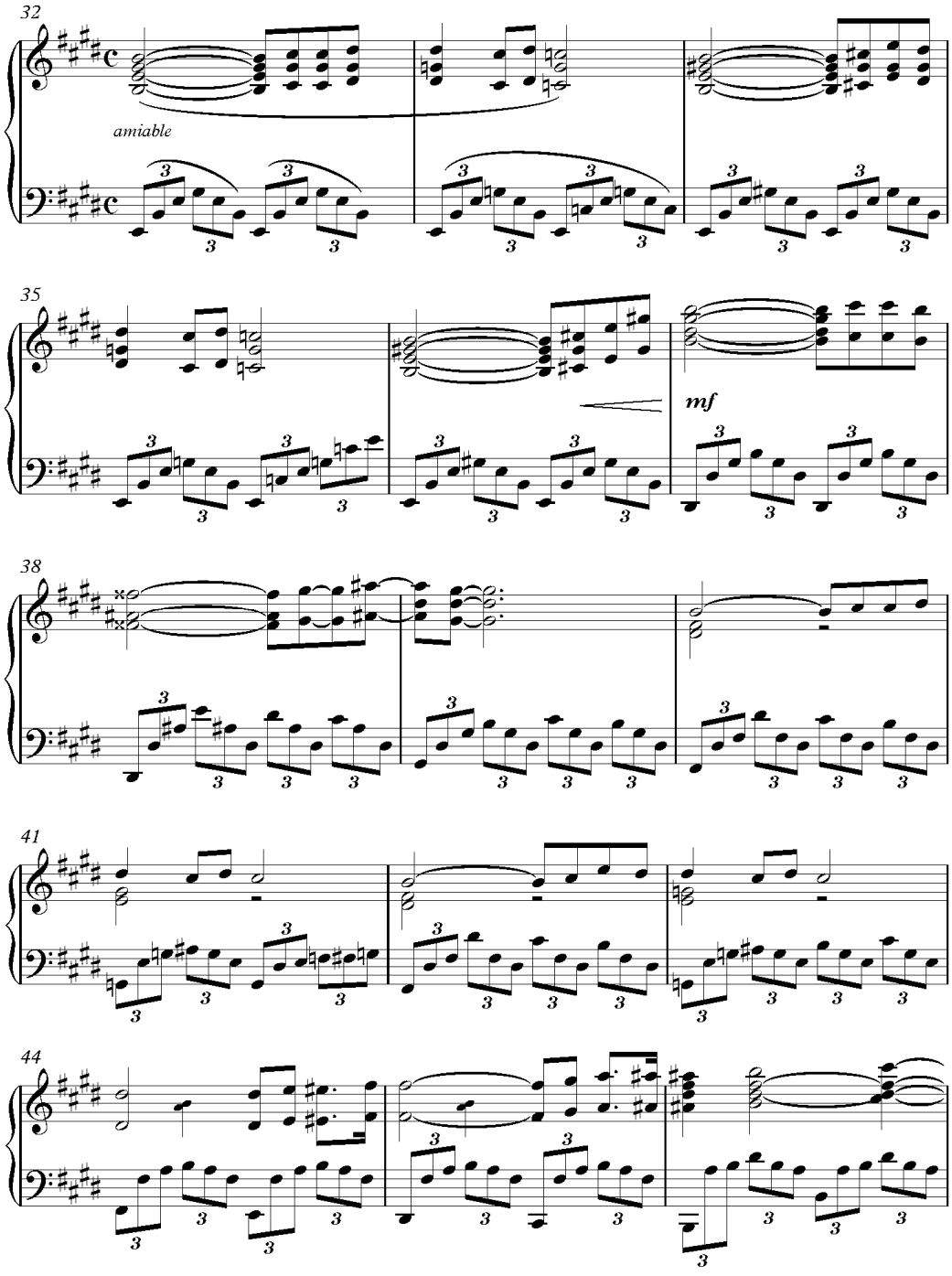


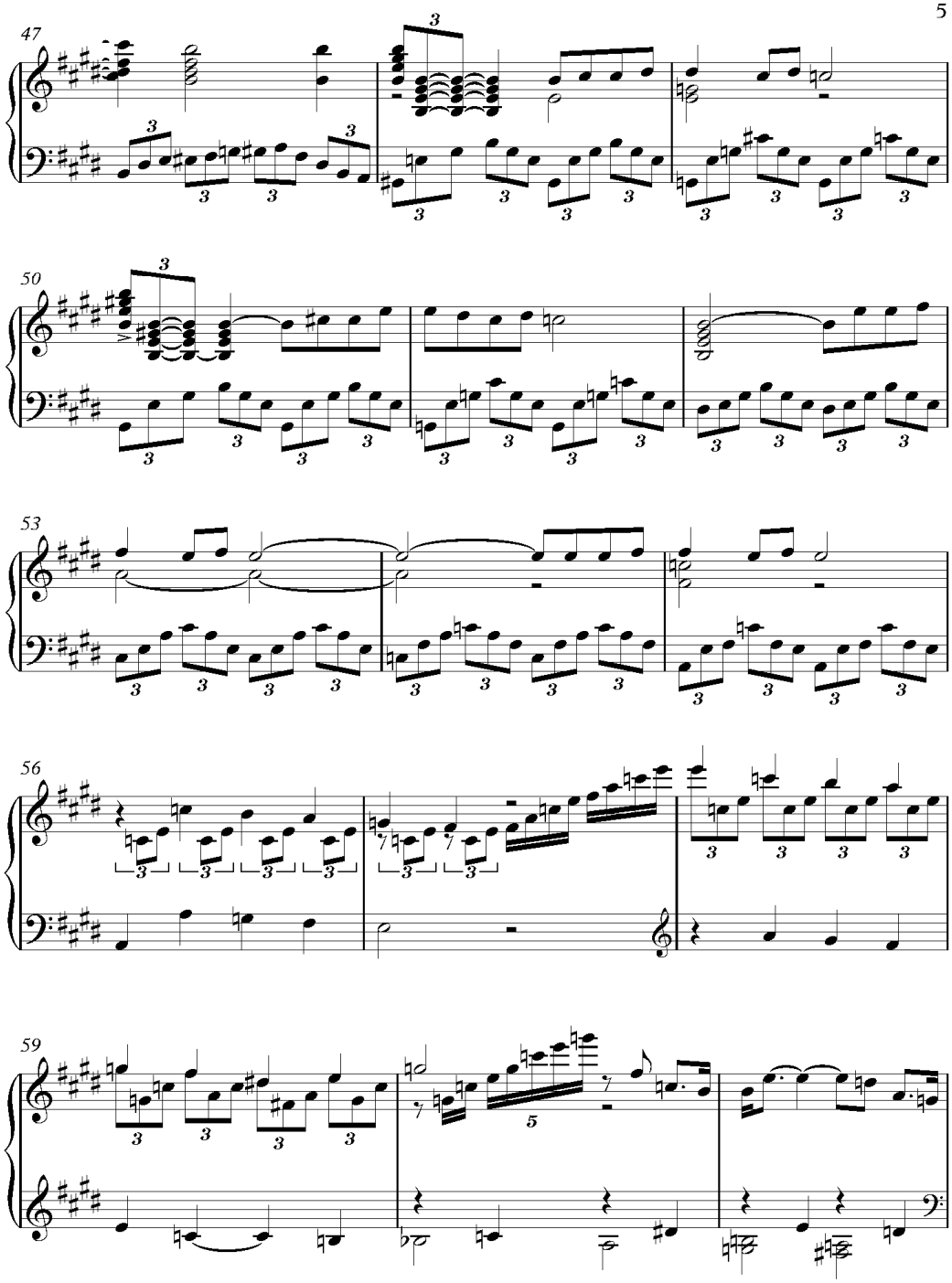


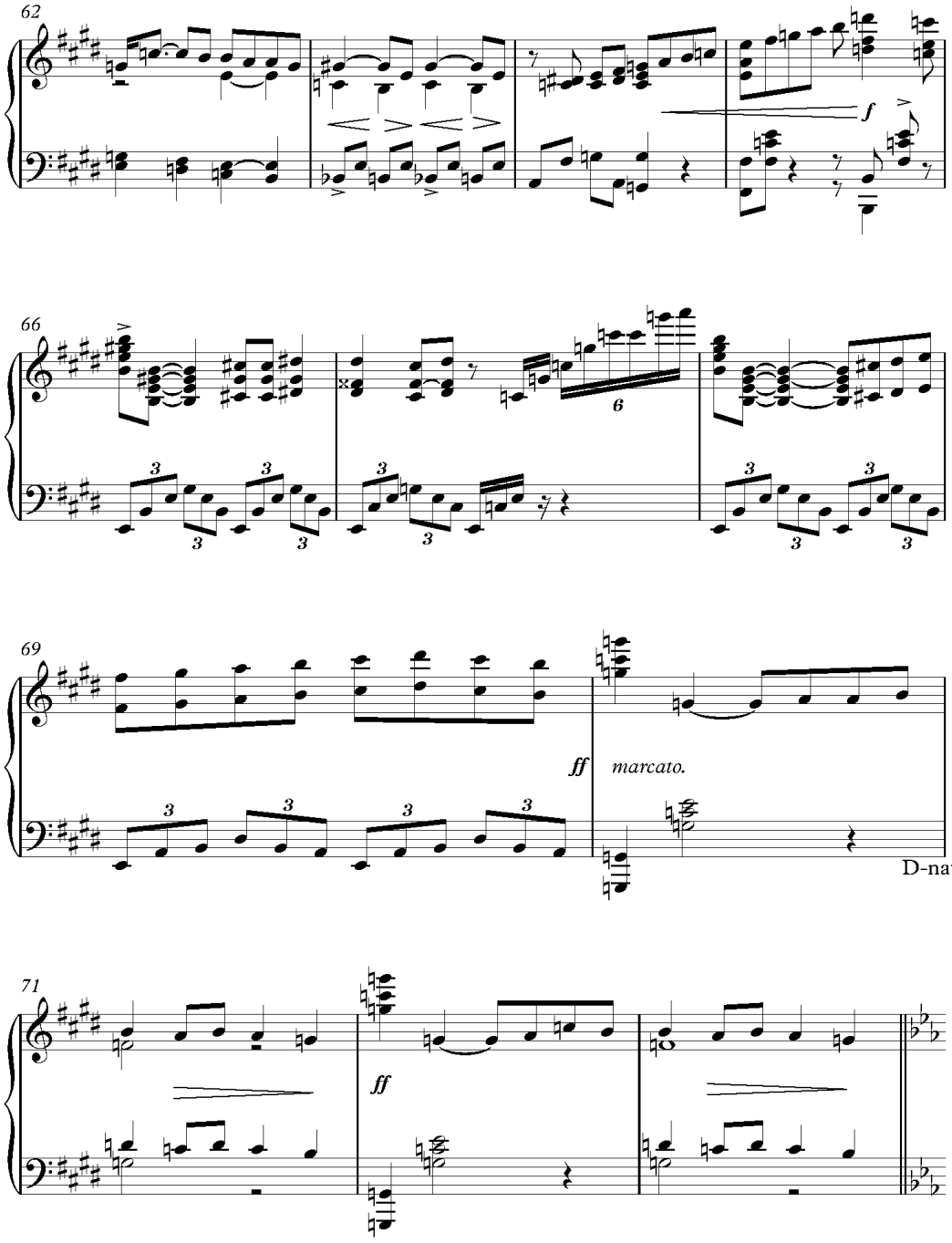
*rhythm unclear



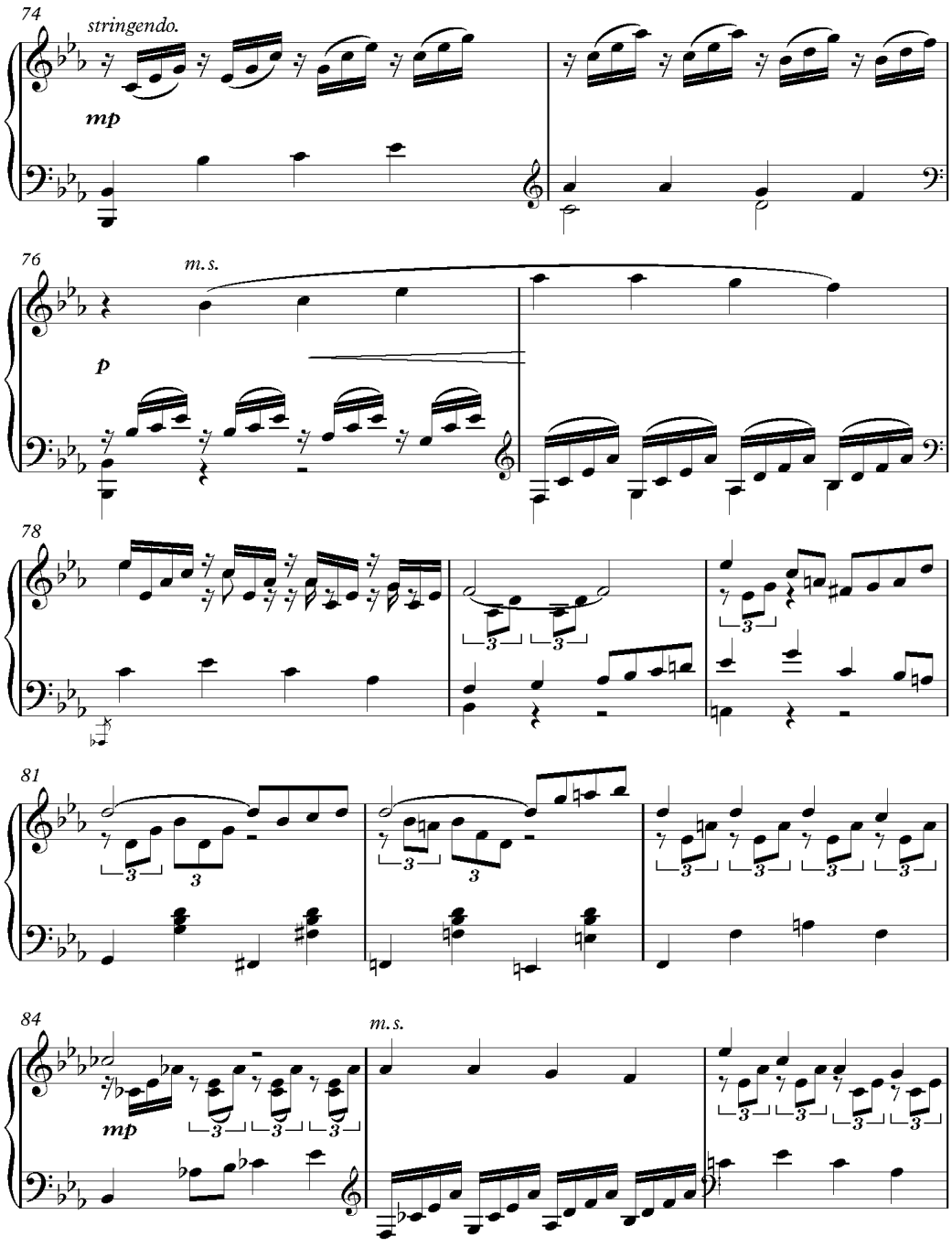


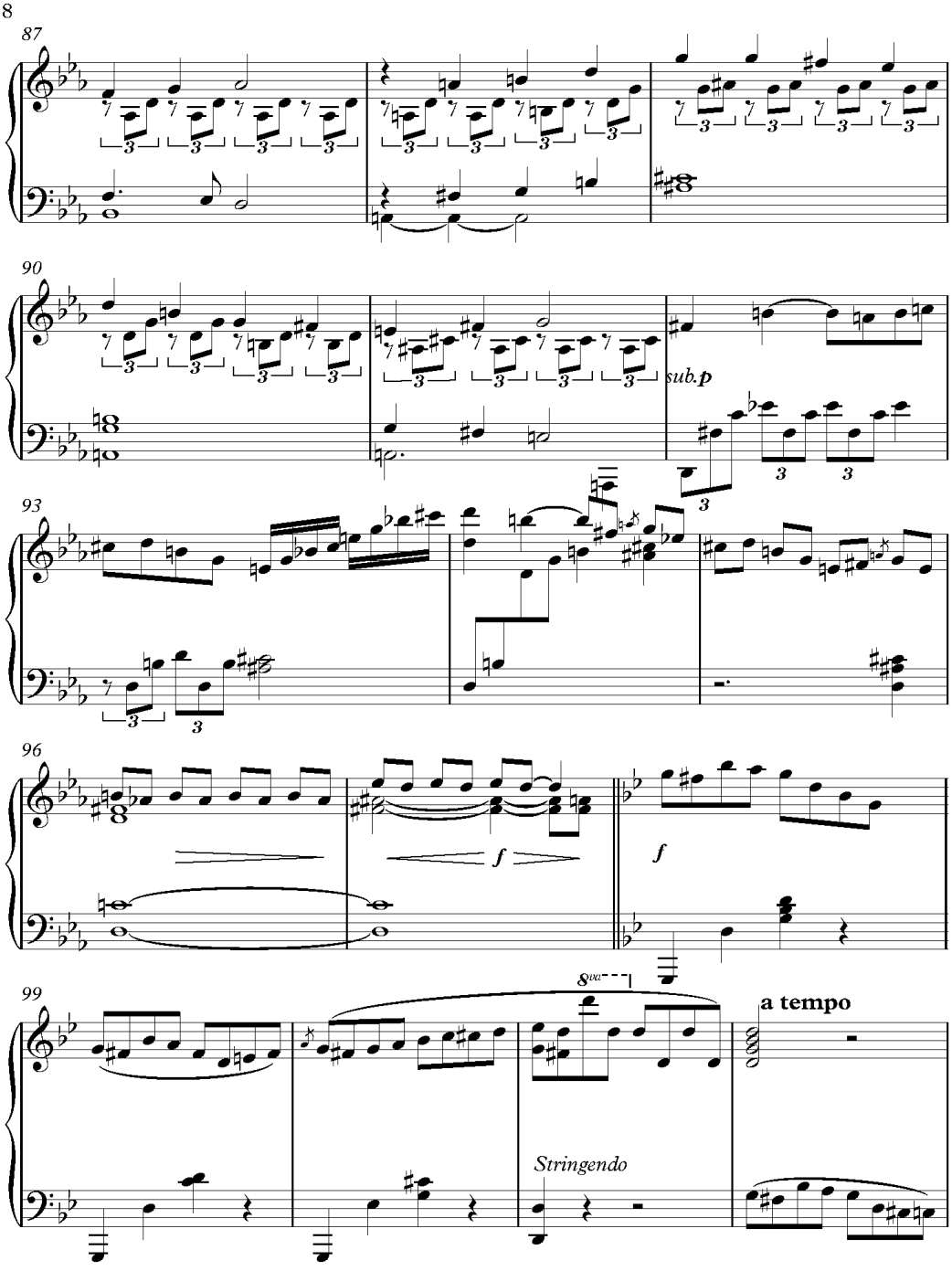

32
amiable
35
mf
38
41
44

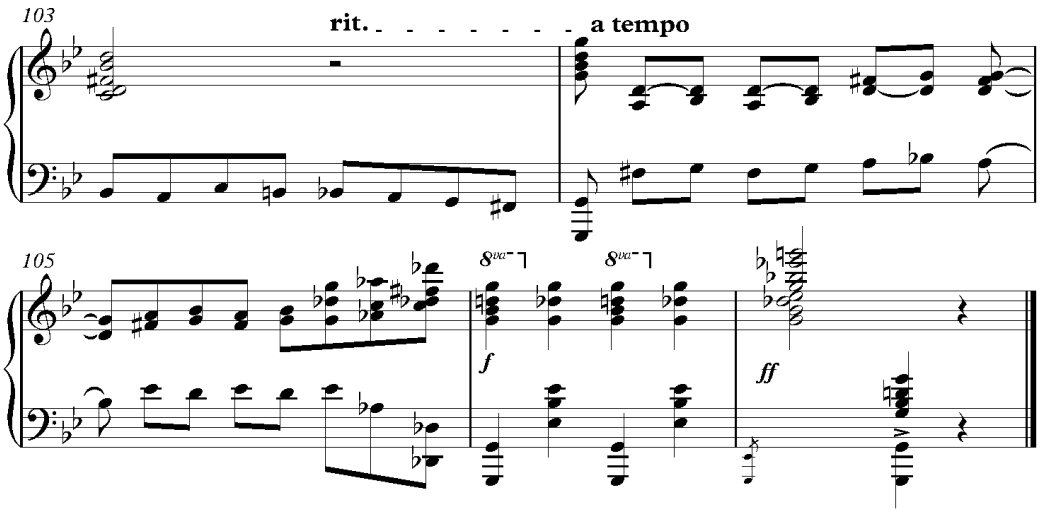

47
50
53
56
59



D-natural is


74
stringendo.
mp
76
m.s.
p
78
81
84
mp
m.s.


8
87
90
sub.p
93
96
f
f
99
8va
a tempo
Stringendo


103
rit.
a tempo
105
8va
8va
f
ff

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