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Conduct Music of the Holocaust:
Notes of Satire from the Stages,
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Cabaret Music of the Holocaust:
Notes of Satire from the Stages, Cafes, and Streets of the Ghettos

by
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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Cantorial Investiture

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
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FOREWORD

In my initial pondering as to what I would research for my thesis, I had thought about various avenues I could take and thought I might want to study something new, yet equal in value to my strong passion for music of the Holocaust. I had cultivated my love and interest in that genre already in my undergrad studies, where I had written extensively on the classical repertoire prominent in Terezín. I thought that maybe now it would be great to round the corner and try something new. It seemed like I had already spent enough time with that genre, and it was time to move on.

Yet, in April of 2004, I found myself on a trip to Washington D.C., where my friend Rachael and I made a point to spend a decent amount of time at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). It was my first time visiting the museum, and there was a certain sense of homecoming for me, as I now was the final member of my family to finally pass through the doors of the museum and immerse myself into the richness of its exhibits. We entered the main exhibit, and not before long, Rachael and I had meandered apart, both of us emotionally swept away by the power of what was before us. I reached a certain point in the exhibit, and there before me in an enclosed case were the remnants of the actual hand-penned manuscripts of music written by composer Viktor Ullmann, one of the handful of composers in Terezín who clearly grew in his artistry while a prisoner. My memories cycled back to when Rachael and I had taken a trip to Prague during our Year-in-Israel and had spent a day outside of the city touring the ghetto of Terezín. It was a whirlwind day where I found myself constantly overwhelmed that I could be standing in the same place where such beautiful music was made alongside the most horrible of tragedies.

Now at the USHMM, I was just about to step through the open cattle car on display, and a grand epiphany swept over me--I knew I had to return to Holocaust music for my research. My passion implored me to unearth more about this music that should have lived a longer life. There is something about Holocaust music that is immensely powerful. For me, it is the fact that in its demise, the music fought back. And, as I began to search for my specific thesis topic, I was incredibly drawn to the cabaret music of the genre, which by its very nature was saturated in political satire and a hopeful, while too-realistic sarcasm. While the classical music that I had studied before had clearly fashioned its own bold existence, the cabaret music speaks of itself even more directly and in simple honesty. There is more elasticity embedded in the nature of cabaret, and it was a clear marker of the experience of its creators. For this reason alone, I think cabaret music is one of the most important examples of the combination of art and life under constant duress. The performers were able to respond through their art. How they did this was the secret of the music, alone.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The existence of cabaret music during the Holocaust was at once an isolated phenomenon while, at the same time, it remained extremely connected to the preeminence of such music in prior years. To understand this existence, one must explore the definition of cabaret music to then be able to pinpoint how it defined itself amidst the extreme conditions of the Holocaust. Beginning between 1938 and 1939, Holocaust cabaret set itself apart from many other musical and artistic expressions in existence during the war, and continued to do so until the end of the war in 1945. While it characterized itself through previously established techniques and musical ideas, it had to address a wholly new subject and, in turn, redefine itself. The odd irony within the genre was that it was dealing with a morose and sore subject in a musical idiom known for its lighter muse. In all of its various forms, Holocaust cabaret was a radical form of expression. In one shape or another, it appears that cabaret music was a widespread artistic response in many of the various ghettos, including Westerbork, Terezín, Lodz, Warsaw, and Vilna. While many cabarets carried on in the style of the affluent Berlin cabaret scene, there was also an improvised street-cabaret idiom heavily influenced by the folksong tradition of the poor Eastern European shtetl. This study seeks to define the significance of Holocaust cabaret through historical, musical, and textual analysis, paying close attention to the context of the music and the lives of those who shaped it. It attempts to uncover the mystery as to how this music was created and adapted for its specific audience, and how it handled its politically satiric nature in an oppressed society.

Both cabaret as a whole, in its over fifty years of existence, and the subgenre of Holocaust cabaret were not attempting to formulate solutions of their own to the societal problems they witnessed. But, they both respectively and continually constituted a medium of response as a reflection of their own happenstance.

Universally, cabaret music during the Holocaust was employed to depict the situation endured by its composers, performers, and audience. This genre afforded more room than any other to provide this ability. This was because it always was a contemporary medium, reflecting upon the current state of society often through satire and political humor, never skirting around the edges of the more risqué. These facts hold true for any of the music one defines as Holocaust cabaret—whether performed on a stage or in the street. The improvised nature of cabaret is what gave it its strength. As compared to the other art and chamber music, opera, and theater found in the various ghettos, cabaret required less rehearsal—time which for the most part was unavailable to the rigorous daily lives of the prisoners. Thus, through its nature of ad-lib, performers were moved to patter on current events and the quality of life surrounding them, following in the tradition of pre-war cabaret or the earlier street singing culture found in the shtetls. Additionally, through its improvisation, cabaret was in a constant state of change. The best of the cabaret artists were versatile in their fluid approach to their art.

Prior to World War II, cabaret was already known throughout Western Europe as common entertainment. It had found its roots in Paris in 1881 with the opening of the first cabaret theater, Le Chat Noir. Twenty years later, at the turn of the century, cabaret was making its way into the heart of Berlin, where it would grow immensely in its art. From its inception in Paris, cabaret was always defined by its political commentary and

response. Therefore, its life in Berlin was empowered by the political struggles of the country's demise in World War I and later in the artists' fight against the Nazi regime. Not surprisingly, the composers and performers who upheld this liberal and radical artistry were comprised of many Jews. This fact would ultimately contribute greatly to the death of cabaret as it was once known. The emergence of such cabarets became not only a popular form of entertainment, but also an intellectual dialogue to an engaged audience within an intimate setting. The early years of cabaret (1901-1918) were spent establishing the tradition of the revue. While there were elements of satire and parody, the focus was more on lavish and gaudy production numbers.[1] The political aim in early cabaret poked fun at all political parties, rather than pointing a finger at any specific one. This did not change until the last years of the Weimar republic.[2] If there was a golden era for cabaret, it could be marked as the period between 1918 and 1930. It was during this time that the medium really came-of-age. Cabaret was now quite diversified in its musical approach:

> There is no distinctive musical form that can be called 'cabaret:' all the composers who have worked in cabaret have drawn on existing folksong, popular song, or operatic parodies for their inspiration. Traditions have evolved, so that in particular the slow waltz as used by Satie is recognized as a cabaret style, so is a dramatic tango such as the one composed by Lehár . . . .[3]

Prior to this period, there was very little censorship of the content of the revues. During this second period, if there was any censorship, it was held in the hands of the audience

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[1] Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Press, 1993), 3.

[2] Ibid. The Weimar Republic is a term invented by historians to describe the period in Germany between the end of World War I in 1919 and the Nazi takeover in 1933. This term was never used during this period.

[3] Klaus Wachsmann and Patrick O'Connor, "Cabaret" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie, ed. (Washington D.C.: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 1998), 764. The involvement in cabaret of classical composers such as Erik Satie and Franz Lehár denote the empowerment with which cabaret was seen and the strong desire among many who wished to be involved with music that was a step away from their regular "scene."

and only out of a desire to appease their regular customers would performers try to be aware of their audience's tastes. The audience remained quite liberal venturing to hear music that addressed issues not covered anywhere else including prostitution, homosexuality, and lesbianism.[4] Meanwhile, the political parodies at the time played it easy by only making indirect parallels to their targeted subjects.

By the late 1920's, cabaret continued in its anti-establishment, unconventional style. Many major cabaret theaters were now running in Berlin including the *Kabarett der Komiker* (Cabaret of Comedians) known affectionately as "Kadeko" founded by Kurt Robitschek and Paul Morgan in 1924, as well as renowned composer Friedrich Hollaender's Tingel-Tangel cabaret, which opened in 1931. Through clear example of the content they were producing, the artists in these cabarets were clearly misjudging and underestimating the severity of the threat of the Nazi regime.[5] Up until then, the established tradition of the Jewish performers had been a repertoire of Jewish jokes. However, these jokes were now playing into the hands of anti-Semitism. The eerieness of the reality of the situation is promulgated in a Hollaender song, sung to the tune of the "Habanera" from *Carmen*, which places the Jews at blame for the most natural of weather related events. It begins: "If it's raining or it's hailing, if there's lightning, if it's wet . . ." and comes to a conclusion saying "If you cough or if you sneeze: It's all the fault of all those Jews!"[6] Jelavich comments on this song noting that the dangerous reality was that many voters at this time were inclined to take statements like those in the song seriously. "The [song] may have reinforced a sense of intellectual and political superiority among Hollaender's audience, but that also might have encouraged a false

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[4] Jelavich, 5.
[5] Ibid., 200.
[6] Friedrich Hollaender, "Ob Es" quoted in Jelavich, 207.

sense of security by belittling the severity of the threat."[7] What the artists were trying to do was to reduce the already seemingly absurd ideas of the Nazis into satirical absurdity. In like fashion, the following jibe by the artist Werner Finck became a mere prediction, unbeknownst to the artist or his audience: "In the first weeks of the Third Reich, parades will be staged. Should the parades be hindered by rain, hail or snow, all Jews in the vicinity will be shot."[8] Finck was perhaps the most audacious of the cabaret artists at the time. He told his audiences, "What you hear here, you cannot hear anywhere else in Berlin."[9] He was perhaps so overconfident because he believed his audiences to be 20 to 25 percent Jewish. He was able to get away with his statements for he never made any political quip directly. Finck masked his own opinion through his puns and innuendos noting that if his words were misinterpreted then this was the fault of the audience.[10]

By 1931, a new era in the life of cabaret had begun, and it was a challenging one. The survival of cabaret was now resting in the hands of Nazi policy. The Nazis would not gain full power until 1933 with Hitler taking office, but in 1931, they were already staging huge riots on the Kurfürstendamm, where theaters such as the Kadeko were located. Attendance began to decline. Almost all of the major cabaret artists fled to neighboring countries, while a few, including Hollaender, Robitschek, and Morgan, succeeded in immigrating to the United States.[11] The Nazi policy on cabaret was tied up in their overall constraints on music and musicians carried out through a central office, the *Reichsmusikkamer* (RMK), established in 1933. These policies were directed toward

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[7] Jelavich, 208.
[8] Werner Finck quoted in Jelavich, 209.
[9] Finck quoted in Jelavich, 238.
[10] Jelavich, 239.
[11] Robitschek and Morgan attempted to reestablish their Kadeko as one of the many "exile cabarets" in New York and failed due to the lack of audience interest.

two major concerns: the preservation of German racial purity and the attitude against "modernism" in the arts.[12] The first concern targeted Jewish musicians by outlawing them from playing any music by non-Jewish, German composers. Meanwhile, the second concern targeted any music described as being international, atonal, or modern—jazz music, and ultimately cabaret, becoming one of its targets. Yet, it is essential that the Nazi policy on music was often ambiguous, as even Hitler's own musical opinions seemed to find him delving into music that was considered too provocative.[13] This would help jazz and cabaret, to continue to survive beneath Nazi constraints. In 1938, jazz music was on display as part of the *Entartete Musik* (degenerate music) exhibition in Düsseldorf. Jazz was featured alongside biographical portraits of other "degenerate composers" such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and operetta composer Oscar Straus, whose son Leo Strauss[14] would be one of the main lyricists in the Terezín ghetto. Yet despite the intended "outcry" of the exhibition, people came to it in order to appease their curiosity of hearing the unique music of Jewish composers such as Kurt Weill.[15] The exhibition seemed to do little to sway the popularity of jazz, which was still being heard on the radio in 1939, even though it had been banned in 1935.[16] For the Nazis, jazz was anti-national being that it was American, and stood the chance of tainting the national racial purity because of its Black and Jewish roots. The very characteristics that constitute jazz were a far cry from the stateliness of German marches. Jazz rhythm is syncopic with rhythmic variation that almost defies notation. Jazz melodies incorporate non-standard intervallic inventions, many which are not scalar. Jazz harmony is intricate

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[12] Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 82.
[13] Ibid., 83. Hitler had a positive reception of Werner Egk's modern opera *Peer Gynt*.
[14] Note their relation despite their varied chosen spellings of their last name.
[15] Levi, 96.
[16] Levi, 84.

by its extended verticalness—its ninths, elevenths, etc.[17] As a whole, jazz defines itself through a "dirtyness" heard in the non-static swing of the beat and the blue notes of the singer. Historian Michael H. Kater writes:

> The serenity of sound so valued in classical music is frequently mutated to an ambiguous or "dirty" state deriving from the ever so slight and merely momentary flatness of a saxophone's pitch, the sliding or smearing of a bass note on the string bass, or the impurity produced through the "wa-wa" of the trombone's mute.[18]

The Nazis tried their hand at imitation by creating a "German jazz" which failed. It is clear that the inimitable qualities of jazz were the music's constant appeal. By 1939, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels would finally realize the ineffectiveness of banning jazz and its impracticality toward the war effort.[19]

Just as they had attempted to replace jazz, the Nazis similarly sought to replace cabaret. Through their totalitarian ideals, the Nazis sought to control all artistic endeavors for their own purposes. Goebbels pronounced this fact in a speech to theater professionals on May 8, 1933:

> A revolution does not limit itself to the confines of politics, but instead gradually conquers all areas of public life . . . This revolution will be carried out to the extreme end. It stamps its mark on culture, the economy, politics, and private life. It would be naive to believe that art could be spared this, that it could lead a Sleeping-Beauty existence, far from life, beside or behind the times, that it could assert that art transcends parties, that art is international, that art has higher tasks than politics.[20]

But, as previously mentioned, it is crucial to note that Goebbels stepped back on this notion six years later when realizing that not only had this become an impracticality, but "that it would be impossible to win over the broad masses to National Socialism if they

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[17] Michael Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 13.
[18] Ibid., 14.
[19] Levi, 84.
[20] Goebbels, quoted in Jelavich, 243.

were deprived of hearing popular entertainment music."[21] The Nazis represented the first attempt by any regime to control and use cabaret for its own purpose.[22] They did this by creating their own cabarets known as "Positive Cabaret." In their perspective, the "positive" attribute of this cabaret was that it would guide the nation toward reconstruction, advancement, and community.[23] Yet, the Nazis could not have been anymore misguided in their goals by overriding the very essence with which cabaret was maintained. They sought to void cabaret of its identifying uniqueness and liberalism. In continued opposition, Goebbels' speech of May, 1933 demanded that "individualism will be smashed."[24] While the Nazis could succeed by shrinking the cabaret audiences and eventually dismantling the theaters, they were destined toward failure in creating their own inauthentic, skewed cabaret. The cabaret idiom was always meant to challenge single-mindedness. Jelavich notes that even beyond the fact that the best cabaret talent were Jewish,

> Cabaret acquires its bite from its ability to challenge prevailing values, successful fashions, and the political powers that be. It seeks to make people reexamine their preconceived notions, and it attacks figures, institutions, and symbols of authority . . . The last thing [the Nazis] wanted was critical thought.[25]

When the theater which once housed the Kadeko was bombed in February, 1943, cabaret tradition had found its home and was continuing strongly in the many ghettos.

Musically, it is clear that the cabaret of the ghettos began where it had trailed off. Whether built on the German tradition or the music of the shtetls, the music found little variance in its style even now that it was behind the walls of the ghetto. Quite prominent

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[21] Levi, 121.
[22] Jelavich, 243.
[23] Ibid., 242.
[24] Goebbels, quoted in Jelavich, 245.
[25] Jelavich, 244-5.

especially amongst Yiddish songs, although also exemplified by a few German works, were musical contrafacts, songs that retained earlier melodies while set to new and reflective lyrics. These contrafacts provided an automatic connection to the past, usually including the entire melody of an older song, making them easy to sing and easy to be recalled by even the least musical of people. Meanwhile, the environment in which the music was being written and performed had changed considerably and its effect on the music cannot be ignored. In Germany, where Jewish artists were often performing for mixed or mostly gentile audiences, these artists now found themselves performing almost exclusively for a readily available, Jewish audience. In some cases there is an exception to this, where these artists may have been performing for Nazi soldiers and guards in the ghettos and camps, yet their surroundings still were defining characteristics for the context of their artistic survival. German cabaret had always been a no-holds-barred artistry throughout its mainstay. Now, in the ghettos, it was subject to censorship by its artists and ghetto leaders who feared Nazi response, whose ultimate censorship would only be by way of death.

The ideology of Holocaust cabaret strongly roots itself in the already established Brechtian tradition. Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) was a cabaret performer turned writer who by 1924 was establishing himself as one of the foremost thinkers on cabaret. He stemmed out of a previous cabaret movement known as the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivism). This movement sought to separate itself from earlier impressionistic and modernist techniques. Its artists included filmmakers, performers, writers, and musicians who sought a realistic and accessible output dealing with the ordinary individual.[26] Brecht's theories clearly specified how theater and cabaret could undertake this role. He

[26] Lisa Appignanesi, *The Cabaret*, 2d ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 168.

invented the theory of *verfremdungseffekt* (the alienation effect) that focused on the relationship between the player and the spectator. The actors play directly to their audience, rather than to one another, and consistently play off of the audience's feedback, allowing the audience to feel constant inclusion. Author Lisa Appignanesi comments further on this:

> In the same way Brecht's alienation effect demands that both audience and player are distanced from their habitual roles so that both can see around these. The actors constantly 'send-up' the illusion that reality lies in the on-stage fiction and that they *are* the characters they are portraying. Their insistence on the fact that they are merely playing a role which they can clearly see around, wake the audience into an awareness of its own role as an audience.[27]

In addition to having this technique at hand, Brecht began to use an empty stage with little scenery, props, or theatrical effects. While this began due to a cause of economic hardship, it became his signature trademark.[28] This characteristic undoubtedly became an essential within Holocaust cabaret.

One of the foremost elements in cabaret is the master-of-ceremonies, known as the *conférencier*. The *conférencier* developed out of a need to bind together the varied scenes of the early revues, and this was the role he played in cabaret's early years. As cabaret lost its need for flashy production numbers and became more political, the role of the *conférencier* began to change as well. He was no longer only an emcee, but became part of the mainframe of the show, offering a running commentary often of a political nature. Thus, the role of the *conférencier* in the Brechtian style was vital. The *conférencier* was the means by which so many of Brecht's goals were achieved for it was he who was able to have an open dialogue, so-to-speak, with the audience. The *conférencier* could simultaneously serve as both an inside component and outside

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 169.

observer of the performance. Under the Nazis, it was often the *conférenciers* who were addressing the ensuing political situation with sardonic wit. Examples of this biting humor are featured in the Appignanesi history of cabaret:

> *An SA man baiting a Jew*: Tell me Jew, who's responsible for the fact that we lost the war?
> *The Jew*: The Jewish generals, of course.
> *SA man*: Good, good. (Then reflecting a little) . . . But we didn't have any Jewish generals.
> *The Jew*: Not us – the others![29]

As one can see, the tone of the humor was edgy and clearly at-risk for Nazi denigration. A second example raises the bar even further: "A conférencier, raising his arm to the level of a 'Heil,' looks up at it questioningly: 'That's how high we are in shit . . .'"[30] It is evident that the role and impact of the *conférencier* in political entertainment was so great and enduring that by 1941, Goebbels still felt it necessary to introduce a law that banned performances by any *conférencier*. The four-part law first outlawed all performances whether meant "to deal with matters of politics, economy, culture, or any other concerns of public or private life."[31] The second component outlawed any comments similar to those made by the *conférenciers*, even if these were "allegedly well-meaning."[32] The third resolution banned any involvement of the press, while the fourth became an umbrella law forbidding anyone "to play one race off against another, one city against another, or one part of the Reich against another."[33] Once again, it covers its bases noting that even the "well-intentioned" are subject to punishment at the "Führer's

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[29] Appignanesi, 195.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Goebbels translated in Laurence Senelick, ed, *Cabaret Performance Volume II: Europe 1920-1940*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 281-2.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

behest . . . with the harshest penalities."[34]

Holocaust cabaret emerged and settled upon all of this. For the record, there continued to be *conférenciers* within the performances in the ghettos long after Goebbels' instituted law. The ideology of Holocaust cabaret carried the investment of the presented themes and ideas within the individual performers, yet so much of the understanding was placed into the hands of its audience. The continued existence of the *conférencier* allowed for the Brechtian sense of the invisibility of the fourth wall, the window with which the audience perceived the message of a performance. Peter Bailey's article on turn of the century British music hall performances appropriately captures the same elements present in Holocaust cabaret: "In the music-hall, the shift in and out of role and self, artifice and autobiography, allowed the audience to see, as it were, the joins in the performance."[35] Bailey notes that the audience is treated with selective inclusion in a relationship that understands the knowledge and comprehension ability of the audience.[36] Bailey's eerie proximity to Holocaust cabaret ironically depicts how cabaret artists under such oppression and censorship were still able to be successful in delivering their message:

> The prime device lay in the 'things of suggestion,' and as controls tightened and actual time on stage contracted it was the compressed code of the *double entendre* and the innuendo that signaled complicity with an audience, investing language, tone, and gesture with oblique but knowing conspiracies of meaning.[37]

Could one go even as far to say that Holocaust cabaret gave back to its audience their integrity and respect? By its very nature, these performances relied on an audience's

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Peter Bailey, "Conspiracies of Meaning: Music-Hall and the Knowingness of Popular Culture," *Past and Present* 144 (Aug., 1994): 144.
[36] Ibid., 145.
[37] Ibid., 158.

ability to be able to fill in the gaps, placing such power and respect into their hands, no matter how grim the situation. Yet, as Bailey points out, the nature of this existence is just a common characteristic of modern language:

> If we accept the claims of modern linguistic scholarship that it is the spaces more than the spoken that denote the norms of urban language use, then we may allow that the suspense and instability of the space generated in live performance on the halls provided a running opportunity, on both sides of the footlights, for the kind of tactical surprise that could simultaneously confirm and confound the generic pattern of expectations, and delight an audience with its own palpable sophistication.[38]

Thus, the existence of Holocaust cabaret stood as a reminder to both the audience and the performer that they were both still living in a world with laws of nature and realities of human existence that could not be broken. By using everything in their reach, including meaning within the silence of things unspoken, Holocaust cabaret artists kept both the spirit of cabaret alive and used its essential elements as a vehicle to continue to respond to the lives they were forced to lead. In their tactfully mastered, yet bold opposition to their oppression, the power of their artistry alone could never be extinguished.

About this Study

This study will bring you to each of the various locations where cabaret played an important role, from its beginnings at the Westerbork transit camp, through the ghettos of Terezín, Lodz, Warsaw, and Vilna, and conclude by showing that cabaret continued on even in the camps of Buchenwald, Dachau, and Auschwitz. Cabaret played an important role in the lives of many of the prisoners in these camps. In some places, it existed as an open and public artistic statement, while in others it had to remain hidden for the safety of its artists and audiences. Whether public or private, Holocaust cabaret provided a space for all prisoners to unite in order to express and share their emotions and to attempt

[38] Ibid., 159.

to reestablish a community that was being torn apart. The oppression of the Jewish community as a whole and the community of cabaret artists stood hand-in-hand. It was through the music that these issues were addressed, and the music additionally tried to help form alliances where none existed. This was a needed step especially in ghettos where Jewish communities from the East and West suddenly collided, presenting the prisoners with a battle of cultural understanding, additional challenges which only further pressed their struggle to survive. While Bailey's ideas could clearly be attributed to any of the earlier forms of cabaret, they became incredibly exaggerated in Holocaust cabaret. The silence of what went unsaid in the songs of the ghettos and camps spoke a thousand words. This study seeks to uncover and deliver the messages of Holocaust cabaret—both those clearly spoken and those more deeply embedded. In chapter two, the study concerns Jewish cabaret trying to find and create an identity for itself. Then, in the following four chapters, the study portrays the varied roles that cabaret played during the Holocaust in each of the locations where it was found. While the role and establishment of the music differed from location to location, all Holocaust cabaret toed the line in a struggle to find an identity for itself that spoke the truth while not immediately marking its willing and active participants for death. Holocaust cabaret made a unique new name for cabaret music out of necessity. The music's role had to change in order to respond to and to survive an entirely new situation—one that never could have been imagined.

CHAPTER TWO

JEWISH CABARET

What is Jewish cabaret? If a cabaret was performed and created by Jewish artists, does that make it Jewish? If a cabaret was performed for a Jewish audience, does this posit a Jewish intent? If its humor concerned the situation of the Jewish community, is that a defining characteristic? All of these puzzling questions are highly valid in determining and defining the nature of a "Jewish cabaret." The fact is that there was never a defining moment as to what Jewish cabaret entailed until this identity was forced upon what solely became cabaret produced, performed, and created by Jews and, generally, for Jews under the circumstances of the Holocaust. Up until that point, audiences who were entertained by cabaret on the stages in France, Germany, and Austria were generally mixed, Jewish and gentile, even if the majority of the cabaret artists were Jewish and their content reflected their background. All of this would soon change with cabaret being performed in ghettos for solely Jewish audiences and created entirely by Jewish artists. By that time, the question of Jewish cabaret may have been conceivably inconsequential, but early on, it was a matter given considerable thought. Audiences and critics alike looked to define the circumstances that were occurring, while the artists were probably equally concerned with how to respond to the public desire to classify them by their heritage, whether or not this was even a part of their stage act. Nonetheless, the act of defining a "Jewish cabaret" need not start just before World War II. It can be easily traced back to the turn-of-the-century.

Perhaps there is no better place to understand the growth and evolution of a Jewish cabaret phenomenon than in Vienna. Vienna represented the counter-culture

between the East and West, even though these themes also remained strong in Berlin, being not far from the German-Poland border. Immigrants to Vienna were arriving from the strong centers of the Eastern European Jewish community in Galizia, Transylvania, Bohemia, and Moravia. They would settle in an area of Vienna known as the Leopoldstadt or more affectionately to its new residents as the "Mazzesinsel" ("Matzo Island"). The Leopoldstadt was on one side of the central train station so one could literally say that the new immigrants struggled with a balance between their traditional lives and the modern Vienna that began on the other side of the tracks. On the other side was the *prater*, "an amusement park seductive with its fantastic realization of multiculturalism and modernity."[39] It is an interesting diverting reflection upon this era that amongst the songs written later in the Terezín ghetto was a song of memories of the *prater*.[40]

The importance placed on the comparative East versus West began to define Jewish cabaret as it developed in turn-of-the-century Vienna. Musicologist Philip Bohlman states that "as Jewish communities entered the public sphere of Western cosmopolitan culture, they often chose to display Easternness."[41] It was difficult for Jews to break away from their traditional roots in the East—from their Yiddish lore and culture and from their directionality toward Jerusalem.[42] As the Viennese cabaret tradition began to develop, its modern style easily began to incorporate Jewish concepts. Just as was the case with cabaret elsewhere, Viennese cabaret was created to be sensitive to the "mobility

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[39] Philip V. Bohlman, Liner Notes from *Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano: Jewish Cabaret, Popular, and Political Songs 1900-1945* [Performed by the New Budapest Orpheum Society], Cedille CDR 90000-065, 2002, CD, 6.
[40] I have not included or analyzed this piece in this study, but it is *"Drunt im Prater ist ein Platzerl"* with music by Otto Skutecky and lyrics by Leo Strauss.
[41] Bohlman, 17.
[42] Ibid., 18.

of repertory and changeability of [its] audiences."[43] The building block in the Viennese tradition was the couplet or *gestanzeln*, a two line, rhymed verse that skillfully became the means of carrying the message of the song. Bohlman explains the nature of the couplet:

> Couplets fitted the performative needs of the cabaret stage perfectly, and the historical trajectory of the couplet from the urban periphery to its center narrates the history of the cabaret from the late nineteenth century until the 1920s. The couplet variously detailed, criticized, or simply made fun of the social pretenses of the very audiences that were listening to it.[44]

Soon these couplets were wittily commenting on Viennese Jewish life:

> A rabbi went to temple, he wanted to see observant Jews,
> He left with a bad temper – ach vey! There was nobody inside![45]

The changing role of Viennese cabaret through the eye of the Jewish community is best shown through the evolution of the "Wiener Fiakerlied" ("Viennese Coachman's Song") published in 1884 by composer Gustav Pick. The original song was a popular hit that discussed the daily activities of a coachman, some even scandalous:

> I might pick up two lovers, improper true, I know.
> If later someone asks me, "Who those lovers were?" What do I do?
> I never stop to answer. I glide on down the street.
> It's safe for each romancer, 'cause the horses are discreet.
> If grandpa wants to have a fling, that's fine with me, and I just sing . . .[46]

The key element to the song is then delivered in its double couplet refrain:

> I'm proud to be Viennese. Life suits me fine.
> I serve as a coachman, the top of the line.
> I fly through streets with speed like none other can.
> I'm truly a Viennese man[47]

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[43] Ibid., 20.
[44] Ibid., 15.
[45] Budapester Orpheum Gesellschaft quoted in Bohlman (trans.), 12. Note the rhyme scheme exists in the original German couplet, not in this translation. The original German lyrics are "Ein Rabbiner that in' Tempel gehen, Er wollte fromme Juden sehen, Heraus kam er mit böser Min' – ach waih! Er war Kaner d'rin."
[46] Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano: Jewish Cabaret, Popular, and Political Songs 1900-1945 [Performed by the New Budapest Orpheum Society] Cedille CDR 90000-065, 2002, CD.

Despite the song's offbeat while insightful humor, the refrain sets the tone of the piece. It stresses the coachman's pride in his Viennese heritage and nationality.

Pick's "Wiener Fiakerlied" found itself used later as a contrafact melody set to a new text. The song was now retitled "Jüdisches Fiaker Lied" ("Jewish Coachman's Song"). The song becomes the persona of being Jewish in Vienna and working in a more labored profession. It values Jewish relations when it notes for one rider who had forgotten his wallet, "He seemed to me an honest Jew, I gladly took his IOU."[48] The narrator of this song notes that he began working his way into this profession right after his bar mitzvah, yet before "the crash."[49] He notes that his father, "a kosher Jew," objects to his choice as to becoming a coachman. But, the final verse demonstrates that the narrator has won not only the argument with his father, but is making a prominent social and physical statement by being a Jewish coachman:

> I did not even care. I climbed up in that drivers seat, and my new life was there.
> When racing, my hack really goes, I'll come in first place by a nose.[50]

The double couplet refrain from the original "Fiakerlied" has also been modified accordingly:

> I drive a Fiaker, a nice Jewish boy.
> I fly through Vienna's streets, just like a goy!
> My mother and my dad are still proud of me.
> I drive a Fiaker for all to see.[51]

The refrain simultaneously emphasizes the speaker's Jewishness next to his assimilated identity through his profession. However, the Jewish coachman is only assimilated in the

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid. This dates the writing of this song to after the stock market crash in 1929, which affected the global economy. A period of 45 to 50 years most likely exist between this contrafact and the original "Wiener Fiakerlied."
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

way he does his job and cannot escape his Jewishness. Nonetheless, he desires to prove the ability of a Jew in his profession "for all to see." The "Jüdisches Fiaker Lied" represents an element of Jewish cabaret that pinpoints the struggle for recognition of one's Jewish identity against the broad and mainstream society.

While the example of the growth of a Jewish cabaret idiom in Vienna is well-depicted, it needs to be stated that the performers amongst this subgenre were careful with how they were viewed by their public audiences. Bohlman explains, "The best troupes secured jobs outside the [Leopoldstadt] by making sure to vary their repertoires sufficiently to avoid being stereotyped only as Jewish."[52] While the emergence of Jewish cabaret historically may seem to signal a victory for the minority, one cannot underestimate the basic risks in the performers' balancing of their content. There was the overarching problem of pending economic failure if the performers alienated any sector of their audience, Jewish or non-Jewish. Back in Berlin, with the tumultuous 1930's and the rise of the Nazis at hand, Jewish artists and entertainers were in need of assistance to support their careers. The *kulturbund* became the answer to this need, when it was founded in the Spring of 1933.[53] It was a Jewish parallel to the Nazi's Aryan chambers of culture. The organization had fifty thousand members by 1937 and included some of the biggest names in Berlin cabaret. With the *kulturbund* came the beginning of Jewish performers performing for solely Jewish audiences and the question arose of how Jewish identity was to play into the choices they made in their performances.

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[52] Bohlman, 20.

[53] Alan E. Steinweis, "Hans Hinkel and German Jewry, 1933-1941" in *Theatrical Performance during the Holocaust: texts, documents, memoirs*, Rebecca Rovit and Alvin Goldfarb, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 19. The *kulturbund* began as an initiative of civic leaders such as Leo Baeck. It received approval from Goebbels and then was overseen by Nazi official Hans Hinkel.

With the *kulturbund* working at a grand capacity, the press began to respond to the situation. In November, 1935, the major question was officially published by journalist Margarete Edelheim in the *Monatsblätter des Jüdischen Kulturbundes* asking, "Does Jewish cabaret exist?"[54] She demanded to see more "Jewish content" and "lovely art song in the East European Jewish tradition," which clearly was not being presented at the time on the *kulturbund* stages. Edelheim concluded in her requests that there was no existing Jewish cabaret genre:

> We cannot easily have Jewish cabaret. We will always perceive Hassidic dances, East European Jewish folk songs, the son of the Rothschilds, the description of any New York ghetto scene, or a folk song from the Emek (East European region) as small slices of the reality which together present the diversity of Jewish life in the Diaspora and in Palestine . . . Even so, however, we should not dispense with Jewishness in cabaret.[55]

Which is to say she felt that what did not exist could still be invented or be solely a component of the larger cabaret art form. Albeit, Edelheim was a bit of a purist and felt that only the best of "true art and culture" could be presented within the *kulturbund.* However, she gave no support to define what this comprised. In terms of cabaret, it was never perceived to be an "ethnic" art. While its artistry was being owned and operated almost primarily by Jews, it had never been formerly perceived as an element of Jewish cultural output. Cabaret also had always been an indpendent mainstay of its very own. It was not part of or a response to any "ethnic" artistry. While it often would borrow musical traits of various ethnic groups, for example the tango, one would be equally pressed to find an example of any specifically "ethnic cabaret." A month earlier, in

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[54] Edelheim quoted in Volker Kühn, "We've Enough Tsoris: Laughter at the Edge of the Abyss" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 41.
[55] Edelheim quoted in Kühn, 43-4.

October of 1935, a comment in the *Jüdische Allgemeine Zeitung* on the self-proclaimed "Jewish cabaret" being run by cabaret star Max Ehrlich proclaimed:

> Jewish cabaret—today: two words which do not connect well. Cabaret gains its true legitimization from reality. Jewish reality is sorrow, need, concern—appearances that in the cabaret's colored footlights would hardly make a good impression.[56]

The reviewer ended his review calling for Ehrlich to center his "Jewish cabaret" on humor for they had "enough *tsoris* at home."[57] Theater and cabaret scholar Volker Kühn believes that the debate over the Jewishness of the output of the *kulturbund* was "absurd" for it trivialized the reality of the situation at hand:

> In practice, there was something much more fundamental to consider: the ambivalence of human beings' basic needs in no-win situations. The joke as a drug; satire and irony as harbingers of hope; the punchline as a weapon of resistance; fun as distraction; and laughter to document the will to survive—right there in places where laughter sticks in one's throat.[58]

The reality of the moment was that whether explicit or tacit, these performances were responding to the situation in any way that they could. Present in the motives of the *kulturbund* was resistance through the refusal to become inhuman.

Whether or not there existed a paradigm on its own of Jewish cabaret may remain debatable. The situation was a dichotomy seeming to provide more of the structure needed for a truly Jewish cabaret to exist just as the Nazis closed in and made for less physical and creative space in which to operate. One circumstance fed off the other. It is apparent through the evolution of humor told later within the Warsaw ghetto that pre-war humor focusing on the Jewish community had become self-identified Jewish humor during the Holocaust, which based itself upon Jewish ideas and concepts. The famed

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[56] Quoted in Kühn, 51.
[57] Ibid., 52.
[58] Kühn, 44.

historian Emmanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw ghetto compiled many of these jokes. We see in some a connection to the Jewish calendar year: "We eat as if it were Yom Kippur, sleep in Succahs, and dress as if it were Purim."[59] Another similar joke puns with sarcasm: "If we can endure for twenty-one days, then we'll be saved. Namely, eight days of Passover, eight days of Succos, two days of Rosh Hashanah, two days of Shavuos, and one day of Yom Kippur."[60] Other examples displayed qualities of Jewish storytelling and Midrash: "A teacher asks his pupil, 'Tell me Moyshe, what would you like to be if you were Hitler's son?' 'An orphan,' the boy answers."[61] The humor that later emerged was in a way even more descriptive of the grim situation as the prisoners sought an authentic Jewish voice with which to respond. What seems to have disappeared from public display are examples likened to the more direct attacks on Hitler and the Nazis seen before the war in the cabarets of Berlin. Yet, while one cannot accurately compare most of the occurrences in the Warsaw ghetto with those of pre-war Berlin, there are examples of such humor that were recorded by Ringelblum that were likely privately circulated. One reported example parallels that which could have once been found in a Berlin cabaret:

> The Führer inquires of General Franco, 'Comrade, how did you solve the Jewish problem?' Franco answers, 'I instituted the yellow badge.' 'That's nothing,' says Hitler. 'I imposed tributes, instituted ghettos, lessened their food rations, imposed forced labor.' He goes on, enumerating a long list of edicts and persecutions. Finally, Franco says, 'I gave the Jews autonomy and Jewish councils.' 'Ah,' says Hitler, 'that's the solution.'[62]

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[59] Quoted in Shimon Huberban, *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland During the Holocaust* (New York: Yeshiva University, 1987), 113.
[60] Ibid., 118.
[61] Ibid., 113.
[62] Ibid., 116.

Whether or not it can be accurately categorized, the imprisoned performers and their audience could only find the most justice for themselves in seeking and propagating a response to their predicament from a Jewish perspective. On one hand, the artists could not ignore the atmosphere of the times, while when they spoke savagely of the Nazis, they blindly could not see they were foretelling and perhaps even escalating their own destruction. This was at once a blessing and a curse. Yet, cabaret, and for that matter a very "Jewish cabaret," would nonetheless continue to prosper during the war in its own design specifically fit to the location to which it served.

CHAPTER THREE

CABARET IN WESTERBORK

The Dutch transit camp at Westerbork represented some of the earliest examples of cabaret music within a ghetto or camp during the Holocaust. Westerbork began as a holding camp for German refugees established by the Dutch government in 1939. It was not taken over by the Nazis until 1942. Throughout the entirety of its existence, the camp was only a temporary residence for its inhabitants who eventually would be transported to Auschwitz, Sobibor, Bergen-Belsen, or Terezín. The camp provided a unique environment for the continued livelihood of cabaret because the camp's SS commandant, Arnold Konrad Gemmeker, was a devoted fan. However, the rationale behind Gemmeker's allowance of cabaret performance remains unknown. First-person accounts of these performances were well-recorded amidst the accounts of two prisoners, Philip Mechanicus and Etty Hillesum, who both eventually perished in Auschwitz. On Gemmeker, Mechanicus wrote:

> Man wants to mourn with those who have been struck down by fate, but he feels compelled to live with the living. Is the *Obersturmführer*[63] such a good psychologist that he knows this law of life and has put it into effect here? Or is he merely a brutal egoist who lets the Jews amuse themselves for his own amusement and gives them something at the same time? You cannot see the workings of his heart.[64]

What was well understood was that Gemmeker used cabaret to calm prisoners and even had performances occurring at the exact moment of transports. However, neither Mechanicus or Hillesum initially attended any of the cabarets. For the most part, there was a resentment at first toward these performances when prisoners were shocked by the

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[63] Commander.
[64] Philip Mechanicus, *Year of Fear: a Jewish prisoner waits for Auschwitz*, trans. Irene S. Gibbons (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964), 159.

performances being held in the same exact hall where registration occurred when prisoners arrived and where they went to plead for exemptions before some were sent onto transports. The living conditions at Westerbork were survivable, and, thus, the expression "No theater in a cemetery" which would become prevalent later in the Vilna ghetto, need not apply. The revues were boycotted more frequently because they were perceived as tasteless and sacrilegious. Furthermore, the wood for the stage had been taken from a demolished synagogue from the nearby town of Assen.[65] Yet, it soon came to show that the quality of the cabaret performances at Westerbork was unsurpassed. Because a lot of major German cabaret artists had initially fled to Amsterdam, those who did not try to escape elsewhere ended up in Westerbork. These cabaret artists were among the most famous and creative performers of their time. They included the renowned Max Ehrlich, Willy Rosen, and Kurt Gerron, the latter who would become an even bigger presence in the Terezín ghetto. Mechanicus spoke the truth when he exclaimed, "Westerbork has the best cabaret in Holland."[66] Cabaret at Westerbork provided an initial model for what the ideal setting for cabaret in a ghetto or camp could be, albeit, the situation was not likely to repeat itself. Even in Terezín where performances were abundant and widespread throughout the ghetto, performances lacked the exactitude of similarity to Weimar cabaret that was brought to cabaret in Westerbork. Thus, Westerbork was a place of transition. This is almost a reinstatement of the very fact that it was a transit camp, and that no one was there in permanence. Clearly, the cabaret performers were in transition as well, coping with the fact that they were in the

[65] Jelavich, 268.
[66] Mechanicus, 89.

process of surrendering some of the glitz of their careers and continuing to do what they did perhaps just as well, but soon in even truer simplicity.

Westerbork's performances were comprised of a variety of revues that were described in Mechanicus's diary as a "mixture of antiquated sketches and mild ridicule of the conditions and circumstances prevailing at the camp."[67] The revues were able to get away with their commentary for they involved "not a single sharp word, not a single harsh word, but a little gentle irony in the passing, avoiding the main issues. A compromise."[68] Photographs of these revues show that they included rather intricate sets that accurately mirrored the conditions in which the prisoners were living. Fancy costumes were also a staple. One example of a set was within the prisoners' barracks.[69] While many of these performances dealt with the prisoners' current conditions, there were many scenes that popularized nostalgia. One scene even harkened back to the style of the original Viennese cabaret, with an 1880's style waltz and coachman's song, along with extravagantly classy costumes.[70]

As more and more performances were scheduled, the audience response became quite mixed. In general, it appeared as if the younger generation was more apt to an enthusiastic response than the older generation. Mechanicus discusses this and notes that the older generation was unable to separate themselves from their suffering. Yet, many would still attend performances and talk about them later. About this psychology, he wrote, "There is a lot of self-deception in this—they do not want to miss the revue, their

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[67] Ibid., 146.
[68] Ibid.
[69] See photographs in Jelavich, 264-70; Rovit and Goldfarb, 127, 161-2.
[70] Jelavich, 264.

evening out. At Westerbork they have nothing."[71] Amongst the younger generation, there was an enthusiastic realization of just how good the performances were and how shockingly cheap they were: "People have never seen a good show so cheaply before, and they will perhaps never see anything as good and as cheap again."[72]

It is clear from both prisoner's accounts and from the actual texts of the music that the performers felt that, through the music, they were extending their chance at life. In a certain sense, this was a limited truth. By being involved in cabaret performances, these artists were less likely to be sent on initial transports because they were appeasing Gemmeker. And, the irony stood strong that as the transports rolled by, the cabarets were concurrently running. Those applying for exemption from the transports and the artists performing to save their own lives were constantly together, side-by-side, in the main hall. The artists must have felt the panic for survival twofold. In her diary entry of August 24, 1943, prisoner Etty Hillesum noted performer Willy Rosen's singing to Gemmeker's favor, and ultimately receiving an exemption from the pending transport.[73] Meanwhile, if testimony such as this does not report enough from the front, the begging sentiment could be no more present within the lyrics of Rosen's self-penned song lyrics: "If one is unlucky then life has no meaning; if one is unlucky, then one slips and falls down. That's why I beg you, Fortune, to be true to me."[74] It was, in fact, Willy Rosen's words that spoke more honestly of the situation with an understanding of the fatal situation at hand. Rosen was trying to communicate this message to his audiences, many who were oblivious of their imminent and tragic destiny. His monologue delivered in

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[71] Mechanicus, 158-9.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Etty Hillesum, *Letters from Westerbork*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 133.
[74] Willy Rosen quoted in Kühn, 56.

late 1944 was an ode to the camp, attempting to gloss over the reality of hardships and to realize that they were preferable to the dim future and to death. In his anthology of Holocaust music, scholar and musician Jerry Silverman has provided a translation of Rosen's monologue which is both poetically appealing and remains true to the content and the rhyme scheme of the original German text:

> My dear Westerbork, I must now be leaving,
> I just can't avoid a little tear of grieving.
> Though you were often hard and stressful,
> In the end you always remained peaceful.
> My Westerbork, you tormented me a great deal,
> And yet, you have your own sex appeal.
> Now I say softly, so long, my dear boiler house,
> A last flute-tone, and then the lights I'll douse.
> Be well, my back room with the little carpet,
> I whisper to myself today: *nebbich*, so be it.
> Be well, you tiny kitchen, be well, W.C.
> That I must leave my electric cooker, does pain me.
> You often shorted out, ah, now that was bad,
> Then one could see good Mr. Türkel[75] always getting mad.
> Adieu, my closet, adieu, my bookshelf, too,
> It made me very happy to have the two of you.
> Adieu, my Dutch stew and my garbage can,
> I'm setting out on the road, sack and pack in hand.
> I shake your hands for the last time, *E.H.B.U.*[76]
> Just one more pill, then pull the curtain to.
> Be well, you well-beloved service zone,
> I am no longer on the list, I make room, I move on.
> Many transports I have seen pulling out of here,
> And now—now they're throwing me on the scrap iron heap, I fear.
> Now I climb myself, with knapsack, on the train.
> And just between us let me say, I find this is a pain.
> But sympathy I do not want – advise me, do not try.
> Somehow I'll make it, an old front-line soldier am I.
> Nothing more can happen in Westerbork to me,
> I'm going where other *tsores* are in store, you see,
> Give me my extra rations for the last time,
> I go with butter on my way, with experience sublime.
> I pack it all together, I leave nothing behind,
> I even take my dear wife with me, the best that man can find.

[75] Mr. Türkel was the repairman.
[76] *Erste Hlfe bei Unfällen*: "First Aid for Accidents" referring to the First Aid station.

Adieu *FK*[77] *and V*,[78] adieu to the laundry,
Today my laundry number will once again be free.
Also dear *IPA*,[79] live well, I'm on my way today,
Now tell all your nonsense to someone else, I say.
Live well, you old camp inmates, my dear brothers,
Perhaps another time in life we'll see one another.
A picture postcard to you I don't have to send,
Perhaps I will remain in your memory till the end.
Now I'm sitting in the compartment, soon the whistle will be blowing.
My gaze wanders over the neighborhood – now we're going.
Now I know already – I suffer torment in anticipation.
Adieu, my Westerbork, Hooghalen Station.[80]

The original German is as follows:

Mein liebes Westerbork, ich muß nun von Dir scheiden,
'ne kleine Träne läßt sich dabei nicht vermeiden.
Warst Du auch öfters hard und ungemütlich,
Du bliebst doch letzten Endes immer friedlich.
Mein Westerbork, Du plagtest mich sehr viel,
Und trotzdem hattest Du so'n eigenes Sex-Appeal.
Nun sag ich leise Servus, liebes Kesselhaus,
Ein letzter Flötenton, und dann ist's aus.
Leb wohl, mein Hinterzimmer mit dem kleinen Teppich,
Ich flüstre heute selber zu mir leise: nebbich.
Leb wohl, Du kleine Küche, leb wohl. W.C.
Daß ich den Kocher lassen mußte, das tut mir weh.
Du machtest öfters Kurzchluß, ach, das war nicht schön,
Dann konnte man den guten Türkel immer wütend sehn.
Adieu, mein Schrank, adieu mein Bücherbrett,
Es hat mich sehr gefreut, es war sehr nett.
Adieu, mein lieber Stamppot und mein Vuilnisbak,
Ich gehe auf die Wanderschaft mit Sack und Pack.
Ich drücke Dir zum letzten Mal die Hände, E.H.B.U.
Noch ein Driepoeder, und dann fällt die Vorhang zu.
Lebt wohl, Ihr vielen lieben Dienstbereiche,
Ich bin nun nicht mehr eingeteilt, ich mache Platz, ich weiche.

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[77] *Fliegende Kolonne*: "The Flying Column," an organization of young men who assisted with luggage from arriving and departing trains.
[78] *Verwaltung*: The Administration.
[79] *Israelitische Presse-Agentur*: "The Jewish Press Agency." An organization such as this did not actually exist in Westerbork, and, thus, this is a code word for the ring of gossip that was the vehicle for spreading news throughout the camp.
[80] Rosen quoted in Jerry Silverman, *The Undying Flame: Ballads and Songs of the Holocaust* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), xxi-xxiii.

Manchen Transport sah ich von hier verreisen,
Und jetzt, jetzt wirft man selber mich zum alten Eisen.
Jetzt steig ich selber mit dem Rucksack in den Zug.
Ganz unter uns gesagt, ich find es schlimm genug.
Doch Mitleid will ich nicht und keinen guten Rat,
Ich werd's schon schaffen, ich bin alter Frontsoldat.
In Westerbork kann mir nichts mehr passieren,
Ich geh wo anders Zores organisieren.
Gebt mir zum letzten Mal noch meine Zusatznahrung,
Ich geh mit Butter weg, und mit sehr viel Erfahrung.
Ich packe alles ein, ich lasse nichts zurück,
Sogar mein Frauchen nehm ich mit, mein bestes Stück.
Adieu, FK. und V., adieu auch Wäscherei,
Es wird heut meine Wäschenummer wieder frei.
Auch liebe Ipa, lebe wohl, ich muß jetzt wandern,
Erzähle deine Schmonzes nun den andern.
Lebt wohl, Ihr alten Kampinsassen, liebe Brüder,
Vielleicht kann ich bei Euch so im Gedächtnis bleiben.
Nun sitz ich im Coupé, gleich wird es pfeifen.
Noch einmal laß ich meinem Blick über die Gegend schweifen.
Nun weiß ich doch—ich leide Qualen.
Adieu, mein Westerbork, Post Hooghalen.[81]

At times, Rosen's monologue is a statement of personal surrender, while he mockingly seeks to gain what little he can find from his sordid experience. In referring to the "Jewish Press Agency (*IPA*)," Rosen marks the collective atmosphere that existed in Westerbork, even if the only method of distributing the news was by mouth and could only be confirmed as gossip, at best. By using the *IPA* as a coded term toward his fellow prisoners, Rosen masks the identity of his suggestion. This may have been a protective measure, but indeed is an element of "knowingness" amongst his collegial audience. In general, Rosen seems to make peace with himself and his situation while simultaneously demonstrating a quiet resistance to the predicament. His sarcasm seems to question reality, pushing the limit to even wonder if leaving with his wife by his side is in the realm of possibility. Rosen is blatantly trying to expose his ultimate message when he

[81] Ibid.

mentions the availability of his laundry number. With no one left in the camp, he feels his identity will be lost forever. He will remain only a simple memory. Thus, in yielding and finding his place, Rosen can only make restitution toward the camp, owing the final days of his life to the camp, alone.

The destination of the transports was not understood to most, and this lack of understanding is even clear in the writings of Mechanicus and Hillesum. Prisoners knew that the transports must be avoided, but knew nothing of the gas chambers or their ultimate fate. This is what makes statements such as Rosen's so powerful. Rosen clearly felt quite alone while making this statement and this is reflected in a later reflection recorded as he passed through Terezín on his way to Auschwitz:

> There's always someone somewhere whom one laughs about.
> There's always someone somewhere who makes the jokes.
> Someone is intended to play the fool.
> It lasts one's whole life and begins in school.
> Someone must wander through life – the eternal clown.
> Ach, people like to laugh, especially at the cost of another.
> There's always someone somewhere whom one laughs about.
> There's always someone somewhere who will play the *pojaz*.[82]

It seems from this statement that Rosen felt as if he had failed to use his art to manifest his survival. He feels that others have used his tragedy to their benefit. Whether this is a scornful reference to the Nazis is unclear. Both Rosen's monologue and this statement are fairly neutral in terms of pointing the finger of blame. They are very personal statements that focus on Rosen's own personal situation, dilemma, and state of mind. With the lack of any presence of hope, it appears that by the time of this statement Rosen had given up and saw no merit in fighting back with his words. Yet, in light of the situation, what he did was just that—he fought back with tragic, yet peaceful assurance.

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[82] Rosen quoted in Kühn, 57. Pojaz is the term for the "tragic clown."

Rosen and his colleague Max Ehrlich were sent "with privilege" to Terezín, but only remained there for two weeks. They both died in Auschwitz in October, 1944.

Social relations in the camp were far from perfect and this fact had a strong impact on the musical activities of the camp. Gemmeker favored the German residents of Westerbork, who had been living there since its establishment. He gave them preferential treatment through better housing, but more importantly, empowered them as leaders to run the camp and to make daily decisions as to who was sent on the transports.[83] Understandably, the German leadership structure caused more of the Dutch prisoners to be sent East. Meanwhile, Gemmeker's favoritism was reflected in the prominence of performances of German cabaret, causing additional negative reaction among the Dutch prisoners. It is quite ironic that despite the abundance of public performances of German cabaret, very little, if any, of this music has survived. What is known today about these performances was garnered from survivors' testimony, from any texts that may have survived, and from various printed programs that note the musical selections and casts of individual revues. Thus, it is with great surprise to note that one song that did survive was performed in Dutch by a Dutch duo!

The surviving song was *"Die Westerbork-Serenade"* ("The Westerbork Serenade")[84] sung by the duo Johnny and Jones, who had gained fame in the Netherlands prior to the war. Johnny and Jones were also known affectionately as "Two Kids and a Guitar."[85] "Johnny" was born Max Kannenwasser (1916-1945) and his partner "Jones," just two years younger, was born Nol van Wezel (1918-1945). Unlike their German colleagues, Johnny and Jones were not given the opportunity to perform much in public.

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[83] Jelavich, 266.
[84] See Appendix 3-a.
[85] Liner notes from *Joodse Amusementsartiesten*, Theater Instituut Nederland, FAV 1-95194, 1995, CD.

They mainly performed within their own barracks. Yet, the talented duo already had charted a hit in 1938, while introducing their jovial style, in the song "*Mijnheer Dinges weet niet wat Swing is*" ("Gentlemen do not know what swing is"). This upbeat and whimsical style was a mainstay in "*Die Westerbork-Serenade.*" There is somewhat of a mystery surrounding the survival of this very song. It is known that the song was recorded in Amsterdam at Studio N.E.K.O.S. (*Nederlandsche Klank Opname Studio*) in the Spring of 1944.[86] This was possible for both Johnny and Jones were being sent into Amsterdam for daily work at an aircraft facility while leaving their wives back at Westerbork. At some point during this time, the two recorded the song in a hidden, basement studio with their old recording engineer. Meanwhile, both were also offered to be placed into hiding, an offer which they refused, perhaps for it did not include their wives or, more likely, the two could not and did not fully understand the magnitude of their fate. Johnny and Jones both survived transport to Terezín and Auschwitz, but perished only shortly before liberation at Bergen-Belsen in April, 1945.

"*Die Westerbork-Serenade*" follows in the similar fashion of a 1920's American jazz standard. It opens with an A section as a prelude and a build-up of musical suspense before the main melody of the song enters. The first nine measures of the song contain this prelude, which returns for a second time with new lyrics after the first round of the main melodic B section (m. 9-44). The prelude creates its "musical suspense" by allowing few chances for the vocal line to fully cadence. Even though there is a I chord found in m. 4, the melody remains on the A-natural, the fifth degree of the scale. The end of the prelude transitions into the B section by moving into the dominant key area, introducing this with a secondary dominant in m. 7, and not resolving back to the tonic

[86] Ibid.

until the B section is already underway in m. 10. What is immediately apparent in the difference between these two sections is the rhythm to which the text has been set. While one would imagine the preface to want to lengthen the section to draw out the suspense, the rhythm carries forward the text quite rapidly with continually succeeding eighth notes, with only a slight pause for the end of each phrase. Section B introduces slower and more drawn out rhythms that begin to emphasize the text even more. It also greatly relies on syncopation as a driving force linking the elements of the music and the text. The harmonic texture of the B section follows fairly standard harmonic progression. Being that the "Ik zing mijn . . ." melody is sung three times in the B section, the second time is given a harmonic boost by a tonicization in the key area of the ii chord (m. 17-21) and then moving to the area of the V chord (m. 22-25). Measures 25-32 represent the bridge of section B. A secondary dominant in the subdominant key area places most of the bridge resting on the IV chord. After escaping the tonic for over 15 measures, it finally returns in m. 32, albeit hidden amidst the half cadence that introduces the final round of "Ik zing mijn . . ." The last important characteristic to happen with the harmony occurs before the first repetition of the entire piece (as it goes back to section A). In the first ending (m. 44), the final chord is a secondary dominant of IV. This is important because the piece begins on a IV chord, so this sets up the perfect harmonic transition back to the slower A section.

Truth be told, in order to really understand this song, one must look at the contents of its lyrics. Without the lyrics, there is little characteristic to the music that sets the tone of the subject of the piece. The English translation of the lyrics have been set to parallel the context and rhyme scheme of the original by Jerry Silverman:

Hello the situation seems to worsen,
and my thoughts I just can't seem to guard.
Now suddenly I'm like a diff'rent person,
My heart beats like an airplane wrecking yard.

I sing my Westerbork Serenade.
Down the little rail line,
See the silver moon shine on the heather.
I sing my Westerbork Serenade,
I'm with a pretty lady, strolling with my baby, we're together.
Like the boiler in the boiler house my heart's a fire.
In my mother's house I never felt the same desire.
I sing my Westerbork Serenade.
By the barracks chased her, there I first embraced her over there
Was the Westerbork love affair.

I went into the camp first-aid station.
But the guy said, "I really can't treat this.
You surely will improve your situation,
Right after giving to her your first kiss."
(And that you mustn't do.)

I sing my Westerbork Serenade . . .[87]

The opening prelude of the piece notes that the singer has experienced something out of the ordinary. One's initial presumption is that the singer is expressing his feelings on the conditions at the camp, which clearly is the initial thought presented. But, this piece emphasizes that other thoughts exist and are presiding over the singer's state of mind. These are thoughts of love. One interesting reference in the first prelude is the "airplane wrecking yard," where both Johnny and Jones worked. However, the love interest is clearly not at their place of work. She is at the camp, where the singer's pursuits occur near the barracks. The irony of the song is in his love, which burns like a fire, as something out of the ordinary itself, because it is happening not at home, but in the camp. This finds itself fleshed out in the second prelude, describing the singer's "visit" to the first-aid station only to find himself a lack of a solution but to kindle the flame of love

[87] Silverman, 142-45.

itself. In the original recording of the song, the B section is repeated in its entirety for a third time after reaching the second ending. The bridge (m. 25-32) is reduced to the melody sung with a gibberish, yet good-humored improvised scat solo. It is sung with a lot of rhythmic flair, adding almost four sixteenth notes to every quarter note of the original melody. It seems that the reason for this interruption is as if the singer cannot resolve the complexity of his entire situation, and can do no more than sing a wordless melody. The song ends once again with the lyrics "the Westerbork love affair." The love affair clearly is not only with the idolized woman--perhaps the woman is an icon for the camp itself.[88] One had to find some kind of love for the camp amidst incurable illness continually felt through their growing disenchantment.

Cabaret at the Westerbork transit camp ultimately had a positive impact on all those who were a part of it and who attended performances. It lightened the mood of those able to enjoy it, and equally, it lengthened the lives of many of the performers. The existence of cabaret at Westerbork also established a phenomenon that would be repeated for the performers who were sent to Terezín. In a certain sense, it prepared them and created the momentum for them to continue in this vein of performance under conditions that were only to get worse. It is clear in Rosen's "My Dear Westerbork" monologue that even he was able to recognize the singularity of the gift that had been presented to he and his fellow prisoners at Westerbork. They had taken advantage of this, and he was personally thankful for the opportunities that had been presented. Overall, they had all easily survived being at Westerbork and performers, especially, had been given

[88] Johnny and Jones were married, after all! The parenthetical lyrics "And that you mustn't do" which are sung as a quick response at the end of the second prelude are a quick-witted retort in response to this fact.

privileged status in the hands of Gemmeker. Yet, time was only fleeting, and life was bound to change.

CHAPTER FOUR

CABARET IN TEREZÍN

Like the performances at Westerbork, cabaret in the Terezín[89] ghetto played an important role in the daily life of the ghetto.[90] However, while Westerbork's commandant attended the activities in the transit camp regularly, the commandant of Terezín, Karl Rahm, rarely attended performances. The musical activities in Terezín did not directly seek to improve the lives of the prisoners living in the ghetto. They were part of an illusion created by the Nazis to show the outside world that the prisoners there were being treated extra well, while prisoners were living in barely survivable conditions. Even though this was the case, music in Terezín did have a profound impact on the prisoners and the Terezín ghetto produced the most musical output by prisoners anywhere during the Holocaust. This output was incredibly varied. Besides for a multitude of cabaret, there were operas, chamber and orchestral works, choral works (including the Verdi Requiem), and productions involving the children of the ghetto. Amongst all of these genres, there were both old and new works performed. Professor Samuel Edelman has summed up the nature of Terezín in saying it was "a cauldron of creative activity."[91]

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[89] Terezín is the original Czech name for the town which was renamed by the Germans as Theresienstadt for the duration of WWII. Today, it is once again known as Terezín, and it will be referred to as such in this study.

[90] There is a varied vocabulary used in reference to Terezín. In many cases one will find the term "ghetto," while in many other cases "camp" or "concentration camp." Terezín was comprised of both a town and of the remnants of the garrison fortress that was built for the Czech military in 1780. The walled fortress, thus, became like a small camp in itself, while the rest of the town was equally under Nazi control and comprised the rest of the occupied and "ghettoized" town. The prisoners lived in both places. What did make Terezín similar to other concentration camps was that it was established in a town that was not the primary residence for all of its prisoners and they were brought there. However, most concentration camps were built anew solely for their own purpose. Like all the other ghettos, Terezín became a walled-in, pre-existing town, even if some of its walls were pre-existing on their own. For the purposes of consistency in this study, Terezín will always be referred to as a ghetto, although one term is not any more qualified than another. They are each representative through the perspective in which they are defined.

[91] Samuel M. Edelman, "Jewish Cabaret and Opera during the Holocaust" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 130.

These activities provided a diversion for the audiences who were lucky enough to procure tickets to the performances, and it became the actual daily work of the composers, conductors, musicians, directors, and performers who were involved. Compared to the livelihood in other ghettos, one could realistically say that these cultural activities did brighten the daily lives of all those involved. However, the prisoners had no ability to compare their situation to those of other ghettos and camps. This is thus the explanation for some of the survivors' testimony burdened with negativity. The living conditions in Terezín remained quite a challenge, and people were still falling incredibly ill and dying. It was not until the end of the ghetto's existence from late 1944 to 1945 that the prisoners began to see that everything was a cover-up plot by the Nazis. Thus, the illusion created by the Nazis while ultimately in deceit, probably caused more good than harm. Unable to see the true effect of everything surrounding them, the prisoners tried to live life as ordinarily as possible, using the cabarets and artistic events of the ghetto as comfort.

In an environment where cabaret was only one major form of artistic expression, it played a certain role along with the rest of the creative output. What was unique about all of the artistic output in Terezín is that almost every performance in one way or another seemed to be making a statement. Cabaret, in itself, continued in its established tradition, although it appears that Terezín's cabaret seemed to be subtler in its political expression, and spent more time commenting on the way of life in the ghetto. While the cabaret revues generally shied away from direct finger-pointing at the Nazis, other artistic forms in the ghetto were not as restrained in their expression. Classical composer Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944), a former student of Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1954) whose style was informed by the Second Viennese School, clearly represented a rebellious sentiment

in his modern opera *Die Kaiser von Atlantis* (*The Emperor of Atlantis*) with libretto by a young poet, Petr Kien. The opera, subtitled "The Denial of Death," is a post-modern work in which its characters are forced to suffer repeated agony beneath a totalitarian emperor who lives an isolated life, advocating for total war. Meanwhile, all others are unable to escape the tyranny, not even to succumb to the peace of death, for neither a state of life nor death exists. Death is a personified character in the opera. In the end, the dictatorial emperor agrees to die in order for Death to resume his duties. The parallels toward the Nazi regime and Hitler are direct and forefront. Ullmann's work was never formally performed in Terezín. During one of its rehearsals, it was observed and subsequently banned by the Nazis. Only days later, Ullmann and his wife were sent to Auschwitz.

The children's opera *Brundibár* by composer Hans Krása and librettist Adolf Hoffmeister exhibited the similar theme of a tyrannical ruler as in Ullmann's work. Albeit, *Brundibár* (originally composer in 1938 or 1939) was a bit more accessible being a piece sung by children and performed for audiences of all ages. *Brundibár* was the most performed work of any in Terezín, being performed for a total of 55 times, including for the International Red Cross visit. It received its first Terezín performance on September 23, 1943. The plot surrounds a young brother and sister who are trying to find milk for their ailing mother. They have no money, and the milkman refuses to give them milk for free. They attempt to earn money by singing on the street, but attention is diverted away from them by the sinister organ-grinder, Brundibár. When all of the children in the community come to their support, the siblings are able to raise more than enough money to get milk. But, just at this point, Brundibár steals their earnings, until

the entire community finally chases him down, succeeding victoriously. If the ending of Ullmann's opera could be classified at least as a triumph over evil, then the end of *Brundibár* represents this, along with added hope for the future. The fact that the Nazis allowed performances such as these, those which were incredibly explicit in their anti-totalitarian ideology, portrays the level of artistic statement allowed in Terezín. Why did the Nazis allow this? It seems that for the most part they did not feel that these messages would have any resonance after all of the prisoners had been exterminated, according to their "Final Solution." Yet, even where there was not a forthright goal to make a strong, political statement, such performances still had strong, fervent messages. A prime example of this was in the performances of the Verdi Requiem. The singers had a primordial feeling of ecstatic emotion in singing this piece. The fact that it was a Jewish choir singing a Catholic requiem mass was no obstacle in that the choir knew they were likely singing their last song together. The requiem was performed for the visit of the International Red Cross on June 23, 1944.[92]

It was amidst this environment that many cabarets existed. The topics covered in these cabarets were treated a bit lighter than the heaviness in some of aforementioned repertoire. This was a shy step away from the radical Berlin cabaret of the 1930's. It is for this reason that this cabaret was often referrred to as "the light muse." The most famous of the cabarets was undoubtedly one put on by German cabaret star Kurt Gerron. This cabaret was known as *Karussell* (*Carousel*). There were an abundance of other cabarets in the ghetto including Czech revues run by Karel Švenk and Felix Porges, as

[92] Rebecca Rovit, "Theresienstadt" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 172. It was on this visit that the head of the Red Cross visiting committee exclaimed that he loved this performance so much that the choir should never be split up. Commandant Rahm agreed to this, and, thus, the entire choir was sent to Auschwitz on the very next transport.

well as German revues by Egon Torn, Hans Hofer, Bobby John, Ernst Morgan, Walter Steiner, and Walter Lindenbaum.[93] While *Karussell* played to a packed audience in a simple room in the Hamburg barracks,[94] other revues and impromptu cabaret performances began to take place at the ghetto's cafe which opened in December, 1942. The *kaffeehaus* (coffee house), as it was called in German, rarely served coffee to its guests. Its guests were generally only treated to being seated at a table by a "waiter" and then enjoying the performance. This is apparent through one of the many drawings by prisoner and artist Bedřich Fritta, which shows many guests, most whom look to be elderly, sitting around empty tables with a trio of violin, trumpet, and accordion performing.[95] The cafe became prime territory for cabaret, and it also soon became home to other small musical ensembles, as more instruments and scores were now arriving.[96] Admission to the cafe was by ticket only in order to control the amount in attendance and cost 5 crowns each. These tickets were not easily obtainable, due to the small number of seats available in the cafe compared to the ghetto's large population.[97] Prisoner Eric Vogel, the trumpeter in Terezín's "premier" Jazz ensemble The Ghetto Swingers, later wrote:

> Do not think the coffee house was freely accessible to all ghetto inmates. No. There were tickets distributed that gave the receiver the right to be there for two hours. Elderly people, often without any understanding of our music, had to listen to the band, but they accepted our performance with great gratitude as a welcome

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[93] Many of the original posters advertising these various cabarets have been preserved in the archives in Terezín and have been published in Rudolf M. Wlaschek, ed., *Kunst und Kultur in Theresienstadt* (Gerlingen, Germany: Bleicher Verlag, 2001).

[94] Roy Kift, "Reality and illusion in the Theresienstadt cabaret" in *Staging the Holocaust: the Shoah in Drama and Performance*, Claude Schumacher, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 147. Each of the barracks throughout Terezín were named for various regions of Nazi Germany.

[95] See Jožа Karas, *Music in Terezín 1941-1945* (New York: Beaufort Books, 1985), 148.

[96] Rabbi Erich Weiner, "*Freizeitgestaltung* in Theresienstadt" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 229. Weiner notes that the availability of instruments and scores was even more important than the opening of the cafe, itself. See the next page for discussion of Weiner's leadership of the *freizeitgestaltung*.

[97] Weiner, 219.

> change from the daily chores, the misery and hunger. No food was served here, but the guest got a cup of imitation coffee.[98]

In his diary, prisoner and Youth Welfare Department director Egon Redlikh noted on September 12, 1943 that coffee made of turnips and herbal tea were being served.[99] An earlier entry in his diary from July, 1942 commented on the paradox between the gaiety of the early, pre-*kaffeehaus* cabarets held in the inner courtyards of the barracks against the horrible quality-of-life: "So many contrasts in life here. In the yard, a cabaret with singers, and in the house the old and sick are dying. Great contrasts. The young are full of desire to have a full life and the old are left without a place and without rest.[100]

All of this was made possible through an organization that was established in February, 1942 known as the *freizeitgestaltung* ("organized leisure time" abbreviated *FZG*). While many informal recitals were being performed four months before the institution of the *FZG*, the initial goal of the *FZG* was to organize religious services. Thus, this was the reason that Rabbi Erich Weiner was asked to head the organization. Redlikh found sarcastic irony in this, as well: ". . . again a paradox possible only in the ghetto of Terezín. A hall. Up front, on stage, a revival of Wolker's *Hospital*. In the back, Jews are praying. (January 2, 1943)[101] Two months later, he approached the subject again: "Jews pray in the *Freizetgestaltung* hall. In the back of the hall are dancers, actors, a stage. There aren't any orthodox among us, for the real orthodox would not pray in a hall

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[98] Eric Vogel, "Jazz in a Nazi Concentration Camp: Part 2" *Downbeat*, December 21, 1961, 16.
[99] Redlikh, Egon "Gonda," *The Terezín Diary of Gonda Redlich*, ed. Saul S. Friedman, trans. Laurence Kutler (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 130. An interesting note is that Redlikh's diary was written entirely in Hebrew while Redlikh was of Czech heritage and writing in Hebrew was surely a challenge. He did this for two reasons: First, in hope that he would use his Hebrew skills after the war in Israel and, second, to mask his writing in case it was intercepted by the Germans.
[100] Ibid., 58.
[101] Ibid., 94.

such as this.[102] Weiner kept precise notes on his involvement with the organization, and these shed great light on the abundant cultural activities it oversaw. Almost immediately after its formation, there were calls to form a theater, and then the *FZG* became the organization that oversaw all of the logistical needs of the performances that went on allover Terezín, including overseeing the distribution of tickets and the opening of the *kaffeehaus*. The *FZG* was almost a similar entity to the pre-war *Kulturbund*. But, Terezín, in any way possibly imaginable, was made uniquely better by the presence of the *FZG*, compared to all other ghettos who had no organization of its kind. The very allowance of the organization by the Nazis made so many things possible for the community in Terezín that otherwise would have been just a dream.

With so many performances occurring and, hence, performing ensembles being formed in the ghetto, individual entertainers as well as these ensembles were making names for themselves, becoming ghetto-celebrities in their own right. One of the earlier "cabarettists" of Terezín was the young Czech composer Karel Švenk (1917-1945). Švenk, born Schwenk, was composing and directing his cabarets within the ghetto while only in his mid-twenties. His Terezín premiere of his first revue, *Long Live Life*, on May 24, 1942 was later recalled by Rabbi Weiner:

> One had to overlook much, because – like the later Švenk-events – this evening was greatly improvised. The stage and the lighting, assembled with great difficulty, were not fully completed when the guests entered; the program was ill-prepared and too long; the guests, not permitted to transgress the curfew, became rather impatient; and the event had to be ended prematurely. Nonetheless, it was a great success.[103]

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[102] Ibid., 110. This almost goes to say that Weiner's expertise developed more in organizing the performances than in directing religious activities.
[103] Weiner, 216.

In general, the Czech cabarets tended to be more improvised than their German counterparts. However, this was an example of how things progressed slowly at first and gradually improved with experience. It is clearly in retrospect that Weiner noted that the performance was successful. This is because what would become the most well known song in Terezín was performed for the first time as the final song of the revue. Švenk's "Terezín March" was not a song in cabaret style, but as survivor Zdenka Ehrlich-Fantlová remembers, "It echoed the suppressed longing of every inmate, and we promptly adopted it as our Terezín anthem:

> 'Where there's a will there's always a way
> So hand in hand we start
> Whatever the trials of the day
> There's laughter in our heart
> Day after day we go on our way
> From one place to another
> We're only allowed 30 words to a letter
> But hey, tomorrow life starts again
> And that's a day nearer to when we can pack
> And leave for home with a bag on our back
> Where there's a will there's always a way
> So hold hands now, hold them fast
> And over the ghetto's ruins we
> Shall laugh aloud at last'[104]

While the march marked one of Švenk's first major contributions in Terezín, his second revue stirred up commotion in the provocative manner that cabaret had already been demonstrating in its near fifty year history. This revue, *The Last Cyclist*, toyed with the popular joke of cyclists as scapegoats for all evil. This was a popular quip with liberals in West Central Europe, post-World War I.[105] The joke even presents itself in historian Hannah Arendt's densely intellectual work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: "An antisemite claimed that the Jews had caused the war; the reply was, 'Yes the Jews and the

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[104] Zdenka Ehrlich-Fantlová, "The Czech Theater in Terezín" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 236.
[105] Rovit and Goldfarb, 320.

bicyclists. Why the bicyclists? asks the one. Why the Jews? asks the other.'"[106] Švenk's second revue made such rebellious statements that the Jewish Council of Elders quickly banned it after only a short run. However, its audiences loved it and it remained a heroic story telling of both the life of Terezín and of Švenk.[107] Švenk was sent to Auschwitz in September, 1944 but was soon selected to work in a factory near Leipzig. He died there due to poor health, surrounded by heavy work and insufficient food, in April, 1945.[108] Only six of his songs were preserved.[109]

Leo Strauss (1897-1944) was one of the foremost librettists interned in Terezín. Strauss was born in Vienna and was the son of the famous cabaret composer Oscar Straus (1870-1954).[110] Later in Terezín, Leo honored not only his father, but the whole "line" of Strausses who had made an impact on the musical world. Leo used a montage of over ten different waltzes by the family of father Johann and sons Johann, Josef, and Edward Strauss (ie: *Die Fledermaus* of Johann Strauss, Jr.) combined with waltzes from the operas of Richard Strauss (ie: *Der Rosenkavalier*), and concluded with the music of his father. He cleverly introduced this medley saying, "When one hears Viennese melodies being played, it doesn't take long until one knows they're By Strauss – But just which of the many Strausses, now that's a tough one to figure out."[111] He then goes on to

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[106] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism: Part One, Antisemitism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951), 5.
[107] Ehrlich-Fantlová, 237.
[108] Karas, 145.
[109] Ibid. Due to the scarcity of available music and the added language barriers in dealing with the Švenk's Czech cabaret repertoire, I have chosen not to focus on the musical output of any Czech repertoire. Yet, without a doubt, Karel Švenk was incredibly significant to the cabaret life in Terezín and without mention of him, this study would be incomplete. For interpretations of his music by survivors of Terezín, see the recording *King of Cabaret of Ghetto Terezín: Songs of Karel Švenk*, collected by Kobi Luria, adapted by Moshe Zorman, Museum of Beit Terezín, 2004, CD.
[110] Despite the difference in the spelling of their last names, they were related. Note, Oscar Straus outlived his son as he moved to the U.S. in 1939.
[111] Quoted in Hillel, 47. See the original German text in Ulrike Migdal, *Und die Musik Spielt Dazu: Chansons und Satiren aus dem Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt* (München: Piper, 1986), 67.

comment on each of the prominent Strausses. This montage was in actuality a montage-of-montages of waltzes, as many 19th century waltzes quoted other waltzes and compositions. Around the turn-of-the-century, Oscar had enjoyed artistic success as the resident composer in Berlin at the Wolzogen *Überbrettl*.[112] Yet foreshadowing future problems, and perhaps one of the reasons for Oscar's later emigration to America, Straus had problems in dealing with Wolzogen, the founder and director of the *Überbrettl*, who was growing in his anti-Semitism. Wolzogen was chagrined by the continual success of his Jewish colleagues, which even included guest appearances by eminent composers like Arnold Schoenberg trying out his skills in a different genre and venue. In an essay in 1908, Wolzogen rallied for recognition of Jewish artists as using their talent only for commercial exploitation.[113] Then, in 1921, he greatly used his autobiography to feed his anti-Semitic purpose. He attempted to rationalize that the only reason Jewish artists were a part of his *Überbrettl* was because the cabaret had been entirely "un-Germanic" and the "Jewish monopoly" continued to be the "nearly exclusive managers and profiteers of German spiritual capital."[114] It was amongst this atmosphere that Leo Strauss grew up. Not surprisingly, Leo's libretti often dealt with anti-Semitism. However, it was often internal anti-Semitism amongst his own Jewish community upon which Strauss commented. When Strauss would also take on the role as *conférencier*, he would tell the following joke:

> A gentleman who lives in the same room with me said to me today: 'I'm really suffering from a great injustice. Never in my life have I socialized with Jews – and now I'm forced to live in a room with so many Jews.' I replied to him: 'And

[112] Translates to something like "Super Cabaret."
[113] Jelavich, 60.
[114] Wolzogen quoted in Jelavich, 61.

> I suffer from an even greater injustice. In my whole life I have socialized only with Jews – and now I'm forced to live in a room with anti-Semites.[115]

This was all too prominent a reality in Terezín, where Jews of all backgrounds and classes were now together as one united community, who had to learn to get along and live together under the most extreme of conditions.

Amongst the various libretti Strauss wrote in Terezín, the common method of composition revolves around a specific dramatic technique in dealing with the "the tensions between expectations and reality, ignorance and knowingness."[116] Scholar Roy Kift has recognized that the audience's "shock of recognition" as they discovered their true selves presented in the cabarets "must have given their laughter a bitter edge."[117] Strauss's libretti manifest this element consistently. Strauss's *Theresienstädter Fragen* (*Theresienstadt Questions*) is a libretto for which music has not survived. The text is a conversation between an established prisoner with a new incomer who is dealing with false expectations upon her arrival. Expectations such as these were entirely valid as Terezín was promoted to be a "spa town," making it seem like a nice, healthy, and relaxing place to go. The Nazis even tricked some of its willing victims into giving up their homes and savings in order to be sent to Terezín. Upon arrival, it must have been a devastating shock to find the utterly undesirable conditions that waited. The main, short refrain of *Theresienstadt Questions* repeats, "Theresienstadt, hooray, hooray," completed with various adjectives to fill its second rhyming phrase "the most . . . [fill-in-the-blank] ghetto in the world today." The choices of words to fill the phrase demonstrate clear cynical sarcasm toward the true situation, describing Terezín inaccurately as humane,

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[115] Strauss quoted in Jelavich, 279.
[116] Kift, 150.
[117] Ibid.

elegant, fashionable, hygienic, accommodating, and up-to-date.[118] Perhaps the only realistic categorizing of the ghetto is as it being "anti-Semitic," referring to the internal divide between Jews from Czechoslovakia and other more Western European areas as compared to Eastern European Jews of the shtetls. The song refers to a shtetl named "Tarnopol."[119] The dramatic text concludes its banter calling Terezín simply "wacky."[120] The refrain acts as an interlude between the new prisoner asking questions amidst her innocent hopes, only to have them quickly pushed aside by the veteran prisoner, who breaks her in by telling her the truth. If *Theresienstadt Questions* demonstrates Strauss delineating the outsider's perspective, another of his libretti, *Einladung* (*Invitation*), views outwardly from the inside. *Invitation* uses the technique of reversal, usually used to a more comic effect, to comment on the situation in Terezín. Strauss acts as if those suffering outside of Terezín would be better off in the ghetto, for what it provides. He opens his dialogue saying:

> Friends and loved ones, do you suffer
> From a life of want and fear
> Things at home becoming tougher?
> Pack your bags and join me here
>
> Do you live in trepidation?
> Is your life a vale of tears?
> I'm off'ring you some consolation
> Pack your bags and join me here[121]

Strauss's tone is clearly a mocking one, and it becomes clear that in every mention, he is making light of what is lacking in Terezín. He shows that the common tasks of daily life

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[118] Strauss translated by Roy Kift in Rovit and Goldfarb, 204-7.
[119] Ibid., 205.
[120] Ibid., 207. The original German text uses slang only known in Terezín, "zwokky" to mean wacky.
[121] Strauss translated by Kift in Rovit and Goldfarb, 143.

have been entirely replaced within the surreal confines of the ghetto. By the end of *Invitation*, Strauss even figures in the entertainment sector of events in Terezín:

> Do you dream of ease and pleasure?
> Tea and coffee, wine and beer?
> Concerts, theater, endless leisure?
> Pack your bags and join me here[122]

Strauss's *Invitation* concludes with clarification, almost asking its audience to listen to it once again more carefully:

> Here's a wacky world of show biz
> Full of laughter, fun and games
> The only thing I'd like to know is
> How we all get out again[123]

Strauss's most popular and prominent song may have been *Als Ob* (*As If*). The musical arrangement of this song by Alexander Steinbrecher has survived. The song compared to the two earlier mentioned seems to be a forthright coping strategy with being in Terezín. The strategy of "as-if" is an actual Stanislavskian dramatic technique called "endowment" employed by actors. It helps actors manage the realistic portrayal of various activities, sometimes as simple as pretending to drink a cup of coffee or polish a shoe, by thinking of all the various components that make up that activity. For example, an actor pretending to drink a cup of coffee would need to recall and enact the motions of pulling back slightly from the steam, blowing on the top to cool the coffee, gently testing the rim of the cup while drinking a few drops, slowly swallowing, and then opening one's mouth to allow the air to cool it while exhaling.[124] In *Als Ob*, Strauss has toyed with a pun on the phrase "as-if" using it in some places to ironically portray Terezín or the Jews. In other places, the "as-if" concept is in place, where Strauss draws a border between

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[122] Ibid., 144.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Uta Hagen, *Respect for Acting* (New York: MacMillan, 1973), 112-13.

normal life and the "as-if" life led in the ghetto. Poetically, the phrase "as if" connects one stanza to the next. It is likely that Strauss had knowledge of the Stanislavskian technique and used this to his advantage to demonstrate the outcry for hope, even if it was found only in meager doses. Strauss and his ghetto companions were getting by day-to-day only by trusting this "as-if" philosophy of life. As customary to his style, Strauss waits until the very end of his piece to reveal his *nechemta*. The song speaks for itself:

I know a lovely little town
This town is really spiff
The name I can't quite place for now
I'll call the town 'as if'

This town is not for everyone
This town's a special place
You've got to be a member
Of a special 'as if' race

The townsfolk are quite normal there
As if in life, forsooth!
They greet all rumours from outside
As if they were the truth

The people in the crowded streets
They rush about their biz
And even if there's nought to do
They act as if there is

They've even got a Kaffeehaus!
With customers so toff-ee[125]
Who sit and swap the latest tosh[126]
By cups of 'as-if' coffee

You come across some shameless folk
Back home, nonentities
But here they strut about the streets
As if they're VIPs

At meal times what a queue for soup

[125] British expression meaning "upper-class."
[126] British expression meaning "foolish nonsense."

They scramble round the pot
As if the water had some meat
As if the soup was hot

At night they lie upon the ground
As if it was a bed
They dream of kisses, love-bites – ow!
They've bugs and fleas instead

They bear their burden with a smile
As if they knew no sorrow
And talk of future happiness
As if it were . . . tomorrow[127]

One of the most fascinating stories to resonate within Terezín centers around the cabaret star Kurt Gerron. Gerron was born in Berlin in 1897. He lived there for most of his life, enjoying the artistic freedom of Berlin's cabarets and soon made his way onto the big screen in many popular films. Gerron generally played offbeat roles, often portraying the more troublesome characters. While he rarely played the lead, he was so in demand that in the year 1927, alone, he played 27 roles, all to critical success. Early on, he was establishing his trademark voice, singing dramatically in a spoken manner. His song *"Die Dressur"* ("Breaking In") was one of the early songs that established his liberalism through music, being a sung parody of the Nazis. The song's lyrics were written by cabarettist Walter Mehring (1896-1981), one of the most politically outspoken artists of 1920's Berlin. The song was composed by Friedrich Hollaender (1896-1976), who would be side-by-side with Gerron for most of the 1930's. It was not just good song writing, however, that made such a statement. So much relied on the interpretation of the singer, and Gerron was incredibly gifted in this element. His manner was reviewed in one newspaper as, "striking, concentrated, threatening, hitting, at times resounding."[128]

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[127] Strauss translated by Roy Kift in Rovit and Goldfarb, 159-160.
[128] Quoted in Jelavich, 151.

While singing *"Die Dressur,"* Gerron was dressed as a "whip-wielding circus trainer who tried to tame 'the beast humanity.' [The song] portrayed a man-eat-man world of anti-Semites hungering after Jews, capitalists thirsting for their competitors, and politicians panting for putsches. In a world calling for violence and war, the tamer claimed to have brought all of these animals to heel."[129] Mehring's message was not altogether idealistic. In the character of Gerron, he did not envision a solution, for he believed that there was always someone somewhere cracking the whip with violence and power solely being facts of life. Freedom was even suspect.[130] Gerron continued to perform in this political vein, making again a statement later in Rudolf Nelson's (1878-1960) cabaret on the Kurfürstendamm. The cabaret was *Die Rote Faden* (The Red Thread) and the song was *"Die Großstadt Infanterie"* ("The Big City Infantry"). Nelson was now writing the music with Hollaender writing the lyrics. The song represents the anger of the Jews living repressed lives, wondering with sarcasm when things are going to change. Once again, this song is an example of the cabaret artists not taking the atmosphere surrounding them seriously, joking about pending murder and death—the only thing that will present them with the signal to rebel:

A thousand cars are speeding
A thousand horns are beeping
Get out of the way!

And we who only walk on foot
Up with that we have to put!
No one asks if we're okay
If they see us on the street,
They wave and snarl and shout
For we're a race of people that long ago died out

The only thing we're good for,

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[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.

Is for them to run us over
It's time to take up arms
Their fun will soon be over.

Please sir, may we cross the street, I pray?
Or before we have passed over,
Will we have passed away?
Please sir, thank you sir, may we survive today?
Or have we been condemned to auto-da-fé?

We've had it up to here with beggin and scraping!
And after death I promise you,
We'll all be awaiting.
We'll be staging a revolt like you've never seen before.[131]

Gerron, who had an undeniable, commanding stage presence, rose to the pinnacle of fame when he was cast as the original Tiger Brown in Kurt Weill and Brecht's *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*) in 1928. He became the first to sing "*Die Moritat von Mackie Messer*" ("Mack the Knife"), a song to which he would forever be linked. In 1930, he doubled his fame appearing in the movie *Die Blaue Engel* with Marlene Dietrich. Gerron was incredibly successful and had made himself a true household name. Gerron soon took to directing a myriad of films, and in this way established himself even deeper in the entertainment industry. Yet, as Gerron was climbing the ladder of success, Hitler was rising to power. It was clear that Gerron was not taking the Nazis rise to power seriously. In one instance, he joked while on his set, calling for his assistant asking, "Where's my little stormtrooper?"[132] There were already Nazi spies hiding on the set at this point, and not soon after, Gerron was sent away from his own production, replaced by an Aryan director, Erich von Neusser. Gerron moved to Paris, where he lived on the Champs d'Elysee, while his contemporaries Max Reinhardt, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, and others moved to Hollywood. Gerron was soon offered a job

[131] Translation used in *Prisoner of Paradise* and *Kurt Gerron's Karussell.*
[132] *Prisoner of Paradise*, dirs. Malcolm Clarke and Stuart Sender, 100 min, PBS, 2003, DVD.

in Holland in 1935, where things were still liberal and strong. He took this job, even though he was also being contacted at the time to be hired in Hollywood to make an American remake of *The Threepenny Opera*. He turned this down because he was not offered first-class transportation overseas.[133] His Dutch film, *Three Wishes*, failed and Gerron was soon without a job. The only job he could secure was a commercial with the Dutch airline KLM, who also soon dropped him. Gerron reconsidered moving to America, and wrote to Hollywood for help. But, by this time, he only received a letter of rejection.

Gerron decided to return to his roots and began performing in the Amsterdam cabaret scene. He also appeared on stage at the Schouwberg Theatre, now entirely a Jewish theater. The Schouwberg Theatre would later serve as a deportation center. When deportations began, Gerron was first sent to Westerbork and held there, while 100,000 others would pass through. Gerron only starred in one revue during his time in Westerbork. This may have been because Max Ehrlich was in charge of the cabarets and there was a static rivalry between the two.[134] His earlier circumstances at Westerbork may have been the impetus for him starting his own cabaret upon arrival in Terezín, where he was transported to on February 24, 1944. Gerron began by singing a lot of his older repertoire, often finding himself choosing to entertain the older prisoners who were often sick and, thus, "doomed" to be sent off to Auschwitz. He soon teamed up with one of the jazz ensembles, The Ghetto Swingers, who were now newly headed by pianist extraordinaire Martin Roman. Roman was doing all of the arrangement for the ensemble, and upon Gerron's request, agreed to do the arrangements for his new cabaret. This was

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[133] Ibid.
[134] *Kurt Gerron's Karussell*, dir. Ilona Ziok, 63 min, Seventh Art Releasing, 1999, Videocassette.

Karussell, which included the title song, as well as the song *"Die Ochsen,"* both with lyrics by another of the great writers of the ghetto, Manfred Greiffenhagen. The Dutch tenor Machiel Gobets, soprano Annie Frey, and others joined Gerron in its performance. Amongst the musicians of The Ghetto Swingers was a common feeling of being at rest when involved with their music. Trumpeter Eric Vogel comments:

> We were so concerned and so happy to play our beloved jazz that we had tranquilized ourselves into the dream world produced by the Germans for reasons of propaganda. We felt safe and were prepared to stay in the ghetto until the end of the war and even made plans to keep the band together after the war.[135]

Another member, Coco Schumann was originally a jazz guitarist, but joined The Ghetto Swingers as their drummer, because they already had one guitarist. He has similarly reflected, "We forgot we were in the camp when we played." Schumann continued in saying that both he and Gerron were naive, but allowed playing music to still be fun.[136] Amongst The Ghetto Swingers, only Roman, Schumann, and Vogel survived the war.

Gerron's biggest test came when he was asked by the Nazis to produce a film that would portray life in Terezín. The problem was that they wanted the film to portray as if all was normal and that the prisoners were being treated extra well and were happy. Gerron accepted this assignment, and a second period of *verschönerung* (beautification) took place. The first period of *verschönerung* had already occurred prior with the visitation of the International Red Cross on June 23, 1944. The Red Cross visitors only consisted of three delegates, all who were quite young and not quick to press for further investigation after being happily led to conclusion that all was well, after being toured about and treated to performances. This second period began in August, just as Gerron began his filming. He was informed that if he showed how life actually was he would be

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[135] Vogel, 17.
[136] *Kurt Gerron's Karussell.*

punished, and thus the film which was ultimately called *"Der Führer Schenkt den Juden eine Stadt"* ("The Führer Gives the Jews a Town") featured segments showing prisoners happily playing sports, swimming, children eating well, as well as clips of performances from the *kaffeehaus* with background music by The Ghetto Swingers, including arrangements of American standards such as *"Bei Mir Bistu Schein."*[137] In addition to physically cleaning up the ghetto to make it look better on film, the *verschönerung* also involved sending 7,500 prisoners on transport to Auschwitz. Some of the scenes of the film were not even filmed in the ghetto, but outside in the countryside for added scenic effect. As one would expect, this film and the forcing of prisoners to be its "actors" and pretend like life in Terezín was wonderful became incredibly upsetting. Gerron would beg for his fellow inmates to laugh, and demonstrated a fake belly laugh against their lack of response. He ultimately said, "I can direct a scene, but I cannot erase the horror from their eyes."[138] Meanwhile, while Gerron was trying to persuade his fellow prisoners to participate fully, he was in no way immune to the continued evil fervor of the Nazis. The non-Jewish cameraman who was brought in on a daily basis was not allowed to communicate directly with Gerron, but only through two SS officers. These officers also continually harassed Gerron. On one occasion, the cameraman asked them, "Please tell Mr. Gerron this . . ." to which they responded, "What "mister?" Gerron's a 'stinking Jew!'"[139] The filming concluded by September 17, 1944, and transports, which had been held off until the film's conclusion, began once again. In one month, 16,000 prisoners were then sent to Auschwitz. The propaganda film and Gerron's choice to be involved with it has remained quite a controversy to this day. There is a lot of mixed emotion

[137] Note this film no longer exists in its entirety. Only certain sections of it exist and without sound.
[138] *Prisoner of Paradise.*
[139] Ibid.

relating to it. Though, the fact stood that even in Terezín Gerron was incredibly devoted to his work in a vain sense of advancing his career, he believed that at the same time he was helping others to survive. It is known that Gerron found out through a prisoner who was working as a radio repairman about the Allied forces reaching Normandy. This became a consolation to him in making the film.[140] In the end, the film was fortunately never shown and, thus, had no effect or consequences. On the other hand, its director's personal story ends with extreme tragedy. Gerron remained in Terezín for a year more, but then was sent to Auschwitz on the eleventh transport on October 28, 1945. Upon hearing of his transport, Gerron begged Commander Rahm saying that he was the man who had made the film, and was promised to be set free at its completion.[141] He was murdered the very day he arrived. It is said that he was forced to sing "Mack the Knife," the song that was his claim to fame, as he marched to the gas chambers. The very next day, the gas chambers at Auschwitz were closed forever.

The title song *"Karussell"*[142] was composed for Gerron's cabaret by Martin Roman with lyrics by Manfred Greiffenhagen. It was most likely performed in late 1944. It is a unique representation of this genre and time period for it mixes a musical sentimentality near to that of Kurt Weill, which underscores a very serious, metaphorical text. The song almost plays a coy game, masking the real feeling behind its intention with its whimsical melody. While in my analysis I refer to a more literal translation of the lyrics, I introduce the song with a poetic translation of the song by Roy Kift. The setting of the song uses the first and third sections while omitting a second section of the song that I have included from Kift's translation of Greiffenhagen's original:

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[140] Ibid.
[141] *Kurt Gerron's Karussell.*
[142] See Appendix 4-a.

I: In time out of mind, so long long ago
When we were just kids beginning to grow
There was one thing we longed for like hell
If our folks wished us out from under their feet
Or simply wanted to give us a treat
Why! All us kids would begin to yell
Carousel, oh please, carousel, carousel.

We're riding on old wooden horses
Round and round in a clippety-clop
Longing to get fizzy and whizzy and dizzy
Before the roundabout grinds to a stop

O ain't this a funny old journey,
A journey with no destination—
Going round in circles, it really is weird
Our lives are so full of sensation

And the hurdy-gurdy music
We'll never ever forget
When the images fade before our eyes
This melody lingers yet

We're riding on old wooden horse
Round and round in a clippety-clop
Where we land at the end of our journey
We'll only find out when we stop.

II: For most of the time our life is so hollow
But what makes it worth living is passion not sorrow
That's what gives it some sense
Careers, the markets, blondes, brunettes
Movies, football, cigarettes
We've all got our favourite bents
Don't rob us of thrills and amusements
Illusions, oh please, please illusions.

We're riding on old wooden horses
Round and round in a clippety-clop
Longing to get fizzy and whizzy and dizzy
Before the roundabout grinds to a stop

O ain't this a funny old journey,
A journey with no destination—
Going round in circles, it really is weird
Our lives are so full of sensation

And the hurdy-gurdy music
We'll never ever forget
When the images fade before our eyes
This melody lingers yet

We're riding on old wooden horse
Round and round in a clippety-clop
Where we land at the end of our journey
We'll only find out when we stop.

III: Even when sunk in attrition a man's still got his ambition
And here there should be no objection.
How we relish to shout
With the down and out
And those in utter abjection
Hear the song of the ghosts, their pleas so intense
For difference, oh please, difference!

We're riding on old wooden horses
Round and round in a clippety-clop
Longing to get fizzy and whizzy and dizzy
Before the roundabout grinds to a stop

O ain't this a funny old journey,
A journey with no destination—
Going round in circles, it really is weird
Our lives are so full of sensation

And the hurdy-gurdy music
We'll never ever forget
When the images fade before our eyes
This melody lingers yet

We're riding on old wooden horse
Round and round in a clippety-clop
Where we land at the end of our journey
We'll only find out when we stop.[143]

Analysis:[144] Section A of "Karussell" (m. 1-15) acts as an introduction into the piece.

One could note that lengthy, slow-tempo introductions to jazz standards of this time were

[143] Kift, 166-68.

[144] In my harmonic analysis of this piece, I have noted all chords that fall outside of a standard tonal understanding of the key of this piece (E-flat major) in standard jazz notation. Often times, these chords

common musical elements. This has already been demonstrated in the structure of Johnny and Jones' "Westerbork Serenade," but was also found quite often in music such as that of Friedrich Hollaender in Berlin or George Gershwin in America. Measures 1-5 are an instrumental opening to the piece, separate from the opening sung melody that follows. They delineate a harmonic sequence beginning on an E13 chord, quite apparently a foreign chord with which to open a piece in E-flat major. Yet, what the sequence is creating is a roundabout way of reaching the tonic. The sequence travels from E to E-flat to D-flat and finally to E-flat (major seventh). Then, a short chromaticism in the left hand moves from B to B-flat presenting the dominant and an authentic cadence to lead in the singer. The B-flat ninth augmented chord adds a bit of a flourish as well. The harmonically ambitious introduction settles down with the introduction of the vocal line, sticking more to melodic ornamentation for the rest of section A. The text is reminiscent speaking, "In the years long ago, we were small children. We had an ideal." It is important to note that the progression that supports the word "ideal" is a deceptive cadence, leading one's ear away from the expected tonic resolution. As the next phrase enters, it is brought to a short, perhaps reminiscent pause in the fourth beat of both m. 10 and 11. The music harkens back to the days of old, growing up at home and the reward of being a child. The reward is what we learn about in m. 13-15: the children's outcries in desire to ride the carousel.

It is with the notion of the carousel, the main thematic and, moreover, metaphoric substance to this song that we transition into section B. Section B naturally increases the tempo with its march-like style and is consequently sung and played much more in-

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are used for melodic ornamentation or elaboration of the harmonic progression. I will point these out in each individual section of the piece.

tempo. As in the pride of any march, this section is declamatory in its voicing of the text. It speaks of the circling of the carousel of the lives that its listeners lead. This carousel, however, is "a journey that is strange, a trip without a destination." And, the carousel never ceases to end its cycle of spinning. The music is seemingly triumphant even where its description of such a livelihood becomes questionable. The right hand of the accompaniment beckons out bold trumpet-like calls seen first in m. 17, and then in successive, looping melodic structures in m. 19 and 21. The bass line throughout section B plays a strong role in painting the imagery of the text. At the start of the section, it not only establishes the pulse of the tempo, but through its multiple repetitions of scale degrees 4 and 1, imagines the "clip-clop" of the "wooden horses." By the end of the second phrase (m. 19), this "clip-clop" becomes even more emphasized as the left hand changes to jumps of a fifth. The 4-1 scheme returns in m. 20, as the phrase moves toward a final cadence. Yet, the V-I over the bar from m. 21 to 22 is quite short-lived. The harmony paces around avoiding the declaration of the text, "before the horse comes to rest." Measures 24-27 are harmonically stable, perhaps to allow free range for the text to deliver the main idea of the song--that the journey is strange and lacks any known destination. Measures 28-31 build intensity through the harmony, including a flat-III and later a D-sharp diminished chord as the piece readies itself to transition toward new ground in section C. The harmony in m. 28-31 represents a "strange" harmonic progression in itself because the harmonic grounding for the section is a bit unstable and uses chromatic chords to suspend of return to the tonic until the very beginning of section C. However, it does create a somewhat weak V-I cadence from m. 31 to 32. This is due to the V being a 4/2, probably the weakest inversion of a seventh chord.

Section C is made to stand out in this piece for it is quite a diversion from the march-like settings of B and B' (which follows this section). This section is a direct musical quote from the "*Sportpalast Valse,*" a waltz by composer Siegfried Translateur (1875-1944). This waltz was originally titled "*Wiener Praeterleben,*" but gained notoriety in the dancehall of the *Sportpalast* (Sport Palace) in Berlin prior to the war. What is strikingly important about this reference is that the Sportpalast became one of the locations for Nazi assemblies, and Hitler gave a prominent speech there in October, 1938. The melody used in section C is the second theme of the "*Sportpalast Valse.*" In its original form, it is played briskly and staccato. Here, it appears a bit more relaxed in form, emphasizing the sentimentality of the lyrics. The original lyrics set to the waltz are what connect this section to the rest of song. Knowing the history of the waltz, the text is a melancholic memory— "And the music from the barrel organ we won't forget ever in our lives. When also the picture of the past fades, the melody remains in your ear." Harmonically, measures 36-50 are fairly basic. It is the introduction to the waltz (m. 32-35) that sets up a dramatic harmonic texture leading into the waltz. Instead of a standard tonic-dominant relationship as expected, the composer has decorated the dominant, turning it into an augmented chord in m. 33 and then adding a sharp ninth in m. 35. This creates a little more instability while entering the waltz. Contrary to this, the melody used in the setting of the text does not feature such instability. Yet as the text states, "The melody remains in your ear." This creates a subtly subversive quality to this section, creating an image of a waltz that is a little bit off-kilter. The waltz itself, found in the accompaniment, is not fully supportive of its attending dancer, symbolized by the melody.

Section B' retains the same opening harmonic and melodic structure found in the first two phrases of section B. It commences with the return of the jumps of a fifth in the left hand. The text is also the same for these two phrases. In both the first and second endings, there is a move from a ii 4/2 with a flat ninth moving to the tonic in the accompaniment. The ii acts as if implying a subdominant to the dominant, which is only marked by the B-flat sung on the word "dann." The first ending quickly reestablishes the 1-5 pattern in the left hand before beginning the repeat to the start of the piece. I will discuss the repetition briefly after I discuss the Coda (second ending) of the piece. The Coda in itself builds a triumphant, hopeful, and "showtune-like" ending to this piece. This is not surprising at this point. Even though this piece is somewhat of a collage with the addition of section C, it retains the mood and style of its contemporaries (ie: Weill, Gershwin). While B' only retains the first two phrases of section B, the composer craftily brings back the dramatic flat-III chord found originally in m. 28. It again appears at the fermata in the Coda. The nature of the flat-III allows for it to be a chromatic shift into a tonic or a dominant (moving toward the D-natural from the D-flat). While its use in m. 28 was for a heightened effect of prolonging the dominant leading up into section C, here it lingers as a caesura on the subdominant before the final cadence of V-7 to I on the text "woman steht." Note, despite the final cadence, the piece is yet to have ended. As the accompaniment took precedence opening the piece and opening the waltz in section C, it takes precedence to bring the piece to conclusion. For the first time, a flat-VII-seventh is introduced as the final cadence. While stemming from the traditional Jewish modal systems, my premonition does not let me escape the fact that here is a popular Jewish composer writing a cadence (perhaps unknowingly) that mirrors the

standard cadential endings of any piece written in Ahavah Rabbah. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, while this is the first case of this chord to be used in the piece, it does not stem out of nowhere. The flat-III helps to set up the structure from which the flat-VII emerges. The ending cadence of the piece is thus on par with a subdominant, plagal cadence.

The repetition of the piece is musically note-for-note, minus the Coda section which I discussed. The only change in the piece is the addition of a second verse in section A. The change in the tone of the lyrics shifts from being reminiscent, as it was in the opening, to being more reflective on the current situation of their livelihood. The text reads, "Men have ambitions, when you live yourself in misery. You want it better and there's nobody with which to speak. It's after all a pleasure for all, still--poor men scream." The deceptive cadence found in the initial verse supporting the word "ideal" now supports a similar idea – "You want it better." Later, the crying out of children to ride the carousel is now replaced by a different idea, "You heard the ghost's song, 'A difference, oh please, please, a difference!'" This entire verse represents a sense of pining and yearning expected in response to the livelihood of its composer, lyricist, and audience. The "ghost's song" seems to refer to section C. Whether it refers to the original quoted melody itself, the newly set text, or one's personal impression after hearing such a long lost song is unclear. Like a ghost, there is a transparency in the ability to recall such a song of the past and bring it into new light. What is certain is that through the subsequent repetition of the rest of the piece following the second verse, the piece takes on a new defined meaning and emphasis.

I have waited until the end to look at the text of the piece as a whole. While being expressive in its sentimentality, the text is clearly organized to follow a specific rhyme scheme in each respective section. The words are also ordered to follow a natural meter of stressed and unstressed syllables, which enhance the text setting. The rhyme scheme in section A is in effect for measures 1-12. It follows a system of AAB, CCB, linking the first two members of each phrase in sequence with each other, both musically and textually. The closing member of each phrase rhymes with the other, linking both phrases together. The short dialogue-style conclusion of section A rhymes with itself, "schnell" with "karussell," and "gespensterlied" with "unterschied," respectively. The meter of the text is quite apparent between the stressed and unstressed vocalization of syllables set to dotted rhythms. For example, that in m. 6-7 (first verse), "Lang ent-schwun-dnen" and "klei-ne kin-der" – each with the stress on the dotted portion of the rhythm. Later, found on the fermati of m. 10 and 11, the syllables "woh" and "loh" not only rhyme, but also receive the stress of their respective words.

The rhyme scheme changes in section B to an ABAB, BCBC pattern. This pattern is a little more regimented and works well with the quickening tempo and march-like quality of the section. Note, that in the first phrase group ("Wir reiten..."), all of the words end with a similar consonant sound of "-en." This is using the device of consonance, although it is not applied to other phrase groups. As for the meter of this section, the dotted rhythms here play the same role as they did in section A. They enunciate the stress of each syllable, here punctuating the march style even greater. As the piece transitions into section C, it changes into a triple meter. Section C is able to differentiate itself not only by the fact that it is a musical quotation, but also by the fact

that it is rhythmically different from the rest of the piece. There is not a single dotted rhythm present![145] While the rhyme scheme is not as pronounced in its choice of text, it remains the same as that of section B. Thus, the transition back into the familiar in section B' is marked easily by the same rhyme scheme appearing for a third time. One change is made as the end is made significantly clear, by halving the rhyme scheme, and drawing it to a close sooner than before. This means that there is only one single stanza of an ABAB form in section B', including the Coda.

The strength of setting a German text to music is the natural quality of German vowels to align themselves (assonance) and the ease of grouping similar opening consonant sounds of words together (alliteration). This is a binding characteristic of this piece that helps make the smoother sections of the piece (A and C) relaxed and the edgier sections (B and B') remain connected, note-to-note. This is seen in section A with the alliterative use of the glottal consonant K (ie: kleine kinder, Karussell) and the fricative W (ie: wir, waren, wollt, wohnung). Section C relaxes its tone by using the technique of assonance, combining words such as "und" and "MU-sik," "VER-gessen" and "wir," and "noch" and "ohr." Sections B and B' convey a dueling between evasively similar consonant sounds. This demonstrates a contrast between the pure "f" sound of "auf" in m. 16 against the plosive consonant blend "pf" in the following measure. Another regularly found contrast is between the "w" and "v" sounds, even paired with each other as in m. 31, "wir viel."

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[145] Because this section is the most contrasting of the piece, it helps establish it as the main message of the song. It is also important to note that amidst the three different sections of the complete text of Greiffenhagen's *"Karussell,"* the text used for all musical sections except for Section A always remain the same. This retains the same conceptual transitions, on top of the musical setting, even despite the second section of the text not having been set to the music found here.

All in all, it is a combination of all of these musical and textual characteristics that make "Karussell" a composite work of music. This piece demonstrates a clear consciousness to bring all of these elements together to produce a specific imagery that becomes evident upon close analysis of the music. Comparatively, both Greiffenhagen's *"Karussell"* and Strauss's *"Invitation"* share similar endings, searching for a missing answer. *"Karussell"* notes that this answer will only be found once the carousel stops, yet it never does. *"Invitation"* ironically asks how one gets out of Terezín, an unlikely question to ask in a true sense of welcoming. Strauss's text is clearly not an invitation and Greiffenhagen is evidently not focusing on the fun and frolic of a carousel ride. Yet, there still is an unbridled hope that these questions have answers and somewhere they are to be found.

Next to *"Karussell,"* *"Die Ochsen"* ("The Oxen")[146] is a horse, or shall we say ox, of a different color. The song, also by Roman and Greiffenhagen, is marked different once one hears its opening. There is something a bit simpler about this piece and it has a lighter texture as a whole. Just as in *"Karussell,"* Roman has placed the melody in the very top of the right hand accompaniment. Roman is more concerned with filling the rest of the space with interesting jazz harmonies, than creating the musical imagery more present in *"Karussell."* Before proceeding more with discussion of the song's harmony, it is of immediate interest to discuss the concepts outlined in this song. The song's text is as follows:

I: You swaying figures approach once more
Not a day goes by when you can't be seen
Cautiously treading past every door
Dragging your cart my good old team!
The way you watch us on the street!

[146] See Appendix 4-b.

Our hate, our strife, our shuffling feet
And you're glad to be oxen, that I know
How you despise us people so
When people here are squabbling boxing
You stay contented, calm, detached
That's why I think you two oxen
Are the wisest beings in Theresienstadt.

III: A man must eat his stomach calls
But here it's hard to get enough
And when the hour of midday falls
The way to the kitchen's very tough
They can't resist the lure of food
Although it makes their manners rude
When waiting seems to last an age
They lose their temper, start to rage
We don't know what you're moaning for
Your meals delivered to your door
Day and night, we the oxen wait outside
Which of us has got it right?[147]

IV: You hear people talk differently here,
Not only in the idiom, but also in the meaning,
The Dutch, the Danes and the Czech,
The German language from Prague, from Vienna and from Berlin.
Shocking how they speak of each other,
How even here they are divided according to nationalities
And even here attack each other,
In a city that is called ghetto.
In this and especially in this case
There is no difference in people nor in cattle,
Since Jews and only Jews are we all
Like the oxen are all oxen.[148]

Whereas *"Karussell"* was concerned with a purely psychosomatic situation, *"Die Ochsen"* points its finger at actual descriptions of events within the ghetto. As was one issue outlined in Strauss's "Theresienstadt Questions," here there is a heavy focus on the problem of East versus West anti-Semitism within Terezín. As was seen before, internal anti-Semitism was also a problem in Westerbork, there pinning the Dutch against the

[147] Translation found in *Kurt Gerron's Karussell*. Note that these first two verses are the first and third verses of the song. The song's second verse was not set to music.
[148] Translation based off an unpublished manuscript by David Bloch.

German inmates. In Terezín, there was a problem between several nationalities, as spoken of in the last verse of the song. The main symbolic connection that ties this song together is the oxen. The oxen represent a neutral perspective on the battle that is being fought between the inmates. They are introduced in the first verse noted as being the wisest because they are able to remain "contented, calm" and "detached," states of being to which very few prisoners can attest. A second verse of Greiffenhagen's original text has not been set to music, but remains important, nonetheless:

> II: Everyone knows the rumors
> None of us are dumb
> We tell each other the stories
> So they spread around town.
> I heard something fascinating
> When I met you in the barracks yard,
> When I asked your opinion on this matter,
> You told me, you old philosopher:
> 'The bovine family has a sense for paradox . . .
> You people only half see and hear,
> Not even the biggest ox,
> Nor even the smallest calf would believe that'

This verse was perhaps not set because it is a bit more contemplative compared to the more descriptive third and fourth verses, but still talks about hearsay as a means for news traveling throughout the ghetto. It supports the idea presented in the first verse, about oxen being the smartest beings in Terezín. The third verse paints a realistic picture of what it means to live day-to-day in the ghetto with pains of hunger. Yet, the true message of the song is in the fourth verse. Building upon the facts presented a verse earlier, the song seems to chastise those who create unnecessary boundaries, for all Jews are Jews just as simple as all oxen are oxen. The song makes a strong, subversive statement against the Nazis, noting far and beyond that all people are the same, no matter what language they speak or in what dialect, in cases where the language was the same.

The irony of the song is in the use of the symbolic oxen--there is dual symbolism representing the oxen as an outside perspective, while also as the animalistic treatment of and behavior amongst the Jews. In the third verse, the song speaks in first person, "we the oxen wait outside." Just where that defined "outside" is located is a whole concept unto itself. Does it refer to physically being outside, being pushed outside by internal anti-Semitism, or the constant overarching anti-Semitic platform the Nazis have enacted? Very clearly, the song can depict all three.

Upon what is a much more tangible outline of ideas, Roman set this text with much lighter accompaniment. This allows the vocal line more freedom than found in *"Karussell."* However, Roman's accompaniment is still one full of rich and beautiful harmony. He creates a wide sound by using a major-seventh moving to an augmented tonic and subdominant each time the opening motive returns. This is seen in m. 2 and 6 and then again in m. 18. The cadence leading into this motive is always a function of V-I, even at the very beginning of the song, this musical pattern is established. Roman is able to elaborate the harmony through use of secondary dominants, used more regularly to prolong a ii or vi chord, as exemplified in m. 6-9. Roman definitely spends less time throwing in chords alien to the key signature, although these are found in the middle section of the piece beginning in m. 12 with an A-flat seventh, building the tension as the voice reaches its high point in m. 17. An interesting harmonic point occurs in m. 13, with an ambiguous use of a chord that is almost simultaneously outlining part of the dominant and part of the tonic with an added ninth. This gives great effect to the development of the section, adding a little bit of harmonic confusion until the dominant takes over in m. 16 and 17. The piece ends with an interesting cadence, the dominant-seventh of vi

moving to the tonic, and in typical jazz fashion, the final chord uses the higher octaves as decoration. But, as I have noted, the chord in the higher octave spells out an A-minor chord, showing that Roman was playing lightly with the tonality of the song's ending.

Amongst the cabaret songs in Terezín were a few contrafacts. Leo Strauss championed these by writing savvy new lyrics, once even on an old melody of his father's, retitling his father's song *"Die Musik kommt"* as *"Die Menage kommt,"* a song about all the prisoners waiting for their soup. Another prominent contrafact was *"Terezín Lied"* ("Terezín Song"),[149] also with text by Strauss. This was set upon a popular melody from the 1924 operetta *Gräfin Mariza* (*Countess Maritza*) by Jewish and Hungarian composer Emmerich (Imre) Kálmán (1882-1953). The opera gained international popularity, performed in translation in both London and New York. The melody was taken from the song *"Komm mit nach Varasdin"* ("Come with me to Varasdin") which is sung in a typical lighthearted operetta style, a later reflection on the tradition carried earlier by Johann Strauss II (1825-1899).[150] Kálmán studied alongside Bartók and Kodály in Budapest, and joined the ranks of Franz Lehar, as well as none other than Oscar Straus, as a leading composer of the "Silver Age" of Viennese operetta, after moving to Vienna in 1908. Oscar Straus had just completed his operetta *The Chocolate Soldier* within that year. While Leo Strauss was appropriating Kálmán's music, Kálmán had escaped Nazi persecution and moved to the United States and only returned to Europe after the war, where he later died in Paris. It is an amazing fact that the Nazis had

[149] See appendix 4-c.

[150] While it is not immediately clear to me how the contrafact was interpreted, I presume it was in similar style to the original. Being that there were many trained singers within the ghetto, it would be likely that they were the ones singing this repertoire and continuing in the traditional operetta style. With that said, this piece has been recorded more recently by folksinger Bente Kahan and perhaps other classically-untrained vocalists. One should be precautioned that while these recordings are trying to promote the importance of the music, I believe the interpretation may be inaccurate.

banned Kálmán's music after his emigration, yet through this contrafact, it was still in use in Terezín. The original song from the operetta is a love song sung by the lead male character to the Countess, inviting her to his home in the town of Varasdin.[151] The song is a romance between the two characters just as it romances the nature of the town, delivering it as a great place to be. In Strauss's setting of the song, he has even kept a few of the original words. There are two sets of rhyming word pairs that are kept in the very beginning of the song: "ich bitte nicht lachen" ("please do not laugh") and "die sachen" ("the things"). In *"Terezín Lied,"* this acts as a forewarned introduction to the topics to be discussed, asking the listener to take everything in seriousness. Toward the end of the opening prelude to the main melody, which is not introduced until "Ja wir in Terezín," again there is a rhyming pair, "mit zarten" ("with tender/sensitivity") and the word "warten" ("wait"). Having these words remain in the contrafact song shows that the songs simultaneously express emotion toward being in a single place—either Varasdin or Terezín. Additionally, both songs clearly fit into a category of "city songs," which were popular both in Viennese operetta, usually talking about Vienna (*Wien*) itself, or the counterpart Yiddish city songs like *"Belz," "Varshe"* and *"Vilne." "Terezín Lied"* opens with a description of the situation:

> I kindly ask you not to laugh so often about all the things that happen to me daily.
> The oven, the holes, the chairs, the roofs, it does not embarrass me anymore. I find it repulsive if someone suddenly starts talking up a storm,
> words are not preserved, and nobody can wait to speak, even if it is just nonsense.
> Yes, it does not work with people acting like that.[152]

At this point, both songs then enter their first refrain with the same concluding phrase, "sage nur" ("saying only"). But, what each song is "saying only" is quite different. The

[151] Kálmán used the German name of the town known as Varaždin, found in northern Hungary, today part of Croatia.
[152] Translation of *Terezín Lied* by Tobias Puehse.

operetta's message is then presented in its title lyric, "Komm mit nach Varasdin," where everything is great. The contrafact tries to see the bright side of being in Terezín and is a clear insider's perspective. Whereas so many other "city songs" naturally romanticize their hometown, "*Terezín Lied*" is really manipulating itself to do so, and recognizes that looking at the downside is not beneficial. No one is being invited, but at the same time, no one is complaining. As the song states, that would lead to total disaster. The refrain sings:

> Yes, we in Terezín, we take life quite easy,
> Because if it were different, it would be a disaster.
> There are beautiful women; it's a pleasure to view them.
> Therefore I really enjoy being in Terezín.
> I am free of any guilt and therefore have a lot of patience,
> Even when my heart is full of longing.
> Yes, we in Terezín, we take life quite easy and we love our little Terezín.

The second verse opens with the narrator delivering a will, so-to-speak. This will attests not only to give away his wardrobe and money to those who remain after him, but also to present them with the truth. Life has been bad in many ways, and "the dogs who leave no trail" are the Nazis who have given out little food to survive on. But, life has been simple, and there's even a glimpse of joy at the mention of pretty girls serving dumplings:

> If I am to die here, those after me will inherit my wardrobe and ghetto money.
> I rush through the ether, greet my fathers and I am already gone from this world.
> Tell my dearest what we have done here, how simple we have lived here on coffee, turnips, soup, and meat which could only be seen through the magnifying glass, and almost every day, also dumplings with crème served by a sweet girl, from dogs who leave no trail, I only say . . . [Refrain]

The song, as in the case of many Holocaust contrafacts, represents a major change in the context of the lyrics. While using familiar music, these artists were creating wholly new shapes to express an entirely new feeling and meaning.

Retrospectively, it is clear that all of the music at Terezín stemmed out of pre-existing trends and schools of musical style. It is clear this was the case with cabaret. If one piece could stand as a prime example of Weimar cabaret, it was Hollaender's "*Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt*" ("From Head to Toe, I am Prepared for Love").[153] The song was written for Marlene Dietrich to sing in the movie *Die Blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*), premiering in 1930. The song is light and the melody is lilting, while the text struts on its own:

I don't know what is glowing,
A *je ne sais pas quoi*,
But women worth the knowing,
Hold in their eyes, à moi.

Yet when you look within mine
Before I look away,
Before you chance to win mine,
What do they say?

Refrain:
I am prepared for love, my heart has told me so,
And love is all I know, I can't help it.
I've always cared for love, and that is how I live,
I've nothing else to give, I can't help it.
Men become moths as they flutter to my light,
They burn up so quickly because I burn so bright.
I am prepared for love, my heart had told me so,
And love is all I know, I can't help it.

They hold me in a fashion,
They long to call my bluff,
They give me all their passion,
They never give enough.

And when they try to land me,
They have to pay the price.
You have to understand me,
I find it so nice.

[153] See Appendix 4-d.

Refrain[154]

The song is supported by a rather basic harmonic structure, which pales in comparison to the complexity shown before in Roman's *"Karussell."* Hollaender sticks with basic progressions, using a minor-seventh chord to a diminished-seventh chord as decoration, as in m. 6. An augmented chord on the dominant also accents the accompaniment as in m. 10, as well as supporting a chromatic descending melody in m. 12. Hollaender's use of secondary dominants is scarce, first appearing as he marks the end of the A section prelude in m. 19-20. The song is a prime example of the use of a long prelude section drawing out the song before reaching the refrain halfway through (m. 21). The pinnacle of the song is an embedded part of the refrain, where Hollaender makes the before unprecedented move of holding the song upon the secondary dominant for two whole measures. To top this off, the secondary dominant is on vi. He really lets loose against the earlier basic harmonic structure preceding and following this "bridge." Hollaender's musical risks in this piece are very subtle, which is what characterizes the mystery underlying the whole of this song. Is the singer just singing a pretty love song or is this a real cabaret-ish scandal? Viewers of the movie already know that a married professor becomes the existing gambit within this song; he becomes the chanteuse's (Marlene Dietrich's character's) love affair. In his autobiography, Hollaender remarked upon an incident while previewing the song for the film's director, Josef von Sternberg. He tells that as he sung the end of the refrain for the director, he admitted his own writer's block and in an attempt to immediately finish the song, he sang "und sonst garnichts" ("and nothing more"). The resulting syntax could not be any more appropriate. The English

[154] Translated by The New Budapest Orpheum Society on *Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano: Jewish Cabaret, Popular, and Political Songs 1900-1945*, Cedille CDR 90000-065, 2002, CD.

translation provided in this study is a poetic translation which desires to keep the rhyme scheme somewhat in form, and thus sings "I can't help it," within a similar range of emotion. However, "und sonst garnichts" has a biting and racy tone all unto itself, which is not meant to be mistaken for or intoned with any innocence, whatsoever. To add to this dimension, in the performative aspect of the song, Marlene Dietrich chooses to speak the text in the second repetition of the refrain. This is a typical cabaret performing style that in light of Brecht's desire to strip down to the simplest of elements, allows the performer to break out of a song's musical constraints. The singer now owns his or her own rhythm, meter, and pitch through the veil of expression. In all practicality, the performer has broken through the wall of the song. As he or she finishes the spoken section and returns to singing, the singer now is naturally responsible for bringing something new to the song. At the same time, the singer appears unable to evade the trap of musical expression, and as an immediate paradox, speaking seems only one-dimensional.

1930 was clearly a busy year for Friedrich Hollaender, as he also was busy writing lyrics for the Rudolf Nelson *Der Rote Faden* revue. As seen earlier, this revue included *"Die Großstadt Infanterie."* It also included a character piece, *"Das Nachtgespenst"* ("The Night Ghost").[155] The piece was another for which Kurt Gerron became famous, and he continued to perform it as one of his favorite repertoire pieces while in Terezín. Hollaender's text is evocative and incredibly humorous. The style of the song is fashioned through the quickly paced rhyme scheme of the German. For example, "Legt die Hausfrau nachts die Kette vor, im Korridor, steh' ich davor." Without even a need for a translation of the text, it is apparent that the rhyming patterns

[155] See Appendix 4-e. *Das Nachtgespenst* is "boogeyman" when translated into American slang.

are trying to create a mood. They break away from the standard double pattern rhyme, and create a reverbing echo. This pattern becomes less prominent as the piece continues through its three stanzas, each broken by the upbeat refrain. Each stanza gets closer to solving the mystery. The refrain acts as the needed answer to each of the puzzling verses:

I: At night when housewives chain the door
I'm standing in the corridor
With my file it takes awhile
Before the chain lies on the floor

Beneath my feet's an awful mess
While her daughter gets undressed
I slip inside her door
For it's her I'm sorry for.

Refrain:
I am the boogeyman (night ghost)
Your friendly boogeyman
I'll keep whispering in your ear
'Til you wake and call me 'dear.'

Please don't let me trouble you
At first I shall uncover you
And after that I'll cover you
And after that, re-cover you

II: The press wrote that I am a pain,
a scandal, and far from normal.
It saddened me so, and I returned home to cry.
For by day, I am a councilman,
and only at night, do we have the mess!

Refrain

III: When I climb in your room at night
It's not your jewels I'm after
What I'm after's fun and laughter
Tickling your ivory, I'm no burglar, no—not me
I don't want no precious stone
All I need's my fare back home.

But howling's useless, what a pain
At nights I must get out again
Up and down the stairs I flee
What in hell is driving me?
Today it's clear that all my life
I've been running from my wife

She is the boogeyman, my lousy boogeyman
I see her near, I see her far
And now I know what nightmares are

God, you'll never guess the shock
The night she opened up her frock
She'd scarcely dropped her dress
And then I told her to get dressed again!

Out of bed was my salvation
Looking round for consolation
If I stay there I'll go blind
Was the first thought in my mind

So if you've any pity left
This boogeyman is so bereft
Don't bolt your door with lock and key, no
Open up to me![156]

In its final refrain, the song gives away its secret. The boogeyman is personified as a politician running from his wife, perhaps in just as much adulterous scandal as hinted in Marlene Dietrich's *Blue Angel* solo. This song relies heavily on a performative aspect to deliver its "product." While Nelson's arrangement is more harmonically detailed than Hollaender's *"Ich bin . . .,"* the accompaniment remains secondary to the vocal melody consistently. The accompaniment does, indeed, hand off many tools to the singer. Each of the stanzas remain in C-minor, with the music taking a leap into C-major for the refrain. This gives the refrain an extra bounce, as the singer delivers his pronouncement: He is the *nachtgespenst*. And, he is not just any *nachtgespenst*, but a friendly one who means no harm. The jazzy elaboration in the piano as seen in m. 11, returns in m. 36 and

[156] Translation of Verses I and III from *Kurt Gerron's Karussell*; Verse Two by Tobias Puehse.

45, but with an interval of a major second as compared to the sinuousness of the initial minor second. There is a brief section of modulation to the relative major of the original key in measures 46-50. This acts as a brief circuit away from the repetitive refrain to introduce it once again, semi-refreshed, in m. 54.

The song "*Das Nachtgespenst*" stands out in comparison against much of the Terezín cabaret repertoire. In observation, I have found very few character pieces such as this one present within the Terezín cabaret repertoire. This must have made the song stand out even further in its performances by Gerron in the ghetto. It has been said that Gerron himself was becoming like the friendly *nachtgespenst* of the song, inwardly fearful of his surroundings while displaying an outwardly, agreeable disposition. The cabaret repertoire in the ghetto often used metaphor as a means for symbolism, but it seems as if all other artists involved with the Terezín cabaret output shied away from the idea of putting on an act in order to fully escape being oneself in the presentation of these entertainments. This was the same situation present at Westerbork. Performances both there and in Terezín provided a sense of escape in their presence, yet at all times, the action on stage mimicked some quality of reality. In Terezín, this is apparent in everything from *Brundibár* and *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* to the visceral honesty of the choir singing Verdi's Requiem. And, as was always the case with cabaret, the kernel of truth invested in its tradition was a shared connection between the artists and their audience and vice-versa. Baritone Karel Berman, a prominent singer in Terezín who survived the war, has summarized the essence of Terezín:

> If the historians one day succeed in writing the cultural history of the ghetto of Terezín, mankind will be amazed. Grown-ups and children, in constant expectation of death, lived a full, noble life, between outcries of pain and

> anxiety . . . those more dead than alive; in hunger and misery, among the hundreds of corpses of those who died daily, among hearses taking the corpses out of town and bringing back bread, under constant great physical exertion, they lived a life that was a miracle . . .[157]

In 1941, journalist Curt Daniel looked toward the present:

> When at some future but unknowable date not too far distant, the ghastly system of Hitler and his several hundred thousand hangmen has been destroyed by the German people, the great art of the concentration camps will come out into full daylight and be recorded as one of man's great achievements in adversity.[158]

Today, the repertoire composed and performed in Terezín has become a canon of its own. This repertoire is not only incredibly varied in style, but proves to be some of the finest and most challenging work in each respective genre. More of the music of Terezín survived perhaps than in any other ghetto, because survivors sought to memorialize the efforts of the lives they led. Each of these pieces is a time capsule in itself, capturing the emotion of the time and expressing it only in a manner of sentiment that music can furnish. In a sense, Terezín really was a unique experiment in artistic creation never seen before and likely never to be seen again. In such a small town, some of the finest artists of their time found themselves with time only to devote to creating. Already well-versed in their modes of creativity, these foremost individuals worked both independently and jointly and created an artistry that simultaneously provided for its audience an entertaining diversion while demonstrating a timely response to the deprecating situation at hand.

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[157] Karel Berman quoted in Aaron Kramer, "Creation in a Death Camp" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 189.
[158] Curt Daniel, "The Freest Theater in the Reich" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 155; Originally published in *Theatre Arts Monthly* 25 (November, 1941): 801-7. Little is known at present about the details surrounding this author or his article, which published Daniel's first-person observances during the war.

CHAPTER FIVE

CABARET IN LODZ

If one searches for evidence of cabaret music in Lodz, one may initially turn up empty-handed. There was no music in Lodz that specifically identified itself as cabaret. Yet, in a way, the music that was sung widely in the streets by talented street-singers was a cabaret idiom of its own making. These street singers were modern commentators on events and life in the ghetto, and their attentiveness and flexibility toward the changing dynamics of the socio-political atmosphere of the ghetto is immediately recognized in their songs. While the cabaret culture of Terezín was incredibly well constructed, its audience was limited to those who had the opportunity to see a performance. Tickets were hard to come by, and those who procured one could not always be very selective in what type of performance they would see. The street singers of Lodz had an audience of the entire ghetto at their command, and made a remarkable impact on the ghetto's life and history. The cabaret of culture of Lodz was incredibly public, so much so, that almost every survivor of the ghetto recollects the songs that were sung in the streets. They affected those who engaged the singers with their interest just as well as those who overheard them as passersby. The fact that these singers were allowed to sing seemed to be a triumph, for they were incredibly forthright in their opinions on ghetto life. The Nazis ultimately allowed the singers the capacity to sing practically whatever they wanted, with the exception of anything directly against the Nazis themselves, for they knew that the singers would be murdered sooner or later. Yet, no matter the excuses the Nazis ployed, the impact of these singers was immense. They provided a public sense of hope that once again there would be free speech and that the prisoners would return to

their normal lives. While the singers skirted around the edges of never directly pointing a finger at the Nazis, the commentary on life in the ghetto was infused with scorn and remorse; the unnamed villain always clearly present in silence. While the music of Terezín and Westerbork treated oppressed life often lightly and through metaphor, the songs of Lodz were forcefully clear in their emotional appeal. What is truly even further remarkable was that the Yiddish language now had been placed on a platform, for all to see and hear. Up until this point, Yiddish had fought considerably for its own recognition as a language unto its own and not just as a second-class cousin of German. If the Nazis had known that they were actually handing the ghetto inhabitants a weapon of their own, they would never have continued to allow the street singing to continue in Lodz. However, with the lack of any hindsight, the Nazis could never had known that the Jewish people may have been physically weakened, but their spirit of rebellion would carry on forever.

Music of the Eastern European ghettos, mainly being those in Poland, is deeply connected to the life of the Yiddish language. Without Yiddish, the music would have never gained its character. The life of Yiddish is intertwined with the battles the Jewish people have fought in their struggling livelihood. The Yiddish language was being formed as early as 900 to 1000 C.E. as a dialect of High Middle German. As its early life would have coincided with the Crusades, it had ways to go in the many battles to be fought by the Ashkenazic communities of Eastern Europe. But, Yiddish continued to thrive all the way into the twentieth century. In 1888, Yiddish was still being challenged. The Chief Rabbi of Bulgaria, Dr. Moritz Gruenwald, published a polemic declaring the

purity of the Yiddish language, next to its "father" language of German. Gruenwald, frustrated at the "German snobbery" of his days, wrote:

> Gently, Herr von X, Frau von Y, or perhaps Mademoiselle von Z. This very miserable, detestable, and heaven knows how else dubbed language [Yiddish] is entitled to its existence, is perhaps more entitled to live than *your* German language, which is so interlarded and distorted with so many French and other foreign words that, happily, you yourself don't understand.[159]

As the Nazis fought their own battle with the Jewish people, Yiddish became a fearsome weakness:

> Yiddish speakers fared especially poorly because their language was, to the Nazi ear, a debased, corrupted version of the language of the Fatherland. If they tried to speak German, their Yiddish accents were derided, and they were often punished for their efforts. Even though Nazis ordered them to speak it, they found nothing more insulting than a Jew speaking German. Speaking Yiddish was worse. Because almost no one but Jews spoke the language, Yiddish became an easy marker for enemies looking to root them out . . . [anyone] singing Yiddish songs was an obvious candidate for death.[160]

However, Yiddish was allowed within the ghetto, and, thus, the life of Yiddish song continued with a new frame-of-mind exposed within the content of each song.

The Lodz ghetto was one of the two largest ghettos in population during the Holocaust, the other being in Warsaw. The ghetto, which in 1939 was 1.7 square miles, was reduced to less than 1.5 square miles in February of 1941. This sounds like a minor reduction, but with a population within the ghetto walls of 230 to 250 thousand inhabitants, it made quite a stir. The Lodz and Warsaw ghettos existed of living spaces that were previously regularly inhabited parts of their respective cities. However, the Nazis removed all telephones and radios from homes, and all mail was censored, if it

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[159] Gruenwald, "On the Jewish-German Jargon Vulgarly Called a Mishmash Language" quoted in Silverman, 296.
[160] Miriam Weinstein, *Yiddish: A Nation of Words* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), 174-5.

arrived at all.[161] Because of the ghetto being entirely closed off to outside society, it is pertinent to understand that the ghetto inhabitants had hardly any information early on about where deportations of its prisoners were headed. Ghetto life was reduced to being of and only itself, and the ghetto's music is reflective of this internal imprisonment. The music of Terezín was in quite the same situation, yet the conditions and environment in Lodz were a magnitude of times worse than in Terezín.

While of a different style, the music of Lodz served a similar purpose to that of Terezín in its way of consciously dealing with the situation at hand, and for that, they lived perhaps slightly better lives. While musical entertainment was something purveyed in Terezín, music in Lodz probably served more as a background element to the daily rhythm of life. The art of street singing was not something new to Lodz—it began in the *Haskalah* in the second half of the nineteenth century with the *brodersingers* (singers from Brody) who traveled and wandered from town to town. However in the locked ghetto, street singers could only travel from street corner to street corner. Street singing was not the only form of musical expression present in the ghetto. There were performances put on by theater troupes and concerts under the direction of prominent musician and conductor David (Dovid) Beyglman (1887-1944). However, these were nowhere as regularly organized as the performances that occurred in Terezín. Because a large quorum was gathered at these performance, they also served as times when the chairman of the ghetto, Chaim Rumkowski, spoke on matters of the ghetto at the end of the performance. Because of the political presence of Rumkowski at nearly every event,

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[161] Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 12.

the audience could never use the concerts to completely mentally escape from their situation.[162]

Street singers in Lodz possessed a valuable commodity that was necessary during the Weimar cabaret scene. This is that they were naturally mobile performers, and their repertoire was constantly changing to keep up with the times of the ghetto. Yet, the unique quality of their audience was that they were "hungry not only for bread and potatoes, but also for freedom of expression."[163] They eagerly ate up what the performers served them. Ethnomusicologist Gila Flam thoroughly researched the street singing culture of Lodz through interviews with survivors who told their tales and sang songs stored in their memory. Within each and every one of these interviews, one singer was mentioned again and again. His name was Yankele Hershkowitz, and he was the famed singer who would stand on either a stool, a box, or a milk crate and raise his hand in revolt while he was singing. He then would move to another street corner and begin anew.[164] Hershkowitz became known as *Kleine Yidele* (the little Jew).[165] The Yiddish diary of Lodz prisoner Shlomo Frank reports a short anecdote about one of Frank's experience with Yankele. When Yankele had asked Frank for assistance with writing his songs, Frank referred him to one of the fine poets of the ghetto. Yankele responded, "They get angry at me, they think that I am not a poet but a crazy man. But in these days in the ghetto do you have to be a talented poet? You need but some rhymes and to sing."[166] And, so singing is what he did, and despite competition from other street singers of his trade, Yankele won out. He made decent money standing on the corner,

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[162] Ibid., 19.
[163] Ibid., 25.
[164] Ibid., 24.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Hershkowitz quoted in Flam, 24.

and soon he was the only singer remaining.[167] Prior to the war, Hershkowitz was a tailor in the town of Balut. It is believed that he survived the war, remained in Poland, and committed suicide in the 1970's.[168] Hershkowitz's talents were reported in the ghetto's Hebrew literary newspaper, *Min Hametsar*, in a column entitled, "The poets of the ghetto—the short black Jew[169]":

> . . . the short black Jew who stands on a box surrounded by hundreds of listeners is like an endless gusher. Every day he pours forth a new song. He sings his songs and they immediately become the subject of the day or the song of the day. What doesn't he sing about? He sings of the Nine Marks [the amount given to the unemployed to obtain their food] and of the police. And the police themselves stand and listen to this critique; they do not comment but enjoy the fact that they have become the subject of the nation's spirit and gain immortality through the everlasting songs. Once upon a time, a policeman wanted to arrest the poet because he insulted the Eldest [Rumkowski]. The crowd surrounded the poet and would not let the policeman get close enough to arrest him. The poet was set free. After every song he cries out: "a new song for ten Pfennig and no more." The crowd searches throughout their pockets, and one by one they collect the sum of ten Pfennig. Then, our poet continues, and so on.[170]

As was commonplace amongst many ghettos, attending audiences cherished and respected their performers to the extent that they would not let anything interrupt them. The semi-troublesome song about the ghetto's chairman became Yankele's biggest hit. It was the most remembered by all of the subjects interviewed by Flam.

The song *"Rumkovski khayim"* ("Rumkowski Chaim") was so popular that most of the survivors that Flam interviewed remembered or knew of the song, even if they did not know of Yankele or never saw him in the ghetto.[171] Rumkowski, the chairman of the Council of Elders of the Lodz ghetto, was a controversial figure. Like Kurt Gerron, he was given a hard task, and chose to accept it, for the only other option would have been

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[167] Flam, 24.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Referenced in Yiddish as *dos shvartse yidele.*
[170] *Min Hametsar*, July 8, 1941, quoted in Flam, 25.
[171] Flam, 34.

death. However, Rumkowski's task was tenfold that of Gerron's. He single-handedly decided which prisoners would be sent on the next transports, knowing that he was sending them off to their deaths. Many of the prisoners of Lodz questioned Rumkowski's hold of power over critical matters in the ghetto. Like Hershkowitz, they decidedly put the blame on Rumkowski for the sealing of the ghetto, which did not happen until eight months after the September, 1939 establishment of the ghetto, in May of 1940. The inhabitants often wondered how Rumkowski had been placed in this position at all, and for this they criticized and challenged him. For these reasons, Hershkowitz's song found great favor in the eyes of his ghetto neighbors, and for the Nazis, there was nothing he was doing against their wishes. He was almost playing into their own hands by making fun of one of his fellow Jews who, no doubt, was the most powerful Jew in the ghetto. All of Yankele's songs were in a style that while not spoken, were incredibly attached to the spoken qualities of the lyrics. These songs delivered direct messages through the speech-like quality of their melodies. Hershkowitz was not trying to create beautiful music. He was trying to carry forth powerful and often political sentiment, and he clearly succeeded. For him, a beautiful melody would have glossed over the truth he was bringing to the street corner. It was surely his performing environment that reinforced this realistic approach in his song and stature.

Amongst the whole canon of songs in the Lodz ghetto, there was a multitude of contrafacts. In Terezín, these songs played a minor role as compared to their prominence in the Eastern European ghettos. This was because of the incredible abundance of Yiddish folk songs, which in their simplicity were easily applied to new texts. Contrafacts came into existence throughout the Polish ghettos on some of the most

popular Yiddish melodies ever sung, such as *"Oyfn Pripitchik"* ("On the Hearth") retitled *"Fun der Arbet"* ("Slave Labor"), as well as upon melodies of the American Yiddish theater's like Abe Ellstein's *"Mazl,"* made famous by Molly Picon. At the same time, quasi-textual contrafacts existed with new melodies being written with themes in their texts that were antithetically parallel to the original. A prime example of this is in the Beyglman *"Nit keyn rozhinkes, nit keyn mandlen"* ("No more Raisins and Almonds"). The song does not quote any of the original popular tune of *"Rozhinkes mit Mandlen."*[172] Instead of picturing a mother singing to her baby of its future, the baby's father is gone and the mother pleads for God's comfort with all that she has lost. While the majority of contrafacts quoted the entire melody of a song, a technique came into use where a section of a melody would be taken to create a new song, creating a semi-contrafact. In these cases, the old melodies are rarely recognizable, for they have been elongated to fit extra text.[173] Flam explains the purpose of this technique:

> Contrafact seems to have been used because the supply of melodies could not meet the demand of new lyrics, and thus old melodies were harnessed for this purpose. It also means that, in this genre, the main innovations lie in the texts and not in the music.[174]

This technique would have accordingly helped Hershkowitz to continually update his repertoire in a minimal amount of time. He used this in *"Rumkovski Khayim,"*[175] which is organized in a verse-refrain structure not unlike the preludes of German cabaret. The song takes its time in arriving at the refrain for the first time. However, the reasoning for

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[172] This song is one of the most famous of all Yiddish folksongs. It was written in 1880 by the founder of Yiddish theater, Abraham Goldfaden (1840-1908) for his operetta *Shulamis*. The song is a lullabye sung by a mother to her baby telling the boy that his father has gone to trade in the market and will bring back raisins and almonds. She expresses her hope that the boy will grow up like his father and trade as well. As noted above, the Holocaust contrafact becomes the antithesis in meaning of the original.
[173] Flam, 103.
[174] Ibid.
[175] See Appendix 5-a.

this is slightly different. In German cabaret, this was more of an aesthetic choice. In the street songs, it was employed to deliver persuasive messages in the verses, backed by a recurring theme in the refrain. Clearly, the theme of "*Rumkovski Khayim*" is the very individual upon which it focuses. The song does not mask its opinion:

Jews are seen to be blessed with life,
Life until death,
Life from the house of life,
Rumkowski Chaim and his great miracle.
He makes miracles, oy,
So every day,
For heaven's sake, oy, oy, oy,
Everyone asks:
A second question, oy?
Chaim says: It's good this way!

Refrain:
Because [he is] our Chaim
He gives us bran,
He gives us barley,
He gives us manna.
Once upon a time Jews of the desert ate mann;
Now each woman eats her husband.
Rumkowski Chaim thought it through,
Worked hard day and night,
Made a ghetto with a diet (store),
And claims *gevald*[176] that he is right!

Chaim Weizmann said:
He wants the Jews in Palestine.
He told them to plow, sow,
He did them in there deep;
But, our Chaim,
Rumkowski Chaim,
Everyday he gives us leftovers:
One a piece of bread,
The other a piece of horse,
And we are also done in deep.

Refrain . . .

The third Chaim of the house of life,

[176] By force.

Made a good deal with the angel of death:
He should provide him more and more corpses;
He should provide them day and night.
So, the angel of death
Got to work right away.
He makes a mess out of every hero:
He does it quickly,
He does it well.
He makes the whole ghetto weak and tired.

Refrain . . .

On a summer day,
It was a very hot day,
Rumkowski walked in the street,
And looked like a Royal Highness.
He wore a light-colored suit, oy,
And dark glasses,
Surrounded by the police.
I tell you
Our royal Highness has gray hair;
May he live to be a hundred!

Refrain . . .

Rumkowski Chaim, the Eldest of the Jews,
Is employed by the Gestapo.
We Jews are his brothers,
And he supplies our food.
He makes miracles, oy,
So every day,
For heaven's sake, oy, oy, oy!
Everyone asks:
A second question, oy?
Chaim says: It's good this way![177]

The entire song plays with the word *"chayim,"* representing not only Rumkowski's first name, but toying with its various meanings as "life," as well as *beys hachayim*, "a cemetary." The first verse restates the Biblical verse associated with funerals, "For dust we thou art, and unto dust shall thou return," when it says that Jews are blessed with life, until their deaths. Flam notes that an analogy is drawn between Rumkowski and Moses

[177] Quoted in Flam, 40-2.

in the first verse's mentioning of miracles. Moses gave the people manna, and this is referenced in the refrain. Preceding this, a parallelism is created, showing that Rumkowski is giving the people bran and barley.[178] Just like the Israelites in the desert, the people in Lodz are complaining that they are hungry and there is not enough food. Unfortunately, Rumkowski is not Moses and can produce no more food for the people. The second verse introduces Zionism. It contrasts the fact that yet another Chaim, Chaim Weizmann was trying to do good for the pioneers of the land by getting them to dig deep and bring forth produce. The negative parallel to this is that Chaim Rumkowski is driving those in Lodz deep into the earth, toward their graves. The third verse transitions from this by creating an allegory in which a gravedigger named Chaim (who works in the "House of Life," the cemetery) makes a deal with the angel of death to provide corpses non-stop, day and night. This depicts an image of the ghetto that was too authentic, attempting to make some sense of the chaos. Verse four returns to Rumkowski, sarcastically praising him. He is referred to as a "Royal Highness" and is given the blessing of "living to a hundred." Flam notes that this is a curse-in-disguise, for by tradition of Moses living to 120, one always wishes this number as a blessing. She also sees this and the fifth verse as verses that could have been improvised by Hershkowitz if he saw Rumkowski in the street, in order to avoid being arrested or sent on a transport. The fifth verse brings the song full-circle, repeating elements of the first verse, but noting that Rumkowski is working hand-in-hand with the Gestapo, against his Jewish brothers. This song is clearly an angry, negative portrayal of a man who was given little choice in his leadership. While Hershkowitz likely did not mean to do so, the statement "Chaim

[178] Flam, 44.

says: It's good this way" expresses the reality of the situation—Rumkowski was acting in a manner that he believed was the best possible outcome of a no-win situation.

Musically, *"Rumkovski khayim"* is set in a form of A, A', B, B' for both its verses and refrain. Flam notes that this is a common form for both Jewish folk music and European and Jewish popular music, based off of the studies of Beregovski and Idelsohn.[179] The text is poetic, but is not bound by its rhyme scheme. It allows its message to be carried forth without sacrificing authenticity. In singing the song, its triple meter causes asymmetric accents.[180] I believe this is what gives the song its corporal and natural feel. Flam notes that the song uses "ironic cantorial ornamentation" combined with its "sweet" melody.[181] I feel that rather than seeing this piece as cantorial, it can be more accurately described as a song that places the music secondary to the text. The text dictates the rhythms and phrasing of the melody. This is the remarkable case even under the circumstances that part of the music may have come first, if Hershkowitz was enacting a contrafactual technique of composition.

Each of Yankele Hershkowitz's other songs is a world unto its own, although similarities to *"Rumkovski khayim"* abound greatly. His song *"Geto, getunya"* ("Ghetto, Oh Little Ghetto")[182] begins as a love song to the ghetto. Flam explains that the song later uses a metaphor using weak women to symbolize most of the ghetto inhabitants while strong men symbolize those who are keeping the weak women, hence the ghetto alive, through their able-bodied chores. And, ironically, it is the poor, intelligent man

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[179] Ibid., 47.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] See Appendix 5-b.

who "walks around like the dead."[183] The song combines a beautifully haunting melody in its refrain with an emotionally drawn-out recitative, which is closer to a cantorial recitative than what is found in *"Rumkovski khayim."* Unlike the latter, *"Geto, getunya"* begins with its refrain then introduces its two verses interspersed afterwards. The song also equips itself with an international intertextuality, by using Polish terms in its verses,[184] and two lines of Turkish which open the refrain's description of the ghetto.[185] Perhaps Hershkowitz's most evocative song on life in Lodz is *"S'iz kaydankes kaytn"* ("It's shackles and chains").[186] The song addresses the problem of theft throughout the ghetto. What are the inhabitants stealing? Food. Like the aforementioned song, the song opens with its refrain:

> It's shackles and chains,
> It's good times again,
> No one feels shame,
> Everyone only wants to grab;
> Just so his stomach will be full.[187]

The song argues that the situation is twofold. Everyone is stealing and this is a problem, but at the same time, this is the only solution for hunger. It describes the food as "corpses" of yellow sacks of flour as well as watery soup. At the end of the song, Chaim Rumkowski appears, in a likeness most likely to the speeches he made at the public concerts, he pronounces punishment for thievery:

> Be on guard, all you thieves,
> I'll arrest you!
> I want the entire ghetto
> Under our firm, strong hand.
> By decree of the Cooperative:

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[183] Ibid., 60.
[184] For example, the song uses the term *kulatsie*, a Yiddish transliteration of *kolacja*, Polish for "dinner."
[185] The opening of the refrain is: *Geto, getunya, getokhna, kokhana, Tish taka malutka e taka shubrana.*
[186] See Appendix 5-c.
[187] Quoted in Flam, 63.

All of you are guilty!
There are corpses, there is mourning,
Who is full today?[188]

It's shackles and chains for Rumkowski and all of the residents of Lodz, where there is no solution to look back toward or for which to search. Hershkowitz's song captures the heart's cry of the Jews in their native Ahavah Rabbah mode. The Klezmer band Brave Old World has interpreted this song in a fashion which seems to be incredibly near to the emotion of the song by alternating sections of slow, weary phrases contrasted against rapid, frenzied singing of the lyrics immediately following.[189] This effect creates the image of life in the ghetto, each inhabitant torn asunder not knowing what to do, with no solution at-hand—living life only through repeated predicament and dilemma.

Like Terezín, Lodz had issues of internal anti-Semitism between those from the East and West. These did not begin until after the ghetto's start, when in 1941 Jews from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Luxembourg were brought in.[190] Eastern European Jews gave these Westerners the term *yeke*. A short song, "*Es geyt a yeke*" ("It's a Yeke walks around") by Hershkowitz was penned in jest on the topic:

It's a *yeke* walks around, oy,
With his briefcase,
Looks for butter, margarine.
No way, nowhere,
Can he buy it.
So he take a 'visa'
To Marysin.[191]

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[188] Ibid., 64.
[189] See Brave Old World, *Dus Gezang fin Geto Lodzh: Song of the Lodz Ghetto*, Winter & Winter 910 104-2, 2005, CD.
[190] Flam, 93.
[191] Quoted in Flam, 92. Flam notes, "Marysin was the forest area in Lodz where the graveyard was located, and this was the final resting place of the German Jews.

While it may seem there was little let-up in spirit within the songs of Lodz, there were songs of hope. Yankele Hershkowitz was also the composer of the songs *"Ikh fur kayn palestine"* ("I'm Going to Palestine") and *"Nor zorgt nisht yidn (Amerike hot erklert)"* ("Just Don't Worry, Jews [America Has Declared]"). While both of these songs are in E-minor, they happily declare hopes for the future. The first song sings of one's hope to move to Palestine and take advantage of everything there, from hanging a mezzuzah to singing "Hatikvah." The second song, "a song of prophecy" as one of Flam's interviewees described it, furthers hopes of a Jewish state following the Balfour declaration of 1917.[192] The song is a contrafact based off of David Beyglman's *"Ganovim lid,"* a prewar hit. These songs go to show that hope was not all lost. There were thoughts to a possible future. But, perhaps there was no greater statement of hope than in one's identity as a Jew. The statement of *"Ich bin a yid"* ("I am a Jew") was "the most direct, foolproof way to identify oneself as a comrade, no matter what protective disguise one might be wearing."[193] This became an identifier not only for the partisan fighters in the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto at the very end of 1943, but also appeared in songs like *"Vayl ikh bin a Yidele"* ("Because I am a Jew"). The composer of this song is unknown. Some have attributed it to Hershkowitz, while others say it may belong to another composer or may have existed before the Holocaust.[194] In a triumphant voice, the refrain shouts out: "Because I am a Jew, I sing a little song."[195] The verses of the song describe the horrors of the war—of having nothing to eat, of losing family, and of

[192] Yaakov Rotenberg quoted in Flam, 82.
[193] Weinstein, 181.
[194] Flam, 85.
[195] Quoted in Flam, 84.

living amidst the violence. But, through one's singular faith as a Jew sung aloud, the song carries forth undeniable hope.

The songs of Lodz represent a diversion in style from the cabaret discussed earlier in this study. These songs represent a continuation of the Eastern European street singing tradition, and demonstrate how they created an innovative "cabaret" tradition of their own. They were contemporary and challenging through their risky commentary, and made a significant and lasting impact upon those living in the ghetto. Yankele Hershkowitz's songs depict life through honest and credible emotion. His style allows the text to speak naturally for itself, with little embellishment. Hershkowitz aptly became the voice of the people of Lodz, expressing their loves, hopes, and fears. For this, their lives were made even a token of a bit better, for they could believe that all hope was not lost. The people empathized with the things that Hershkowitz said, and Hershkowitz stridently sang the things that the people needed to hear. His songs helped as one physical way to continue to unite the weakened community, whose emotions and spirits could never be extinguished.

CHAPTER SIX

CABARET IN OTHER GHETTOS AND IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

While cabaret and cabaret-like performances were the mainstay of Westerbork, Terezín, and Lodz, there were cabarets in many other locations during the war that shared aspects of the performances and music already discussed. Cabarets sprung up in the early years of the Warsaw ghetto and also were present in Vilna. Performances were even still occurring in the concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau. While the survival of music from all of these locations may not be as pervasive as in Terezín and Lodz, it is clear from primary documentation that music played a strong role in clearly impacting the lives of the prisoners of these ghettos in similar ways that were seen elsewhere. Likewise, this music was testing its boundaries, and continuing in the cabaret tradition. Cabaret in these ghettos and concentration camps was tightly held onto by the prisoners, for they saw it as a last petition of their own freewill. In Warsaw, many of these cabarets were publicly present, in full view by the Nazis. This was the case with some of the other performances in Vilna and Buchenwald, while in Dachau, cabaret activities were kept fairly underground. Comparatively, even in Warsaw, where cabaret did not initially need to be hidden for its survival, it often was kept clandestine. Thus, cabaret was serving two purposes. The first clearly remained as being openly political and outspoken. The second, in a new manner somewhat lacking from all the other cabaret activities aforementioned, served more of the inner needs of the community of prisoners. It gave them their own **private** space to deal with their situation and to carry on their lives in the

most dignified way that could be found. Clearly, the only way to find this was to succumb to risky, while temporarily reassuring seclusion.

In Warsaw, beginning in the 1920's, a cabaret style of its own called *kleynkunst* began. In her history of Yiddish theater, Nahma Sandrow describes *kleynkunst* as "a sort of cabaret revue, witty, gay, and irreverent, rapidly winging from music to dance to monologue to sketch."[196] From its description, *kleynkunst* sounds like a cousin to the cabaret of Berlin. It was remarkably similar with skits making radical political statements such as in "Two Nazis Smell a Plot," where "two Berlin officials think they discover hidden meanings in the simplest Hebrew words and phrases."[197] *Kleynkunst* was equally just as risqué, toeing the line of the acceptable when dealing with religious matters. One skit in question was entitled "Is it Kosher?" and involved a young woman making advances upon a rabbi under cover of asking traditional, *Halakhic* questions.[198] Unlike in Berlin, *kleynkunst* failed to find its audience, and ultimately failed to survive much more than a decade. Polish audiences had greater interest in whole plays, and not the bits and pieces of the *kleynkunst* revues.

Kleynkunst found itself being resurrected in the ghettos. It served well and found new life through the need for small, more improvised performances. It was most predominant in the Warsaw ghetto, the largest of all the ghettos, whose population was between 400 to 500 thousand by 1942. There were 139 members of the Yiddish Actors' Union present within the ghetto, and the old headquarters of their union at 2 Leszno

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[196] Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars: a world history of Yiddish theater* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 323.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

Street was even within the ghetto.[199] With that said, there was little acclaim in being a Yiddish actor in those days. It was not a reputable job in the eyes of the Jewish community. Amongst entertainers, people were more likely to be drawn to an opera star or a "darling of [the] Polish cafe society."[200] As in Lodz, people took to the streets to sing there. However, these usually were poor beggars. A description by survivor Jonas Turkow talks of his walk through the streets seeing a fiddler with a shaking hand, a mother singing operatic arias to the accompaniment of her baby's cries, and a cantor singing cantorial melodies while carrying his child.[201] It should be noted that the gates of the Warsaw ghetto were kept open for more than a year. Non-Jews were able to come into the ghetto during this time, and there were likely many exchanges of goods, providing the ghetto inhabitants, or at least those who had any money or tradable valuables, with some of their needs. It was during this first year that the ghetto cabarets and cafes thrived the most. These cabarets were mainly on Leszno Street, "a sort of Broadway, with a cafe, restaurant, or cabaret theater in almost every other house. Music could be heard all along the street."[202] A girl named Mary Berg describes one of the most popular and expensive of these cafes, which had taken over the former Actors' Union building:

> At number 2 Leszno Street, there is now a cabaret called Sztuka [Art] . . . .
> In the ghetto, light was permitted until a certain hour. After that we had to sit around the house by the light of candles or kerosene lamps. When we reached the nightclub, the street was dark. My escort suddenly said to me, "Be careful not to step on a dead man." When I opened the door the light blinded me. Gas lamps were burning in every corner of the crowded cabaret. Every table was covered by a white tablecloth. Fat characters sat at them eating chicken, duck, or fowl. All of these foods would be drowned in wine and liquor. The orchestra, in the middle

[199] Ibid., 339.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid., 340.
[202] Ibid.

> of the nightclub, sat on a small podium. Next to it a singer performed. There were people who once played before Polish crowds. Now they were reminded of their Jewish heritage. When I came in, M.Z., the renowned Polish actor, played the role of a comic character, eliciting lots of laughter. Afterwards a singer, U.G., sang old Polish hits and romantic songs. The audience crowding the tables was made up of the aristocracy of the ghetto—big time smugglers, high Polish officers, and all sorts of big shots. Germans who had business dealings with Jews also came here, dressed in civilian clothes. Within the walls of the cabaret one could not sense the tragedy taking place a few yards away. The audience ate, drank, and laughed as if it had no worries.[203]

The performers of the cabarets were well respected. Stephen Powitz writes, "A beneficial relationship existed between the performers and the audience. The former desperately needed money, and the latter sought to forget its troubles for awhile."[204] Consequently, these performers did not need to be famous or acclaimed performers to draw an audience. These cafes were in operation between the beginning of the ghetto in October, 1939 through late 1940, when the ghetto was sealed off. The clientele at the finer of these cafes were clearly wealthy. The Nazis knew that the cabarets existed, and, in fact, encouraged more to open. They took this as a practice of demoralization for the more they flooded the ghetto with cafes, the more this lowered the status and caliber of the cabarets, as it cheapened the quality of the entertainment.[205] Even greater divisions of class then developed in terms of which cabarets were frequented by which types of people.

Some of the cabarets chose to remain hidden, and it was in these cabarets that the most radical of performances still took place. One was held in an attic of a house that was located through many side streets, past the rubble of destroyed houses.[206] "In order

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[203] Quoted in Sandrow, 340-1.
[204] Stephen Powitz, "Musical Life in the Warsaw Ghetto," *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy* No. 4 (1978), 6.
[205] Moshe Fass, "Theatrical Activities in the Polish Ghettos, 1939-1942" in Rovit and Goldfarb, 100.
[206] Ibid., 99.

to let the public know the place of performance, guides would be stationed in many corners to direct the people. They would also see that no undesirable (German) guests would come."[207] But, according to another description of the public Art Cafe by Mary Berg, even there one could hear songs and satires on the police, the ambulance service, and on the Gestapo. There even were jokes about the typhus epidemic, "laughter through tears."[208] Berg's initial response was indignant, but she then evolved and wrote, "I have gradually come to realize that there is no other remedy for our ills."[209] She also notes that like in Lodz, there was satiric comedy about community leaders and the presidents of various welfare institutions . . . portrayed by marionettes.[210] There seems to have been a disparity with these risky performances being semi-public, while other performing groups were even going to the degree of masking the non-Jewish author of their play, who happened to be none other than Molière. Performances of works by non-Jewish authors were prohibited, so instead, the theater group publicized the play as if written by their in-house translator.[211] Unfortunately, little of the music from the Warsaw ghetto has survived.[212]

In the Vilna ghetto, Sandrow explains, ". . . the cultural atmosphere was traditionally elevated, [and] there had never been the desperate frivolity of the cabarets

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[207] Jonas Turkow quoted in Fass, 99.
[208] Mary Berg quoted in Sandrow, 345.
[209] Ibid., 345-6.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Sandrow, 346.
[212] Two songs, "*Mues*" ("Money") and "Coolies," are included in the Kaczerginsky anthology, *Lider fun di Ghettos un Lagern,* " recently republished and edited by Tara Publications under the title *Songs Never Silenced* (Velvel Pasternak, ed., 2003). These two songs have also been recorded by Yiddish songstress Adrienne Cooper with arrangements and accompaniment by Zalmen Mlotek on their recording *Ghetto Tango: Wartime Yiddish Theater.* The song "Coolies" is comparison of the use of rickshaw carts powered by people pushing them (coolies) as transportation in China and in the Warsaw ghetto. The lyrics were written by Sh. Sheynkind, and sung by actress Diana Blumenfeld at the "Splendid" coffee-house at 12 Leshne Street. The lyricist died in Treblinka in Summer, 1942.

and home entertainments of Warsaw's ghetto."[213] Performances there did not develop until a bit later than elsewhere. Initially, there were protests, and Vilna was the home of the original expression *"Afn beys-oylem shpilt men nisht keyn teater!"* ("You don't play theater in a cemetery!"). Although, between January, 1942 and June, 1943 there were 119 performances for a total of 35,000 spectators.[214] In line with Vilna's high society, many of these performances were either readings of Hebrew or Yiddish poetry or performances of classic Yiddish dramas.[215] However, new *kleynkunst* made a strong impression of itself in Vilna through the performing company "Diogenes," who performed seven satirical revues, with music by Kasriel Broydo. Broydo composed greatly in the Vilna ghetto, and a number of his songs have survived.[216] Amongst other prominent songs were many songs with texts by the young poet and playwright Lev (Leyb) Rozenthal (1916-1944/5).[217] Rozenthal wrote the song *"Yisrolik"*[218] for his sister, Khayele, to sing its debut at a concert on January 18, 1942.[219] Mischa Veksler, whose collaboration with Rozenthal is clear by other songs included in the *Songs Never Silenced* and Kaczerginsky collections, composed its music. Veksler also worked with Broydo on at least one occasion. *"Yisrolik"* is a character piece, where the singer portrays a young boy who is risking his life to smuggle food and other items into the ghetto by periodically escaping to sell cigarettes on the street. The real *"Yisroliks"* of the ghettos would smuggle their items in by wearing large overcoats with big pockets. In the song, it becomes clear that the young boy is so desperate, that he will even sing or whistle to

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[213] Sandrow, 346.
[214] Ibid., 347.
[215] Ibid. These included those by Sholom Aleichem and Abraham Goldfadn.
[216] See *Songs Never Silenced* or Kaczerginsky for their inclusion.
[217] Many of these are included in the aforementioned anthologies.
[218] See Appendix 6-a.
[219] Shoshana Kalisch and Barbara Meister, *Yes, We Sang! Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 125.

make money. There were thousands of these children who would escape through holes in the walls or navigate the sewer system in their escape. Often times, they would find it impossible to reenter the ghetto, and needed to sleep outside the walls in ruins, cellars, or open fields. On occasion, a kind-hearted non-Jew would take them in, but this was rarely a permanent situation.[220] A literal, while singable, translation of Rozenthal's lyrics tells the story:

So come and buy some cig'rettes,
Some candies and some cake,
These goods were never cheaper than today.
My life is worth a penny,
That's all I ever make,
This ghetto here is where I earn my pay.

Refrain:
I'm called Yisrolik, a kid from the ghetto.
I'm called Yisrolik, I'm tough and I am strong.
Though I'm left here in this ghetto,
I can give you a whistle and a song.

A coat without a collar,
I've pants made from a sack.
I have galoshes, but I'm out of shoes.
Whoever starts complaing,
Whoever starts to laugh,
You just be careful, I'll show you who I am!

Refrain

Don't think that I was born here,
This miserable street.
I had my mother and my father too.
But, now I have no family,
Don't think it is a joke,
Wand'ring round like winds and gypsies do.

I'm called Yisrolik, and when no one sees me,
Secretly, I wipe away a tear.
I've had troubles, let's not talk about it.

[220] Ibid. See also Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist,* which features scenes of young "Yisroliks" sneaking in and out of the walls of the Warsaw ghetto.

Why remember? It makes me feel so sad.[221]

Through his translation, Cantor Robert Abelson has made clear that the focus of this piece is less on the rhyme scheme or poetic shaping of the text, but centers itself in the simple, yet hefty weight of the words. He has chosen not to remain faithful in its entirety to the original rhyme scheme of the Yiddish, as it only becomes secondary. For these young children, their situation was anything but simple. In her anthology, Shoshana Kalisch writes that without the *"Yisroliks,"* starvation would have been quicker in the ghetto. Their role was this important in the ghetto's livelihood. Furthermore,

> The bravery of these children, tough and cocky on the outside but bereaved and frightened underneath, cannot be evaluated. When the ghetto fighters organized their resistance struggle, these children served as messengers to the outside world and as smugglers of arms into the ghetto. Very few survived, for most of them were hunted down by the Germans and shot.[222]

The song's organization opens with the first verse playing out the daily routine of the *"Yisrolik."* He is hawking his wares for as little as he can get with bravado, while making parallel commentary on the valuelessness of his life. It is this dichotomy of content that is a constant shift in the dialogue of this song. It shows both sides of Yisrolik's demeanor. The refrain stays within the tougher range of emotions of his personality, trying to prove that nothing can break through his shell. The second verse continues in the same manner as the first. Yisrolik is now giving a physical expression of his "persona." Yet, this really is no persona at all. This is the reality of his day-to-day life. The refrain returns, ever building the necessary artificiality of Yisrolik's shield of strength. Only in the third verse does the real boy behind Yisrolik's front peek through. He allows himself to describe his true circumstances, as if not to let people guess why he

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[221] Translation by Cantor Robert Abelson.
[222] Kalisch and Meister, 125.

is all alone. This situation was not meant to be. In an adult manner, he recognizes the seriousness of his situation. It is not meant to be humored. This time the refrain returns with a new, more emotional tone. Yisrolik is just like you and me, no stronger or more able to take on his situation. Yisrolik's story is semi-paralleled in a song from the Lodz ghetto, "Sweet Cry for Saccharine." The song is a short jingle which survivors remember being sung on the streets in the ghettos by peddlers, many of them young, poor, and orphaned.[223] In fact, Gila Flam collected this melody from a survivor who sang it himself when he was thirteen. The song announces the going price of the saccharine for sale. She notes that there was variance in this price amongst the various versions of the song she recorded. This reflected the economy of the ghetto and "the inevitable laws of supply and demand."[224] However, the emotional investment within this song can only be attested to when one understands the background so clearly defined in *"Yisrolik."* Ultimately, *"Yisrolik"* is a song of survival and the use of the diminutive of *"Yisroel"* for the name of the character of the song represents "the essence of Jewish survival."[225]

The song *"Friling"* ("Spring")[226] is another prominent song of the Vilna ghetto written in April, 1943. The text is by Shmerke Kaczerginsky, also the editor of the predominant collection of Yiddish songs of the Holocaust. Kaczerginsky included many of his own songs in his anthology. This song has music by Abraham Brudno, and Kaczerginsky notes that it was written in memory of the author "Mrs. Barbara from the house of Kufman in Crackow."[227] He notes the song was sung on the small art-stage *"Di*

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[223] Flam, 100.
[224] Ibid., 101.
[225] Kalisch and Meister, 125.
[226] See 6-b.
[227] Kaczerginsky quoted in Velvel Pasternak, ed., *Songs Never Silenced* (New York: Tara Publications, 2003), 18.

Yogenesh in Fas" ("The Rush of the Barrel"), and was continually performed in other camps, ghettos, and partisan camps.[228] The song has a timeless quality in its bittersweet tone. The first verse is the only verse directing its attention at life in the ghetto:

> I wander in the ghetto from street to street,
> And can't find any place: my beloved isn't here.
> How can one stand it? Please, please, speak to me.
> Now on my house shines the blue skies.
> What does that mean to me now?
> I stand like a beggar by every gate and beg, a little bit of sun.[229]

The refrain then enters, treating spring as the saving grace to bring back the singer's lost love:

> Springtime, take away my grief,
> And bring my loved one, my true one back.
> Springtime, on your blue wings,
> Take my heart with you, and return my happiness.[230]

By the second verse, it is clear that the singer is either reminiscing or daydreaming. His or her mind has entirely left the ghetto. The gates of the ghetto have become a single gate on the garden of the singer's home, where the flowers are withering in mourning. Once upon a time, the long lost love was here too, but no longer:

> I go to work past our little house,
> In mourning – the gate is shut.
> The day is shattered, the flowers wither,
> They fade, for them it is night too.
> In the evening on my way back,
> My sorrow haunts me,
> Right here, darling, you waited.
> Right here in the shadow
> Your footstep is familiar,
> You kissed me lovingly and gently.[231]

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[228] Ibid.
[229] Translation by Lawrence Berson in *Songs Never Silenced*, 19.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid.

With the return of the refrain, the singer's plead intensifies. Perhaps the hope the singer holds in the hands of spring will reawaken the peaceful memories into reality. But, as the third verse tells us, the garden is like the singer's yearning. From the sense of mourning described in verse two, it has blossomed newly with yearning as the spring arrives:

> It is springtime again this year,
> And it came quite early.
> My yearning for you has bloomed.
> I see you as if you were here,
> Laden with flowers, happily you come to me.
> The sun has spilled the garden with sunbeams,
> The earth has spread out in green.
> My true one, my darling,
> Where have you gotten lost?
> You never leave my memory.

If the yearning in the song seems unanswered, an answer seems to approach in the third verse. The singer searches for the lost love, but like the memories shared of the house and the garden, side-by-side with reminiscences of the lost love, it is all still there in his or her mind. This is the comforting hope of the song. Yet, the song does not end here. It returns to the passionate longing of the refrain once again. Thus, the yearning remains, and the song ends in heartbreak.

"Friling" is appropriately set in the style of a tango and when set to an accompaniment of this style, the radiance of its emotion shines through. Tango melodies were prevalent before the war within the canon of Yiddish folksongs. There even was a song called "Yiddish Tango," a tango melody that had lyrics discussing its very subject. This song became a contrafact during the Holocaust. Yiddish tango is further demonstrated by the popular song *"Makht tzu di eygelech"* ("Close Your Little Eyes") written by David Beyglman. Although this song may have remained a prominent song of Beyglman's in the Lodz ghetto, it is believed that he wrote it before the war. Just as

bringing in American jazz components did for German cabaret, bringing in the Latin American tango into Yiddish music spiced up the music with international flair. With the onset of the Nazi regime, tango was given special exemption from the *entartete musik* classification. This was "because it engendered no spirit of rebellion, unlike the Afro-American jazz that they so abhorred and interdicted . . ."[232] As discussed early on in this study, ". . . jazz was seen to encourage disobedience, to engender a collective delirium and a feeling of abandon."[233] It was to the contrary that "the tango was seen to provide an escape, a willing preoccupation with the dance as an oblivion of the self rather than as an incentive to disobedience."[234] It is upon this that *"Friling"* follows suit. The song is written in 2/4, but the majority of its verses seem to be set in a 6/8 meter, with the rhythm in constant syncopation. Despite the syncopation, there is a real feeling of movement throughout the entire section of the verse (m. 1-16). The song opens in Ahavah Rabbah, an almost perfect modal match for a tango, giving it an appropriate mysteriousness to its timbre. There is a clear change of texture however with the entry of the refrain in m. 17. Here, the piece returns to its originally intended meter of 2/4. The movement presented by the compound meter and syncopations of the verse are naturally calmed by the steady eighth notes and drawn out quarter notes of the refrain. These were entirely absent during the verse. This follows in the image of what the lyrics are trying to present. Spring is returning and the singer is pleading, at first slowly for the return of lost love. Then, the emotion builds at m. 25, where the rushed notes of *"oyf dayne fligl"* represent

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[232] Simon Collier, ed., *Tango! the dance, the song, the story* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995) quoted in Lloica Czackis, "Tangele: The history of Yiddish tango," *The Jewish Quarterly* Vol. 50, No. 1 (Spring 2003), 50. Tragically, the Tango also was often played by force while the Nazis were carrying out executions. Thus, *any* music being played while these were occuring became known as "The Death Tango."

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid.

the pinnacle of the singer's lament. As a single lament could not encompass the entire emotional realm of the singer's passionate plea, the phrase must naturally be repeated. Musically, there is a sense just as is present in the text that the refrain is trying to restore some sense of order by slowing things down and becoming more contemplative. The tragic irony is that no matter how much the song tries to restore its crushing temperament, its text presents the reality that only in memory does an imperfect solution exist.

Cabaret music within the ghettos had such a strong impact on its artists and audiences that even in the most trying of circumstances, it is reported that there were still activities going on in the concentration camps of Dachau, Buchenwald, and even in Auschwitz. An article published in 1941 by Curt Daniel supports this. It is unclear how Daniel was able to report upfront on these matters, but it is clear that he was trying to broadly publicize the ghetto prisoners' deprivation. On Dachau, Daniel wrote that the performances were "extremely undercover" and that they were "being carried out by the prisoners at great personal risk."[235] If these performances were exposed, the punishment would have been immediate torture or death. The prisoners were able to create and organize this entertainment once a week on Sundays at 4 p.m., when the SS guards would take a break, leaving no guards near any of the prisoners except in the watch-towers.[236] The prisoners would then put on this entertainment in their barracks Sunday afternoon and evening, when they were left to themselves. One main form of this entertainment was in singing folksongs, of which many new songs were written. Similar to songs in the ghettos abroad, the songs of Dachau were written on themes of the camp and of liberty. The guards even allowed the prisoners to have instruments such as a violin, guitar,

[235] Daniel in Rovit and Goldfarb, 151.
[236] Ibid.

accordion, or harmonica. The prisoners may have bribed the guards in order to allow this, and the guards were strapped for cash, and would have accepted their bribes willingly.[237] In addition to the folksongs, pre-war cabaret made a comeback, and prisoners and former cabaret artists would recite poems and monologues that ridiculed the Nazi regime. These performances would often draw a crowd and Daniel describes the atmosphere:

> Sometimes the excellence of a performance brought forth a spontaneous burst of applause. If the SS men on the watch-towers came down to investigate, the scene would be reminiscent of a raid on a Brooklyn speakeasy during Prohibition days, with prisoners jumping out of doors and windows in every direction.[238]

The most famous song to come out of Dachau, *"Dachau Lied"* ("Dachau Song")[239] occurred in this "illicit theater." Its lyrics were written by Jura Soyfer, a well-known lyricist in the world of Viennese cabaret prior to the war. Composer Herbert Zipper, a fellow Dachau prisoner, wrote its music. The first half of the song describes the circumstances of life and slave labor in Dachau in a mysterious melody that seems to wrap itself in and around A-minor. The second half of the song (the refrain) delivers the punch with a march-like theme in A-major, similar to that of Karel Švenk's "Terezín March," playing off the idea of *"Arbeit Macht Frei"* ("Work makes freedom") with a hopeful tone that the prisoners would win out in the end through their submission. Meanwhile, the bitter expression of the first section left little to the imagination saying:

> Sharp barbed wire with death is laden,
> Our world it does surround,
> And the heaven without mercy,
> Frost and burning sun sends down.
> Far from us are all our joys,
> And far our homeland, far our wives,

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[237] Ibid., 152.
[238] Ibid.
[239] See Appendix 6-c.

> As we march to work in silence,
> Thousands fearing for their lives . . .[240]

But in due spirit, the transition into the refrain notes "And hard as steel, we won't bend."[241] The brave song was later re-set by prisoner Marcel Rubin in the French internment camp of Damigni in 1940.[242] While Rubin's setting is an entirely new melody, it follows the same structure as the original, with a minor opening section becoming major in its march-like closure.

In Buchenwald, the cabaret tradition lived on while the prisoners lived underneath a disordered, drunken SS camp commander. The befuddled commander, who would give his prisoners extra rations one day and punishment the next, commanded a week of cabaret entertainment over New Year's Day of an unspecified year.[243] He placed a former *conférencier* in charge of this, and an entire theater was constructed, complete with overhead lighting and "a few crudely painted pieces of scenery."[244] The *conférencier* opened the performance saying:

> My friends, you are lucky to be here this afternoon. Here, in Buchenwald, we have the best art and the best artists in the whole of Germany. Here you can actually laugh out loud at our jokes. Here is the freest theater in the Reich. In the theaters outside, the actors and the audience are frightened because they fear that they may end up in a concentration camp. That's something we don't have to worry about.[245]

The emcee's remarks were similar to those heard in Westerbork or Terezín, and, similarly tried to evoke a feeling of suspension of reality. Yet, what is clear here that was not clear in many of the ghettos was that the prisoners were aware of what was going on in the

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[240] Silverman, 18-19.
[241] Ibid.
[242] See Appendix 6-d.
[243] Daniel, 153.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Quoted in Daniel, 153.

other German concentration camps. Interestingly enough, the *conférencier* did not represent Buchenwald for the concentration camp that it was, possibly not accepting the situation or seeing it as better than it was. Daniel ultimately notes in his article that no one really enjoyed the official Buchenwald theater. He explains, "The presence of so many SS men threw a damper over everything."[246] Although, after this official week of entertainment there was a lasting effect as the prisoners continued to develop performances in the same underground style as was occurring in Dachau. As had also happened in Dachau, these consisted of small cabarets with performances by professional actors.[247]

Even in the grimmest of realities in Auschwitz, cabaret was possible. Among a whole variety of singing and entertaining that prisoners would do in their barracks to help ease their minds, the former Dutch cabaret artist and survivor Max Garcia gathered a group of friends and performed often, many times in the women's camp of Birkenau for Dutch prisoners. While Garcia was performing there, he would often act as a messenger between the camps, and learned who was still alive and present. He and his troupe felt the pain of the reality surrounding them, but they held strong and "would not succumb to the numbing failure of giving up."[248] What became the most valuable outcome of their struggle was what Garcia commented upon when discussing the act of resistance through their efforts:

> . . . the resistance was there, the resistance was among the prisoners. The resistance was not just in the music, it was not in the joking, it was not just in anything else we did. It was in the refusal. It was in the refusal of becoming inhuman and to refuse them the chance of totally dehumanizing us, those who were still at that time surviving. Now mind you, we who were surviving at that

[246] Daniel, 154.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Edelman, 129.

> particular time were a handful compared to all those who had arrived there. We were small in group, and yet we persisted because of what we had learned in our survival process, that there was a way in survival by defying.[249]

In the Warsaw and Vilna ghettos and in Buchenwald and Dachau, the prisoners involved with the cabarets used the cabarets to escape their reality. From their own perspective, they saw that they were making the loudest possible statement amongst themselves, without pushing the boundary so far as to willingly sacrifice themselves. The irony was that in following in the footsteps of the cabaret tradition, the prisoners had to now negotiate just how far they were willing to push their boundaries while they too were negotiating whether or not to accept their tragic fate. Next to the brave partisan and movements of uprising in Warsaw and Vilna stood cabaret—a non-violent, yet incredibly vocal partisan rebellion, challenged to fight to its very end. If this was the end result of the life of cabaret, it may have been an unexpected end to more than fifty years of an established art. Though, in a way, it seems that cabaret could do nothing more than serve the purpose for which it was established—to defy, to rebel, to question, to push boundaries, and to try to inspire change.

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[249] Max Garcia quoted in Edelman, 130.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Once known in France, Berlin, and Vienna, whether called *kleynkunst* of Eastern Europe or the street songs from shtetl to shtetl, cabaret took a strong stand as a musical art form that never divided itself from the lives of its artists and audiences. It was this rootedness in reality that was never lost as it staked its claim during the Holocaust. In the ghettos of Westerbork, Terezín, Lodz, Warsaw, and Vilna, cabaret remained true to its origins and sought a way to reinvent itself in response to new conditions while automatically helping to better the lives of those who participated and listened to it, even if only in minor ways.

In most cases, cabaret was able to remain true to its style. Musically, it never lost the ground on which it stood. Its foundations in jazz, tango, and Yiddish folk music never faded. It continued to remain inventive, bringing in outside elements that augmented its perspective and imagery. Through every word of its lyrics, each song told the story of ghetto life, allowing emotion to break through and for the song to take charge. It seems that Holocaust cabaret only continued to evolve in its established tradition. It built additional layers of complexity upon the foundation already established in its over fifty-year history. While a response to the Nazi regime began in the 1930's, Holocaust cabaret needed to respond with a serious authenticity that was not present until the composers and artists were creating anew in the ghetto. Imprisoned and faced with their own mortality, the artists responded in wholly new ways, some in sadness, some in anger, others with sarcastic humor, and all with a retrospective view of the beauty of the past. Others included their hopes and dreams, allowing the music to carry them into the

future. And, it was the music itself that provided the element of escape, even if in a submerged reality. Gila Flam explains that amongst the survivors she interviewed nearly all of them "declared that within the walls of the ghetto, singing was freedom, a means of escape from bitter reality . . ."[250] Singing was the ultimate assertion of personal liberty.[251]

For us today, cabaret music is a transparent window into a world of the past. During the Holocaust and through the cabarets, "the song and the act of singing became revolutionary acts. Once a means of escape, today those same songs help us reenter a world that is almost impossible to grasp and comprehend."[252] In researching and writing this thesis, my intentions were to bring together a musical world that was naturally separated by the Nazis. Each individual ghetto had its own characteristics and its own music performed within. Yet, as I have presented, the similarities in the themes present in each song and the obstacles faced by many of the artists were all along the same line. The process of composing and creation of any form of art requires delicate choices to be made. This process became even more sensitive within the ghettos. The artists who were formerly concerned with their audience's tastes, the commercial success of their endeavors, and ultimately with how to present the content with which they wanted to comment upon were now thrown into the sole battle of delivering a message without stepping over the line they toed. Failure to do so was a choice of life and death. And, still, these artists chose to take the risks they did, for failure to deliver their message was ultimately a death of the very essence of cabaret ideology.

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[250] Flam quoted in Hillel, 20.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Hillel, 20.

This thesis brings together information that was formerly compartmentalized. It was divided by where the music was written, by who wrote it, by what genre it seemed to fit, and by when it was created. The importance of my research is in telling the story of Holocaust cabaret not as a separate entity, but as a connection to the history of its tradition and its connection to its succession of artists, many of whom were Jewish and brought Jewish elements into its mix. It is almost amazing to realize that most of the cabaret artists never heard any of the other music happening concurrently in the ghettos. Whether of one style or another, cabaret music was playing a similar role in every ghetto during the Holocaust, and was fighting a universal battle. The artists were in a united army without even having seen the faces of their co-comrades.

The impact of Holocaust cabaret was incredible upon all of those affected. In fitting testimony, an audience member in Terezín was moved to write a poem dedicated to the 1,000th appearance of the (Leo) Strauss Ensemble. Frieda Rosenthal wrote *"Dank Dem Lieben Cabaret," "Thanks to our dear cabaret:"*

I sit here hungry on the ladder –
All at once, everything sounds cheery,
Waltzes from Vienna, tunes from Prague
And my heart soars on a journey.
Quickly in the courtyard below,
So that I catch another snatch of melody—
My gnawing hunger disappears,
Thanks to our dear cabaret.

In the evening, I return from working,
Tired and listless—
There, through a door that's only half-closed,
Sounds charming music,
One melody after the other,
Performed with real esprit—
The day's fatigue quickly disappears,
Thanks to our dear cabaret.

These are the best troupes we've got,
Our loyal group of artists.
During the suffering of hard times
They sing their song, "Once upon a Time"
And our hearts join in,
"It'll be that way again,"
The agony of our longing disappears,
Thanks to our dear cabaret.[253]

To the memory of all those artists who sacrificed their lives in order to allow their voices to be heard and never be silenced, I submit my gratitude.

[253] Frieda Rosenthal quoted in Hillel, Chapter Three, 5.

APPENDIX

3-a

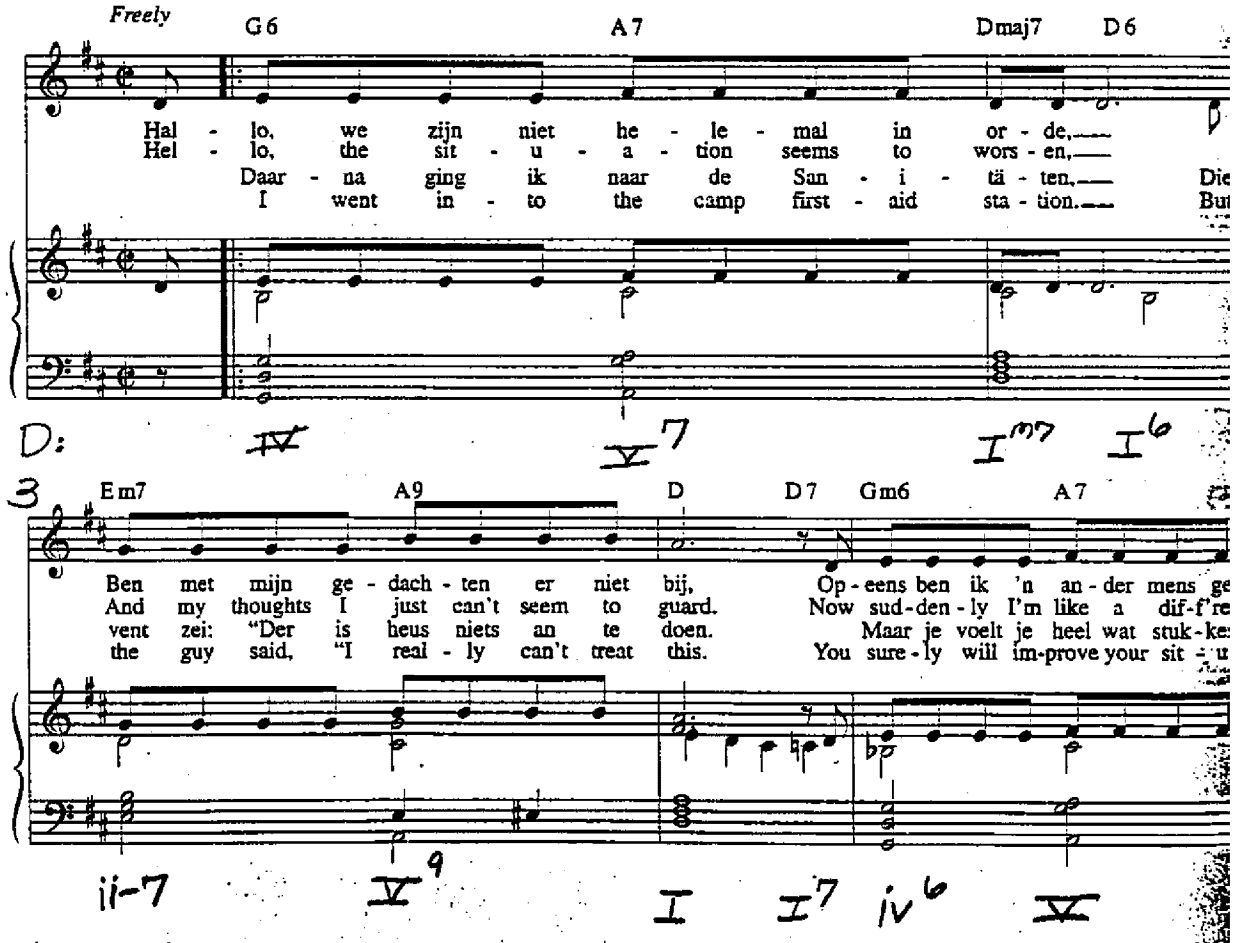
61. Die Westerbork-Serenade (The Westerbork Serenade)

What are we to make of this 1940s pop-style ballad in the context of a Dutch internment camp? With "Strolling with my baby" along the silvery moonlit railroad tracks (*Mit einer schöne Dame*) we can almost see Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers tap dancing over the crossties. Despite his German girl friend and the German title, it is the serenade of a Dutchman; the lyrics are almost entirely in Dutch. Then suddenly we realize that every week as many as 3,000 internees are being transported down those selfsame tracks to the camps "in the east." And then this idyllic moonlight stroll turns grotesque. The very act of kissing the girl by the barracks, so normal under other circumstances, becomes a life-affirming, almost a defiant act. Even the visit to the first-aid station, ostensibly to cure the singer's "love-sickness" can be interpreted as an attempt to get the desperately sought-after medical certificate which might delay inevitable deportation.

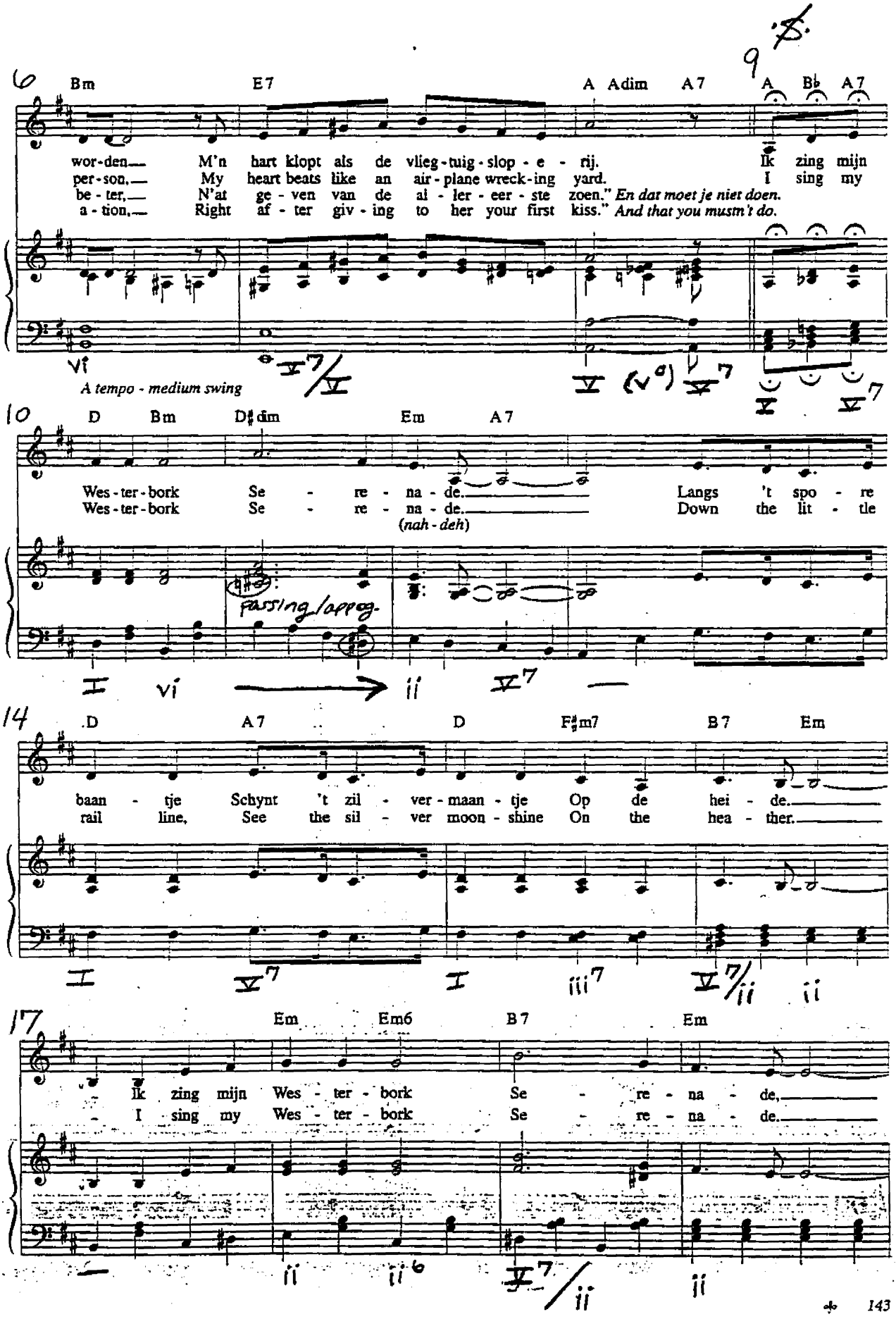
Max Kannenwasser and Arnold (Nol) van Wesel ("Johnny and Jones") were a popular singing duo in pre-war Holland. When they were swept into Westerbork they were assigned to the car metal shop that stripped useful parts from wrecked airplan hence the reference to it in the song. At first they had difficu getting into the cabaret troupe because they sang only in Dut and the official language of the camp was German. Once cepted, they became regular performers, much to the satisfacti of the Dutch inmates, who resented the total Germanization their lives. The camp authorities thought so highly of "The We erbork Serenade" that they sent Max and Nol on an unescort trip from Westerbork to Amsterdam to record it in 1944. Th wives had remained as hostages in the camp, so, despite the u ing of their friends, escape was out of the question for them. the recording we hear their voices blending in close harmony companied by Nol's tenor guitar. By August 1944 they too h made the one-way trip down those tracks to Theresiensta Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen, Ohrdruf, and finally Bergen-Bels where their voices were extinguished forever.

Piano Arr.: Jerry Silverman
Originally on guitar

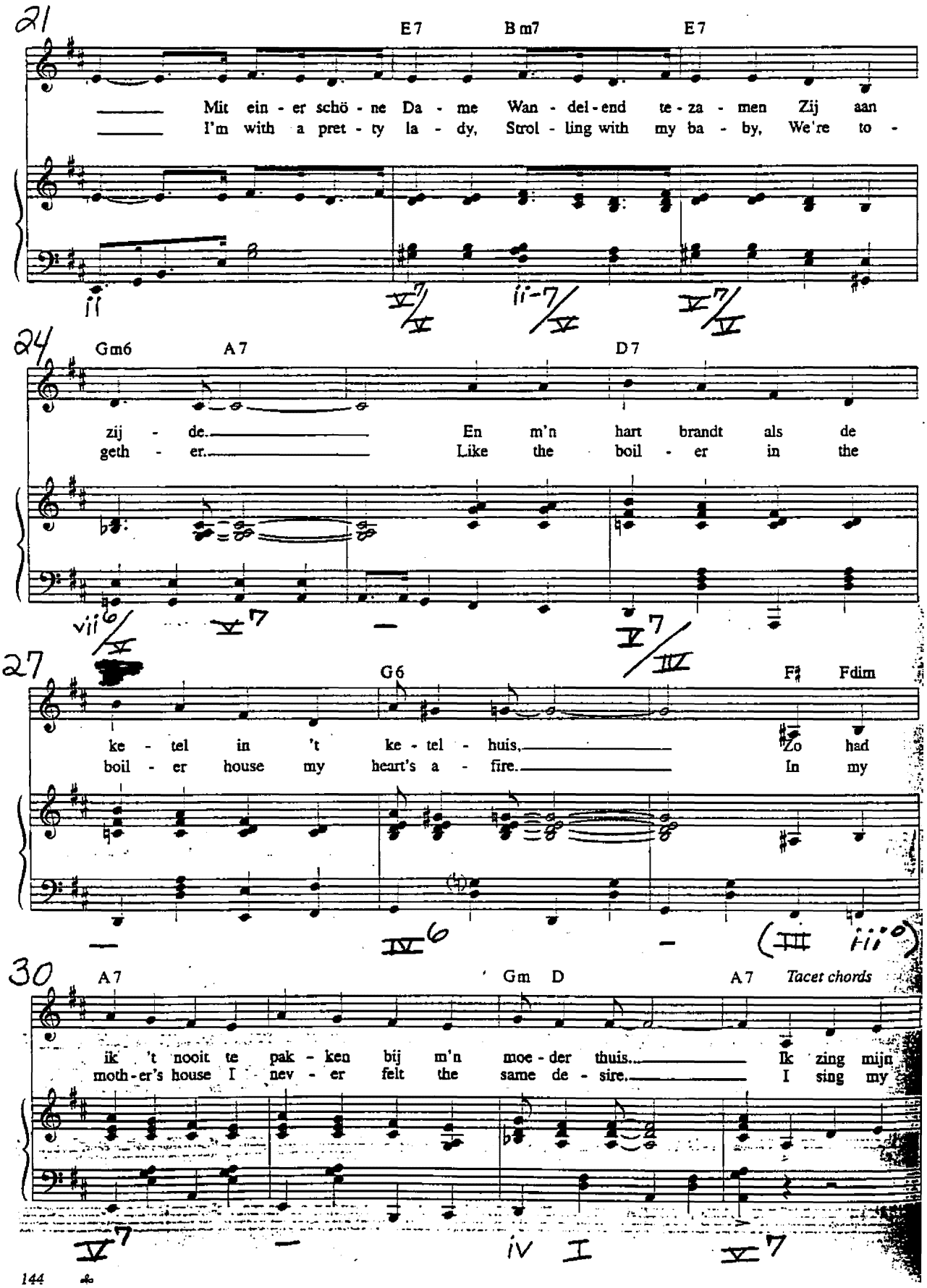
By "Johnny & Jon



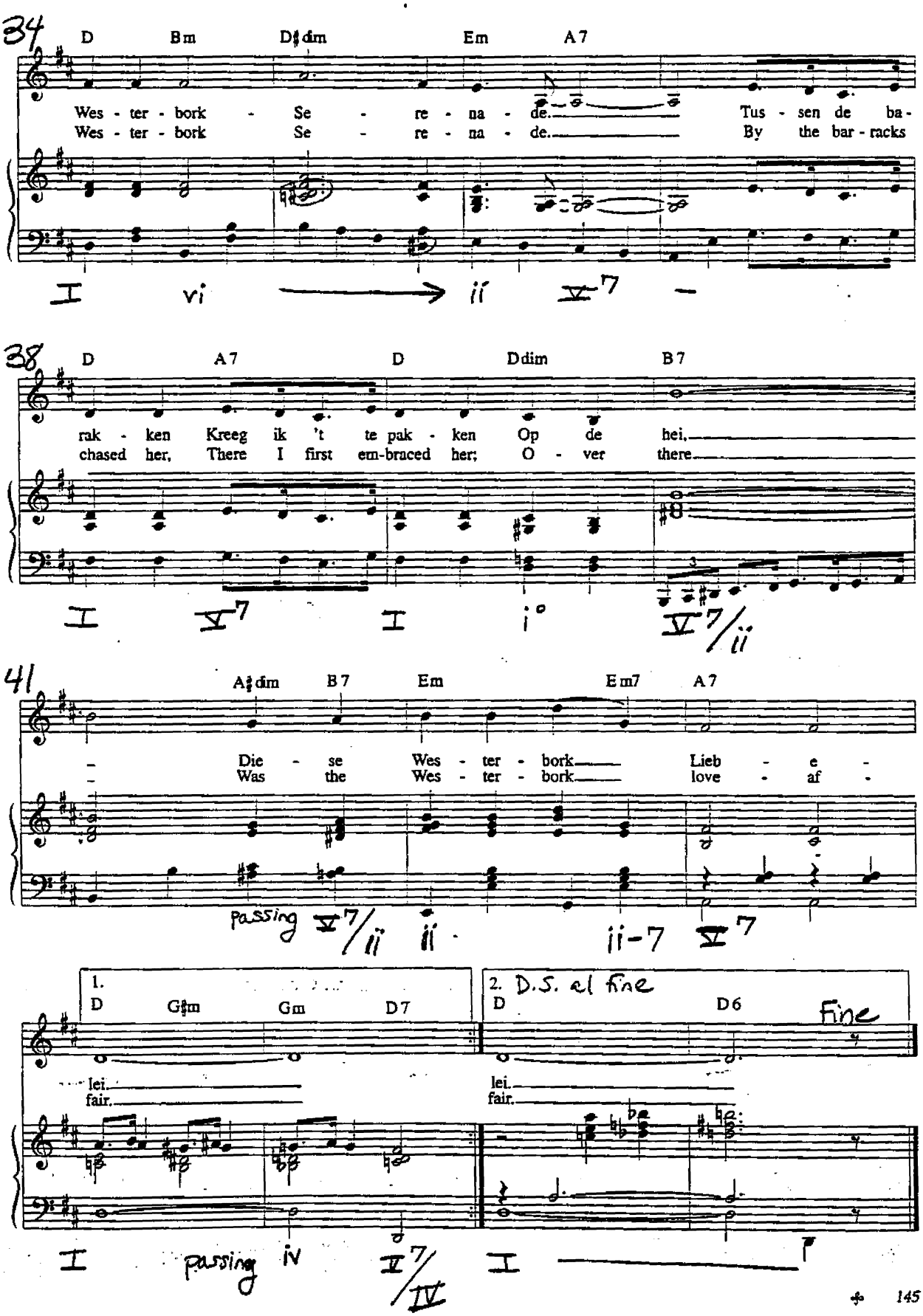
120


6
Bm E7 A Adim A7 A B♭ A7
worden— M'n hart klopt als de vlieg-tuig-slop-e-rij. Ik zing mijn
person,— My heart beats like an air-plane wreck-ing yard. I sing my
beter,— N'at ge-ven van de al-ler-eer-ste zoen." En dat moet je niet doen.
ation,— Right af-ter giv-ing to her your first kiss." And that you mustn't do.
A tempo - medium swing
10
D Bm D♯dim Em A7
Wes-ter-bork Se-re-na-de. Langs 't spo-re
Wes-ter-bork Se-re-na-de. Down the lit-tle
(nah-deh)
passing/approg.
14
D A7 D F♯m7 B7 Em
baan-tje Schynt 't zil-ver-maan-tje Op de hei-de.
rail line, See the sil-ver moon-shine On the hea-ther.
17
Em Em6 B7 Em
Ik zing mijn Wes-ter-bork Se-re-na-de,
I sing my Wes-ter-bork Se-re-na-de.

121


21
E7
B m7
E7
Mit ein - er schö - ne Da - me Wan - del - end te - za - men Zij aan
I'm with a pret - ty la - dy, Strol - ling with my ba - by, We're to -
24
Gm6
A7
D7
zij - de. En m'n hart brandt als de
geth - er. Like the boil - er in the
27
G6
F♯
Fdim
ke - tel in 't ke - tel - huis, Zo had
boil - er house my heart's a - fire. In my
30
A7
Gm
D
A7
Tacet chords
ik 't nooit te pak - ken bij m'n moe - der thuis. Ik zing mijn
moth - er's house I nev - er felt the same de - sire. I sing my

122


34
D Bm D♯dim Em A7
Wes - ter - bork - Se - re - na - de. Tus - sen de ba-
Wes - ter - bork Se - re - na - de. By the bar - racks
I vi ii V7
38
D A7 D Ddim B7
rak - ken Kreeg ik 't te pak - ken Op de hei.
chased her, There I first em-braced her; O - ver there
I V7 I i° V7/ii
41
A♯dim B7 Em Em7 A7
Die - se Wes - ter - bork Lieb - e -
Was the Wes - ter - bork love - af -
passing V7/ii ii ii-7 V7
1.
D G♯m Gm D7
lei.
fair.
2. D.S. al fine
D D6
Fine
lei.
fair.
I passing iv II7/IV I

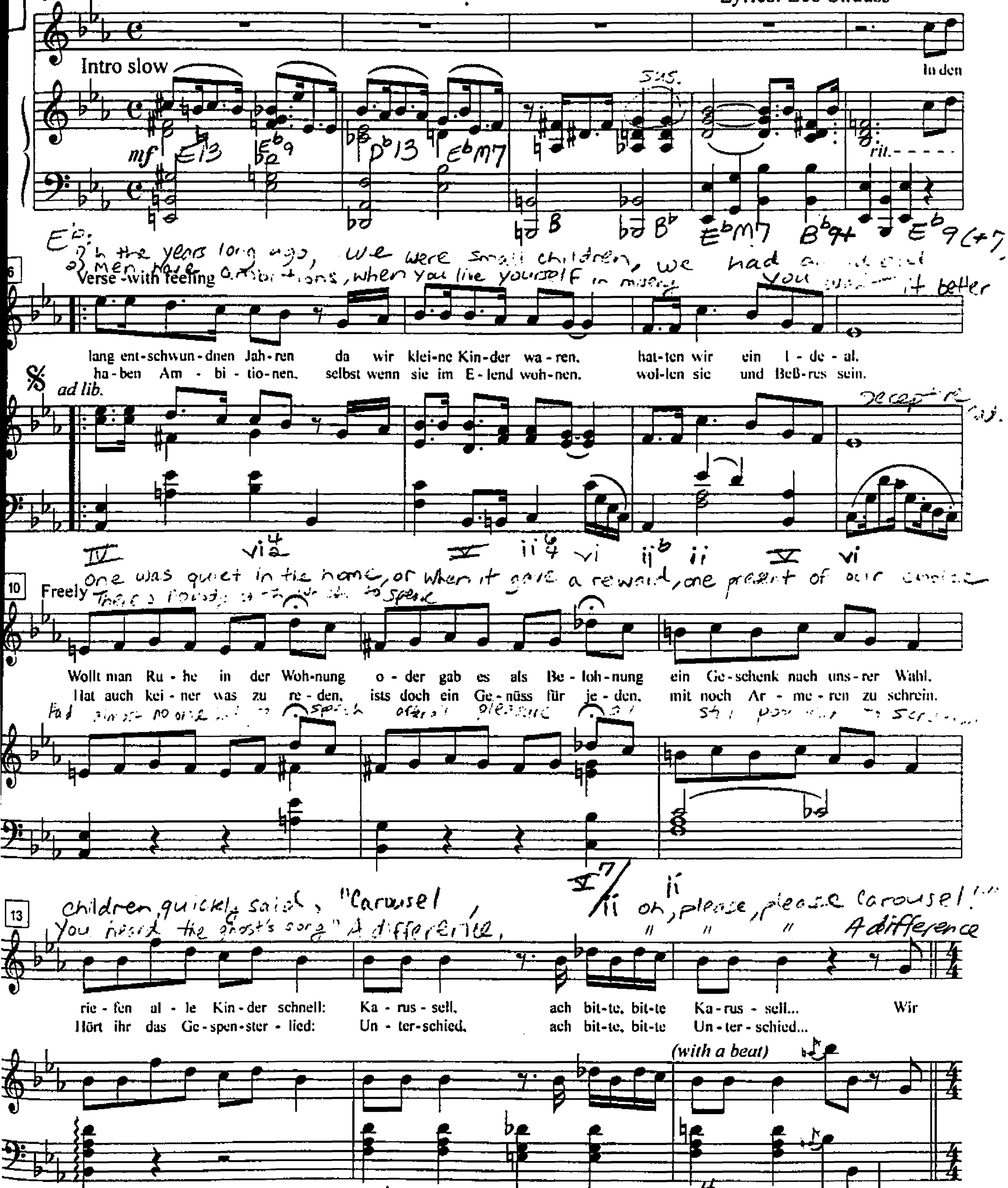
123

4-a

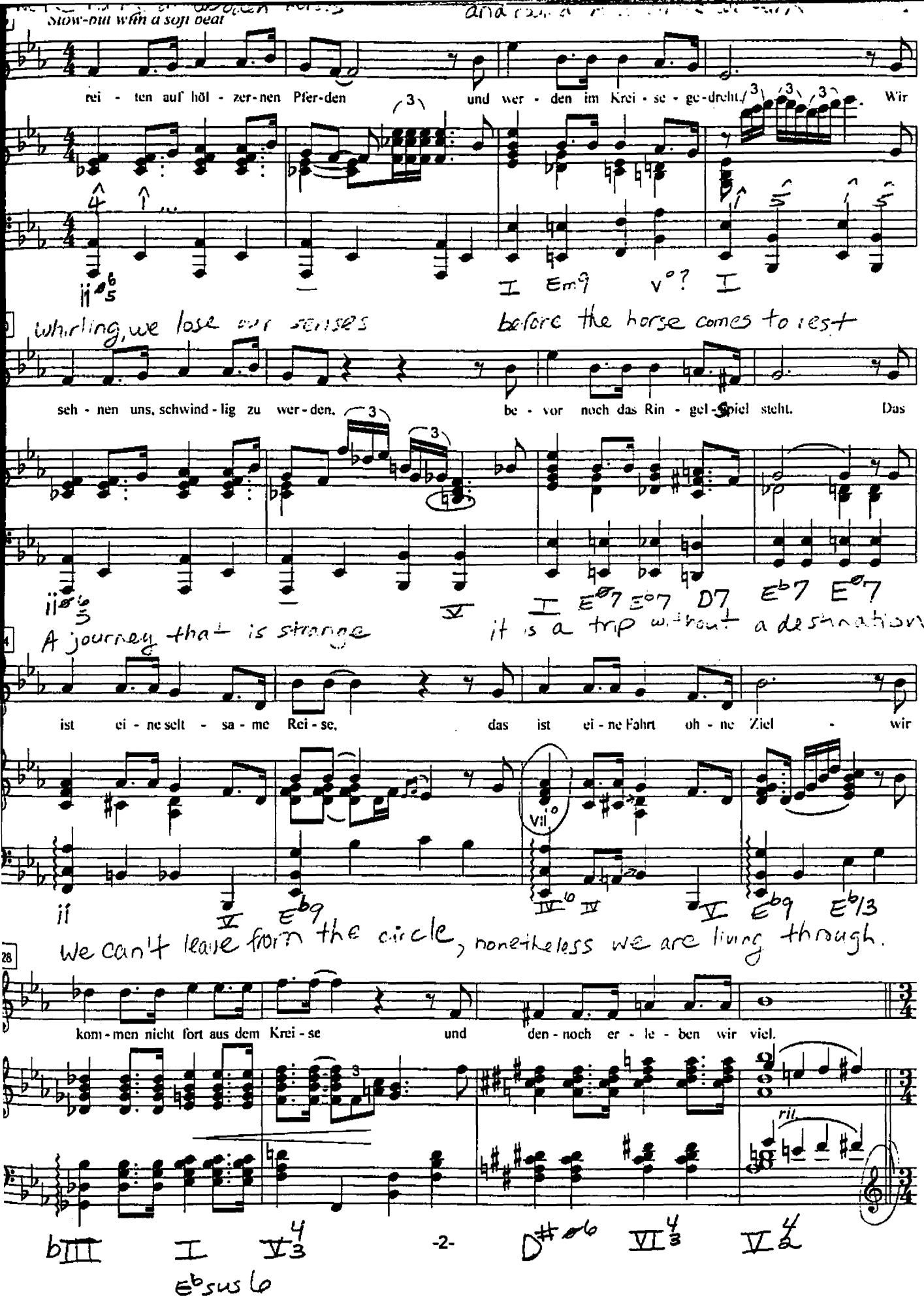
Karussell

(Wir reiten auf Hölzernen Pferden)

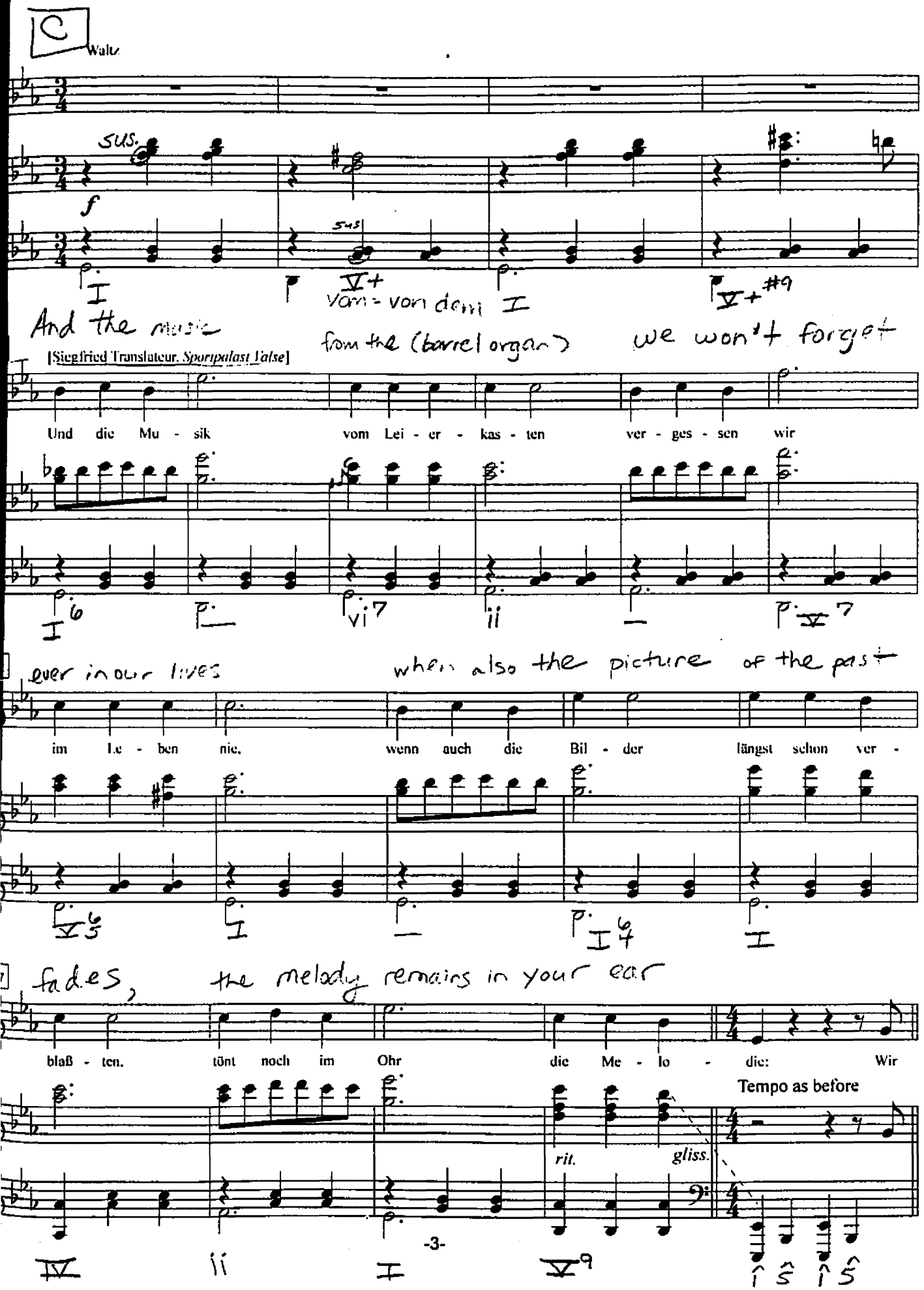
Music: Martin Roman
Lyrics: Leo Strauss



124

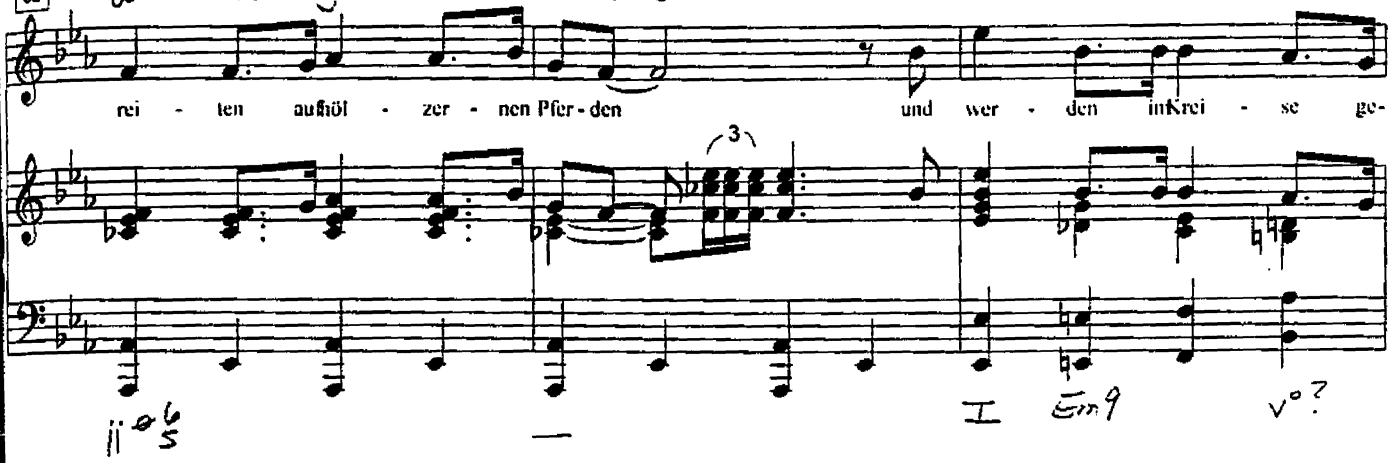

Slow-but with a soft beat
rei - ten auf höl - zer-nen Pfer-den und wer - den im Krei - se ge-dreht. Wir
ii°6/5
I Em9 v°? I
whirling, we lose our senses
before the horse comes to rest
seh - nen uns, schwind - lig zu wer - den, be - vor noch das Rin - gel-Spiel steht. Das
ii°6/5
V
I E°7 E°7 D7 Eb7 E°7
A journey that is strange
it is a trip without a destination
ist ei - ne selt - sa - me Rei - se, das ist ei - ne Fahrt oh - ne Ziel - wir
ii
V Eb9
vii°
IV6 IV
I Eb9 Eb13
We can't leave from the circle, nonetheless we are living through.
kom - men nicht fort aus dem Krei - se und den - noch er - le - ben wir viel.
rit.
bIII
I
V4/3
-2-
D#°6
VI4/3
V4/2
Ebsus6

C Waltz

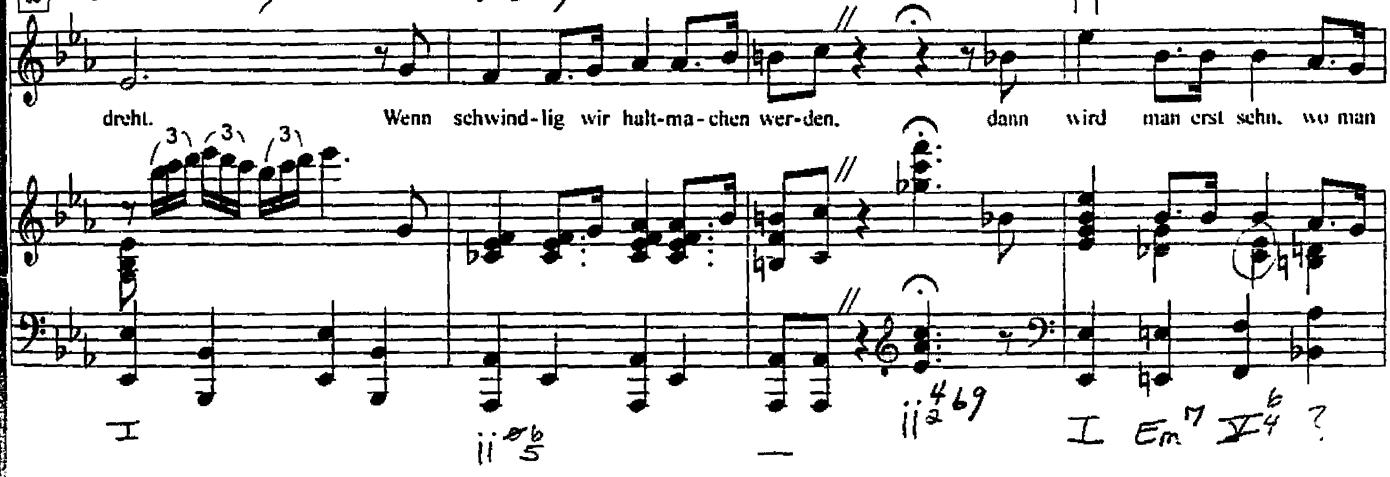

sus.
f
I
sus
V+
vom - von dem I
V+ #9
And the music
[Siegfried Translateur. Sportpalast Valse]
from the (barrel organ)
we won't forget
Und die Mu - sik
vom Lei - er - kas - ten
ver - ges - sen wir
I 6
vi 7
ii
V 7
ever in our lives
when also the picture of the past
im Le - ben nie,
wenn auch die
Bil - der
längst schon ver -
V 6/5
I
I 6/4
I
fades,
the melody remains in your ear
blaß - ten.
tönt noch im
Ohr
die Me - lo - die:
Wir
Tempo as before
rit.
gliss.
IV
ii
I
V 9
1 5 1 5

B'
e m.16

52 we're riding on wooden horses and [illegible] in a circle

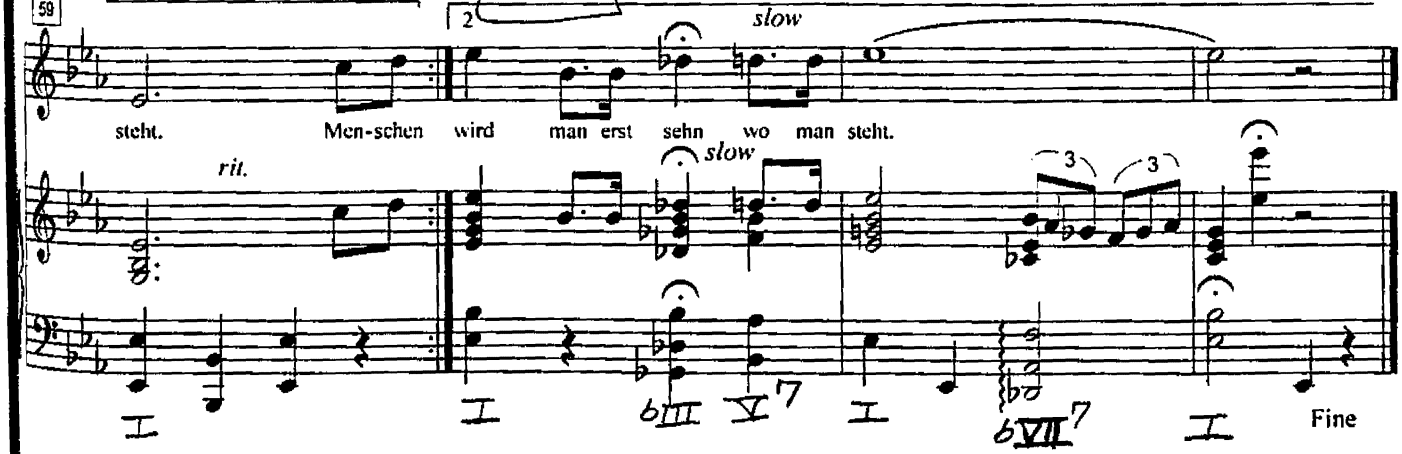


55 we turn, when dizzy we come to stop then one first sees where



one stands.

59 Coda

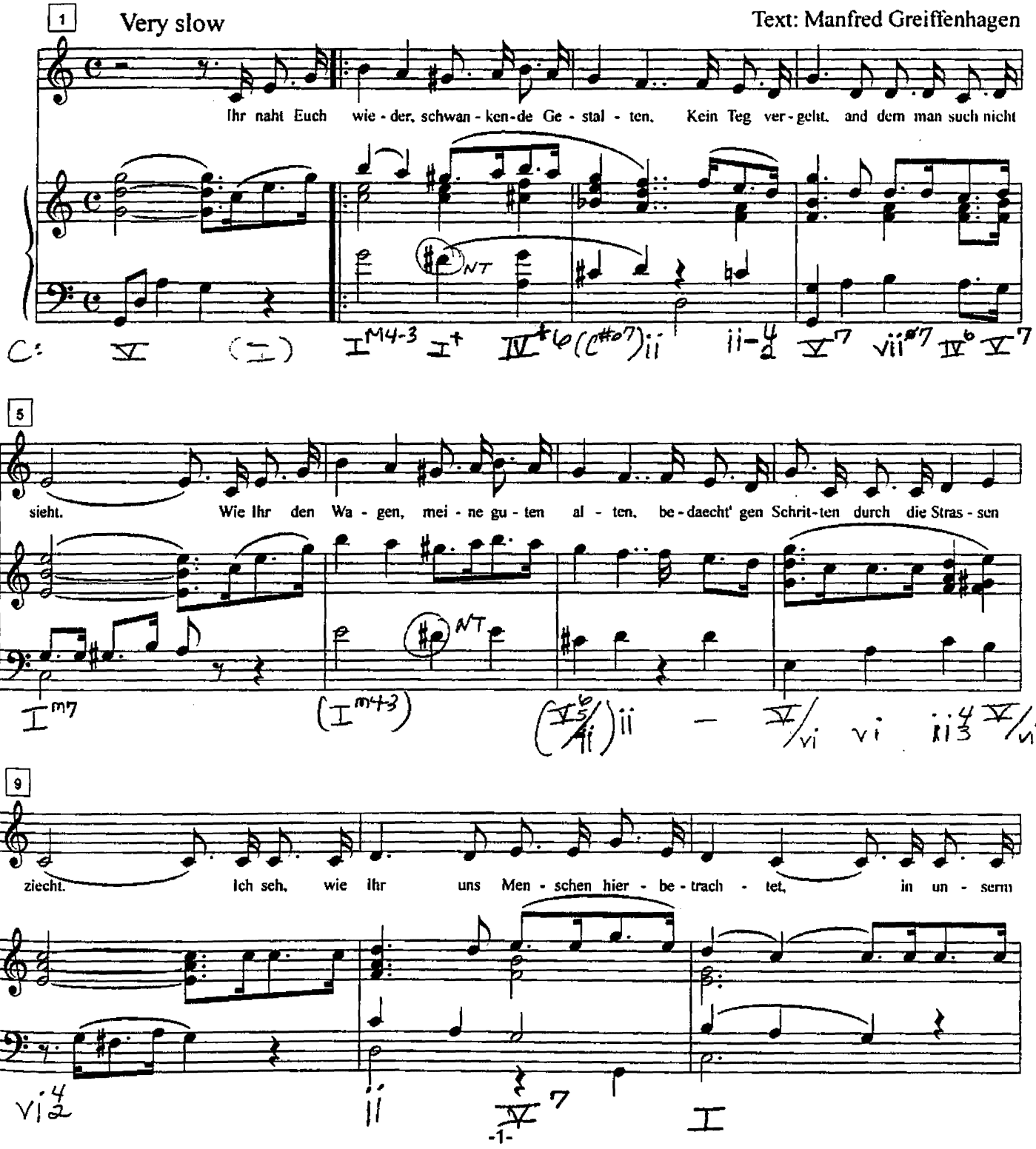


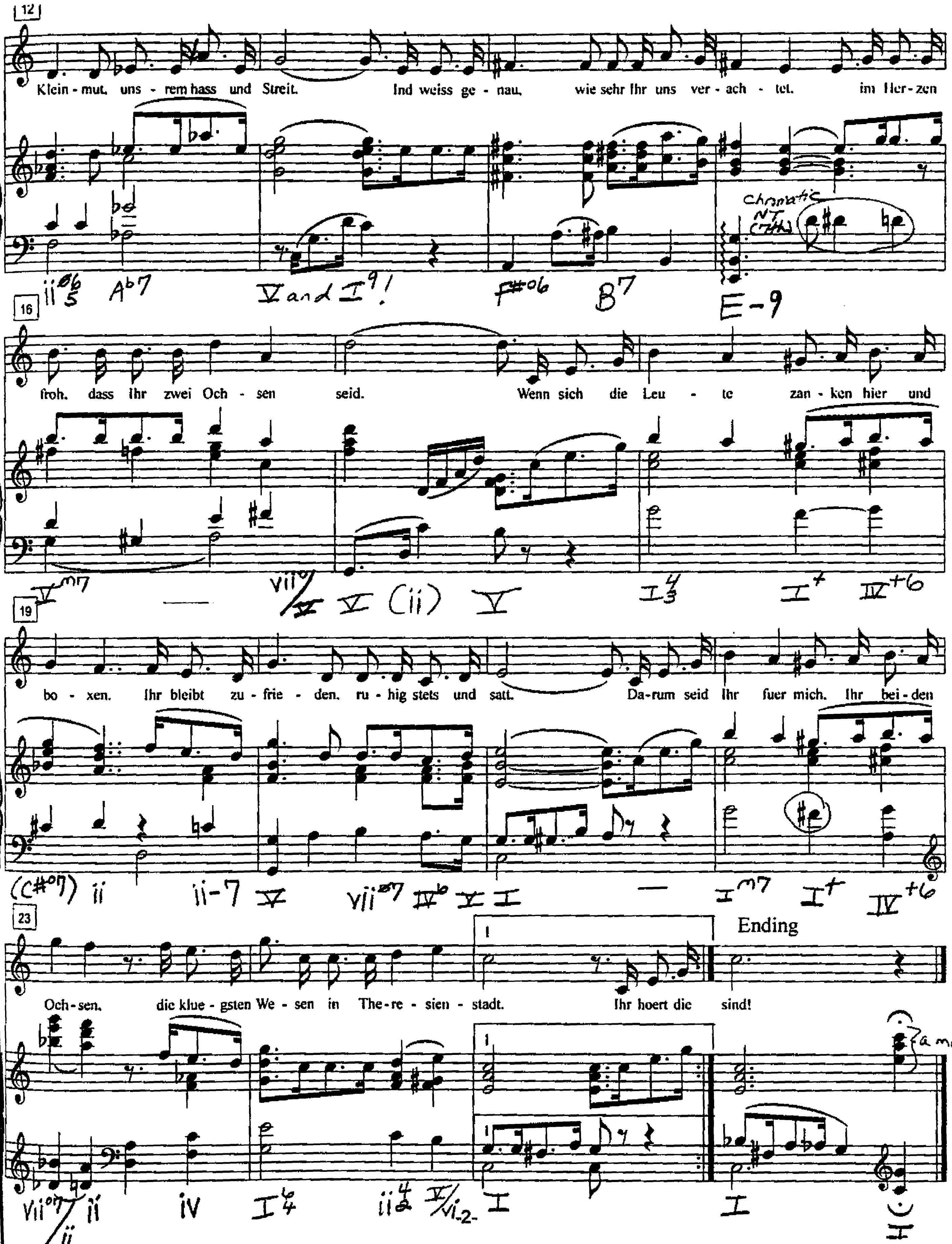
4-b

Das Lied von den Zwei Ochsen

Music: Martin Roman

Text: Manfred Greiffenhagen




12
Klein-mut, uns-rem hass und Streit. Ind weiss ge-nau, wie sehr Ihr uns ver-ach-tet. im Her-zen
16
froh, dass Ihr zwei Och-sen seid. Wenn sich die Leu-te zan-ken hier und
19
bo-xen. Ihr bleibt zu-frie-den, ru-hig stets und satt. Da-rum seid Ihr fuer mich, Ihr bei-den
23
Ending
Och-sen, die klue-gsten We-sen in The-re-sien-stadt. Ihr hoert die sind!

4-c

Terezin Lied

Nach der Melodie: "Komm mit nach Varasdin"
aus der Operette *Grafin Mariza* von Emmerich Kalman/Autor unbekannt

Moderato

p

Ich bit - te nicht la - chen Sie ü - ber die Sa - chen die tä - glich mir hier so oft pa-
Solt ich hier - mal ster - ben, wird man nach mir er - ben die Gar - de - ro - be und das Ghe - tto-

5

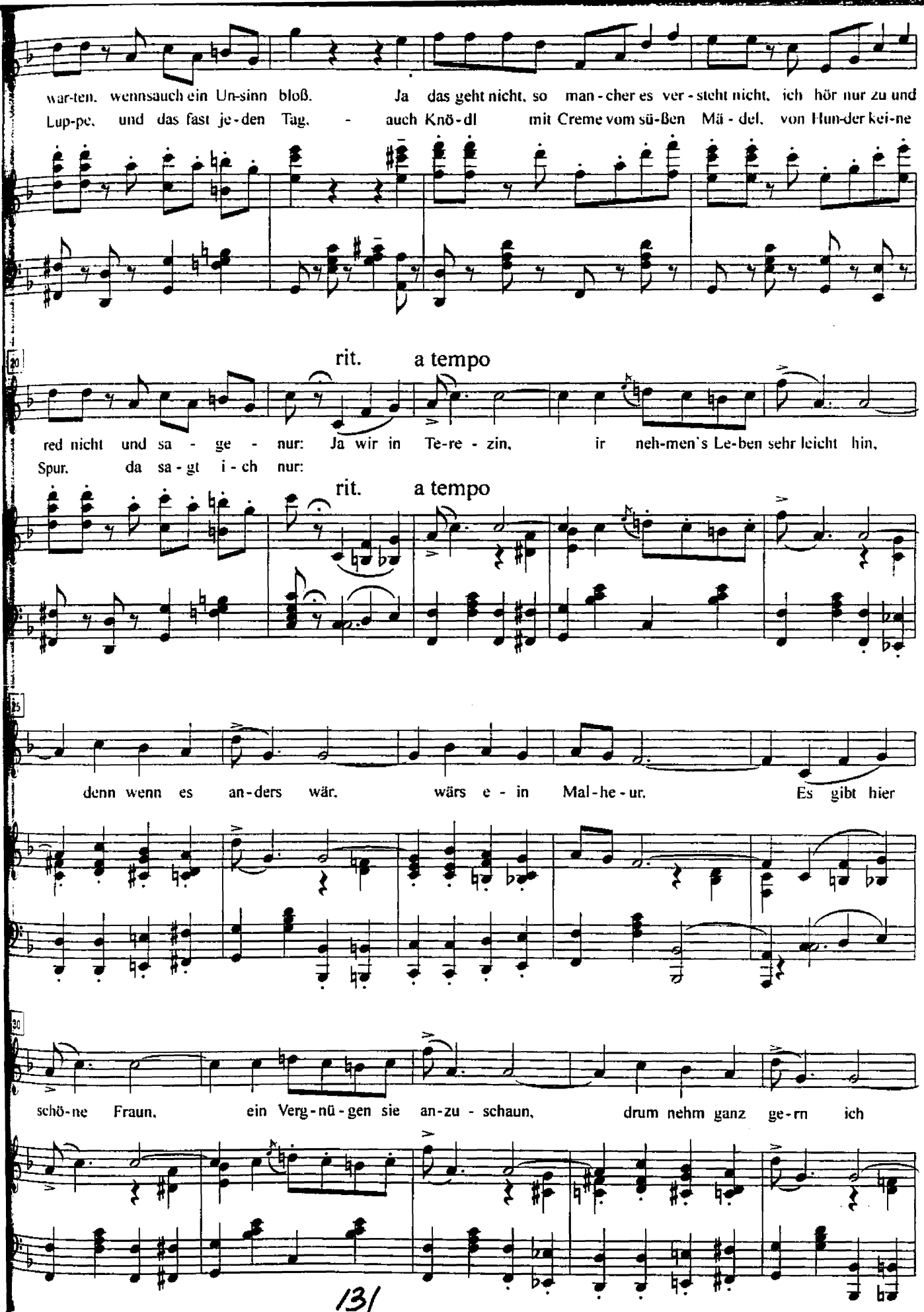
ssiem, die O - fen, die Lö-cher, die Stühl-chen, die Dä-cher, mich kann das - (a) - ber gar nicht mehr ge-
geld, ich rauschdurch den Ä-ther, be-grüß mei - ne Vä - ter und bin schon nicht mehr hier-auf die - ser

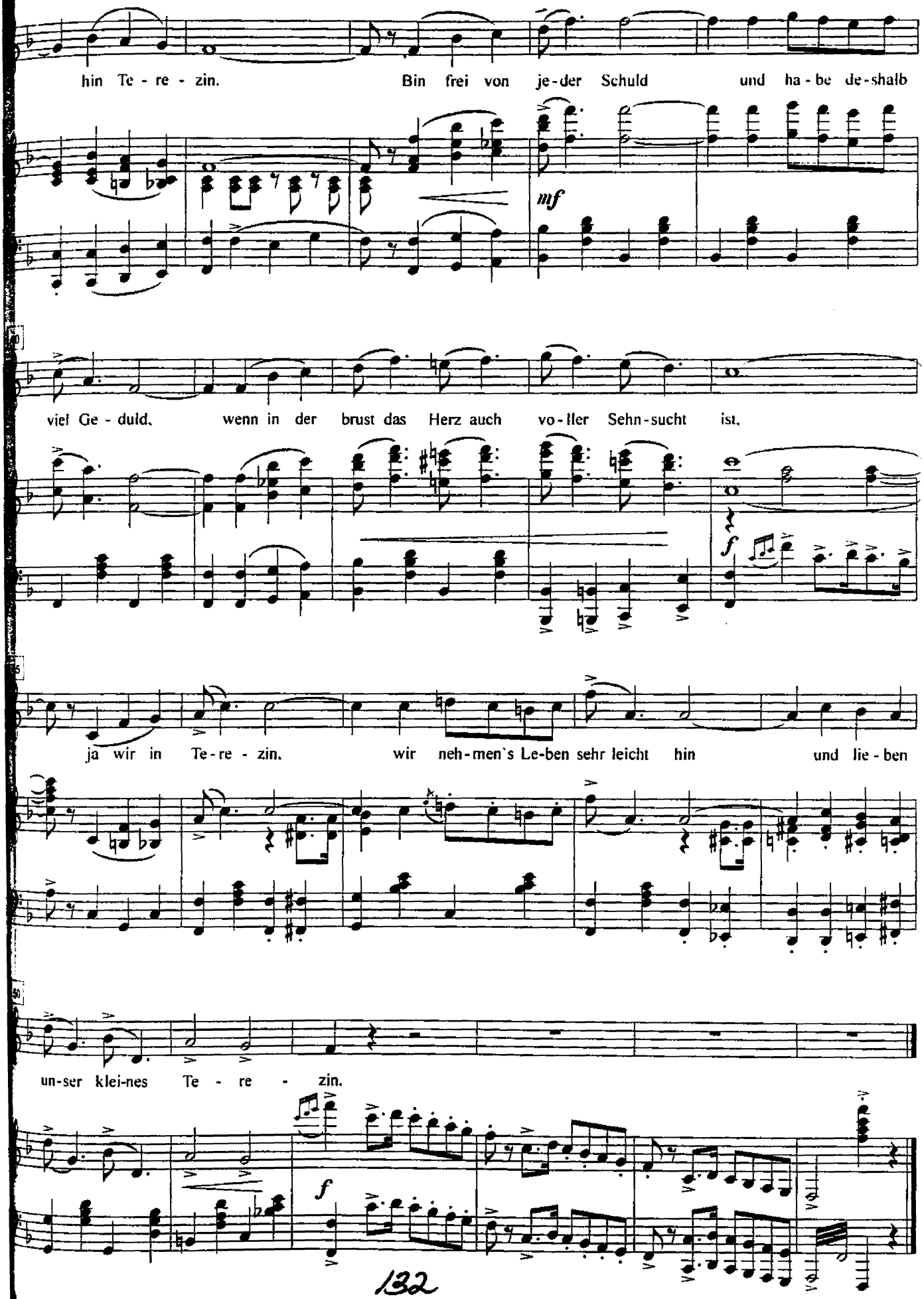
9

niem. Ich find es - ent - se - tzlich, wenn je - mand so plöt-zlich so stür-misch 'nen Re-desch - wall läßt
Welt. Er - zähl mei - nen Lie - ben, was wir hier ge - trie - ben, wie ein - fach wir ge - lebt ganz ohne

13

los, ge - spart wind da mit Wor - ten nicht, mit zar - ten, es kann halt nie - mand
Frag bei Ka - ffe - e, bei Tu - rin und bei - Sup - pe, bei Fleisch nur durch die


war-ten, wennsauch ein Un-sinn bloß. Ja das geht nicht, so man-cher es ver-steht nicht, ich hör nur zu und
Lup-pe, und das fast je-den Tag, - auch Knö-dl mit Creme vom sü-ßen Mä-del, von Hun-der kei-ne
rit. a tempo
red nicht und sa - ge - nur: Ja wir in Te-re - zin, ir neh-men's Le-ben sehr leicht hin,
Spur, da sa-gt i-ch nur:
rit. a tempo
denn wenn es an-ders wär, wärs e - in Mal-he-ur. Es gibt hier
schö-ne Fraun, ein Verg-nü-gen sie an-zu - schaun, drum nehm ganz ge-rn ich


hin Te - re - zin. Bin frei von je-der Schuld und ha-be de-shalb
mf
viel Ge - duld, wenn in der brust das Herz auch vo-ller Sehn-sucht ist,
f
ja wir in Te-re - zin. wir neh-men's Le-ben sehr leicht hin und lie-ben
un-ser klei-nes Te - re - zin.
f

Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt

4-d

Lied und langsamer Walzer
aus dem Film „Der blaue Engel"

Worte und Musik: **Friedrich Hollaender**

1 Moderato — 5 VERSE

Gesang

1. Ein rät - sel-haf - ter
2. Was bebt in mei-nen

Klavier

G F: I vi IV I V7 I

Schim - mer, ein je ne sais pas quoi, liegt in den Au-gen im - mer
Hän - den, in ih-rem hei - ßen Druck, sie möch-ten sich ver - schwen - den,

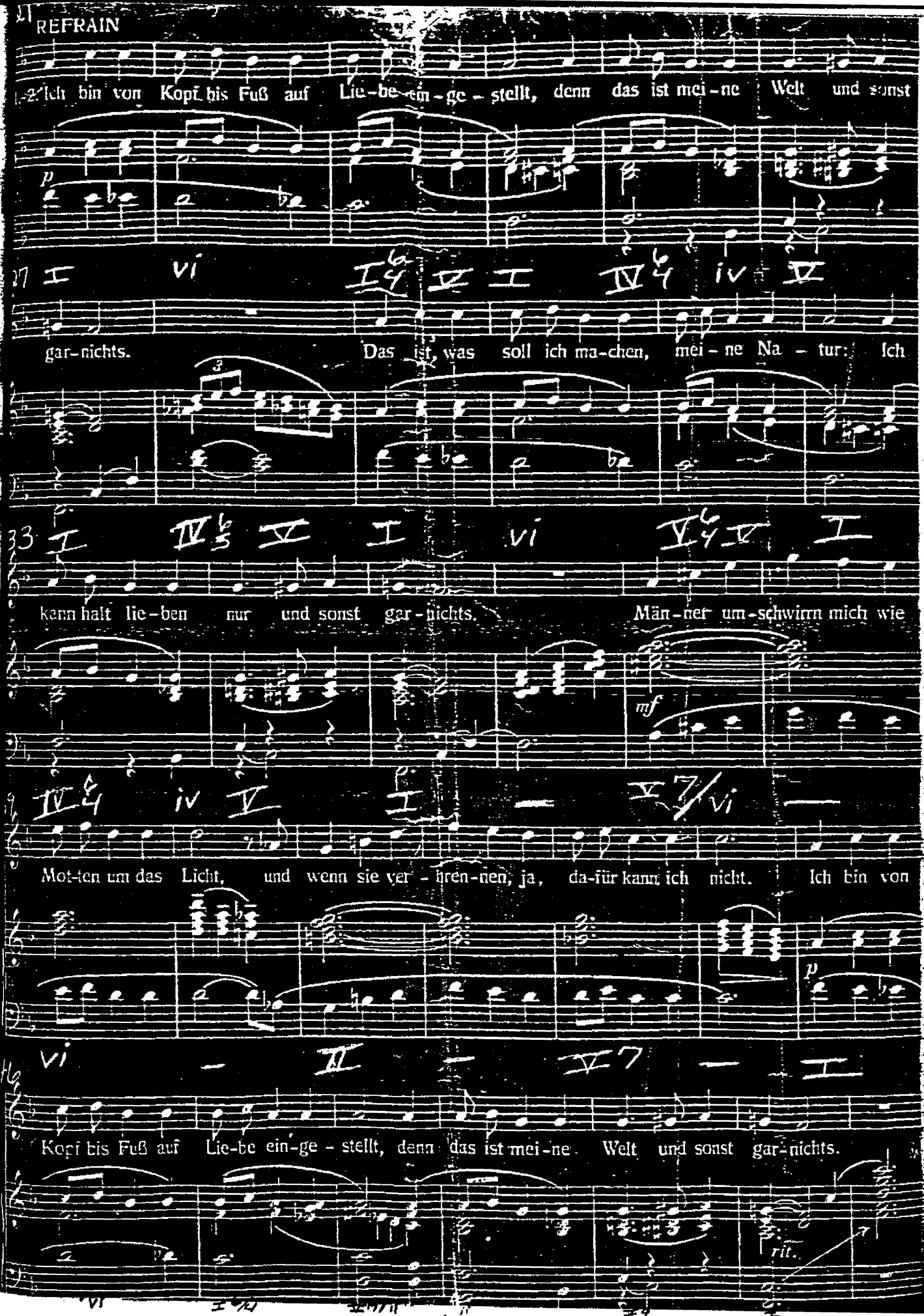
A-7 G#o7 I 3/4 ii7 V ii V+

bei ei - ner schö-nen Frau. Doch wenn sich mei-ne Au - gen bei ei - nem vis a
sie ha-ben nie ge-nug. Ihr wer-det es ver - zei - hen, Ihr müßt es halt ver -

I V+ I A-7 G#o7 V

vis ganz tief in sei - ne sau - gen, was spre-chen dann sie?
stehn, es lockt mich stets von neu - em, ich find' es so schön.

VII7 I V6 IV9/V V7


REFRAIN
Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Lie-be-ein-ge-stellt, denn das ist mei-ne Welt und sonst
I vi I⁶₄ V I IV⁶₄ iv V
gar-nichts. Das ist, was soll ich ma-chen, mei-ne Na-tur: Ich
I IV⁶₅ V I vi I⁶₄ V I
kann halt lie-ben nur und sonst gar-nichts. Män-ner um-schwirrn mich wie
mf
IV⁶₄ iv V I V7/vi
Mot-ten um das Licht, und wenn sie ver-ren-nen, ja, da-für kann ich nicht. Ich bin von
p
vi II V7 I
Kopf bis Fuß auf Lie-be ein-ge-stellt, denn das ist mei-ne Welt und sonst gar-nichts.
rit.

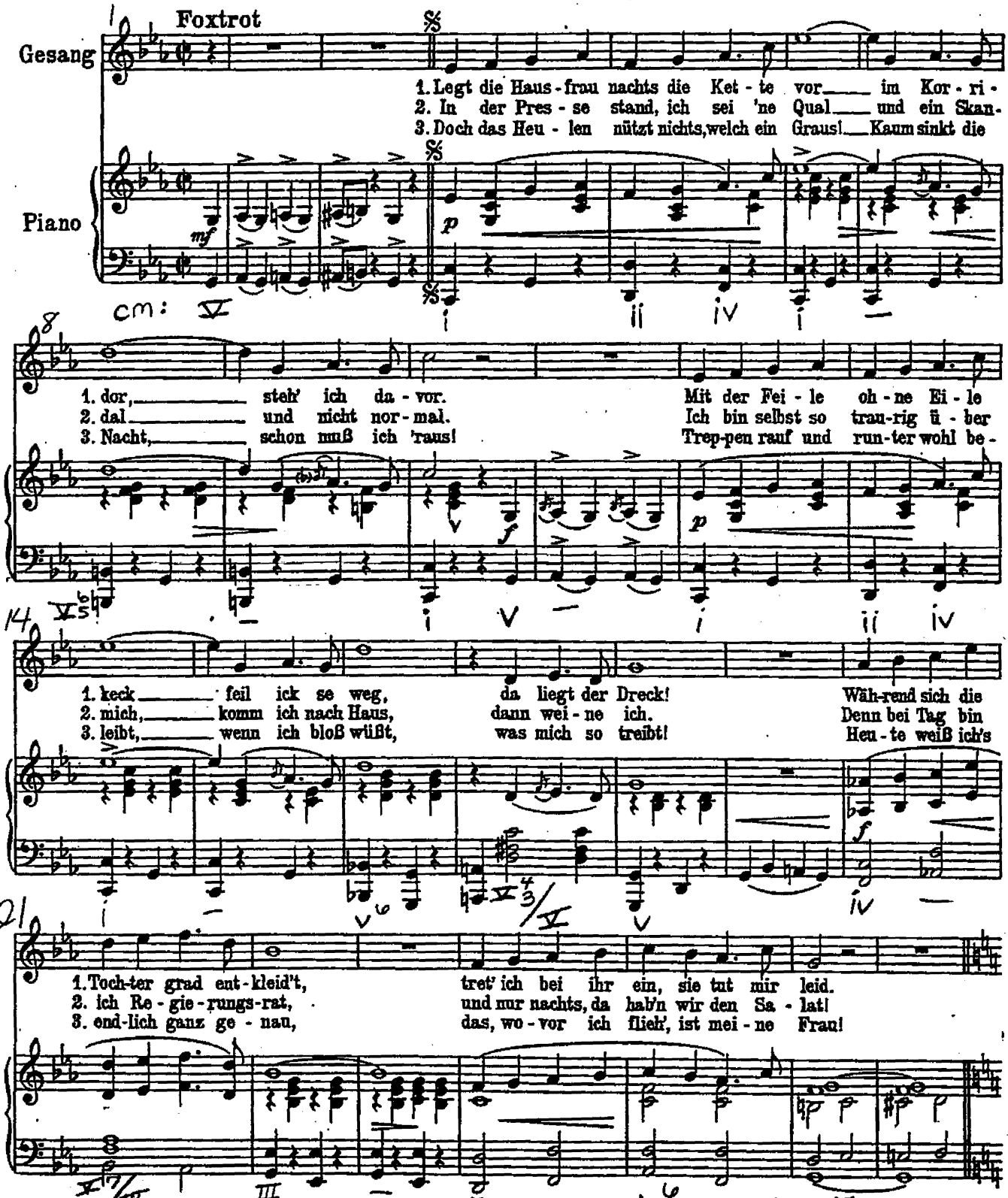
Aus der neuen Nelson-Revue „Der rote Faden"

No. 10. Das Nachtgespenst

Foxtrot

Text von Friedrich Holländer

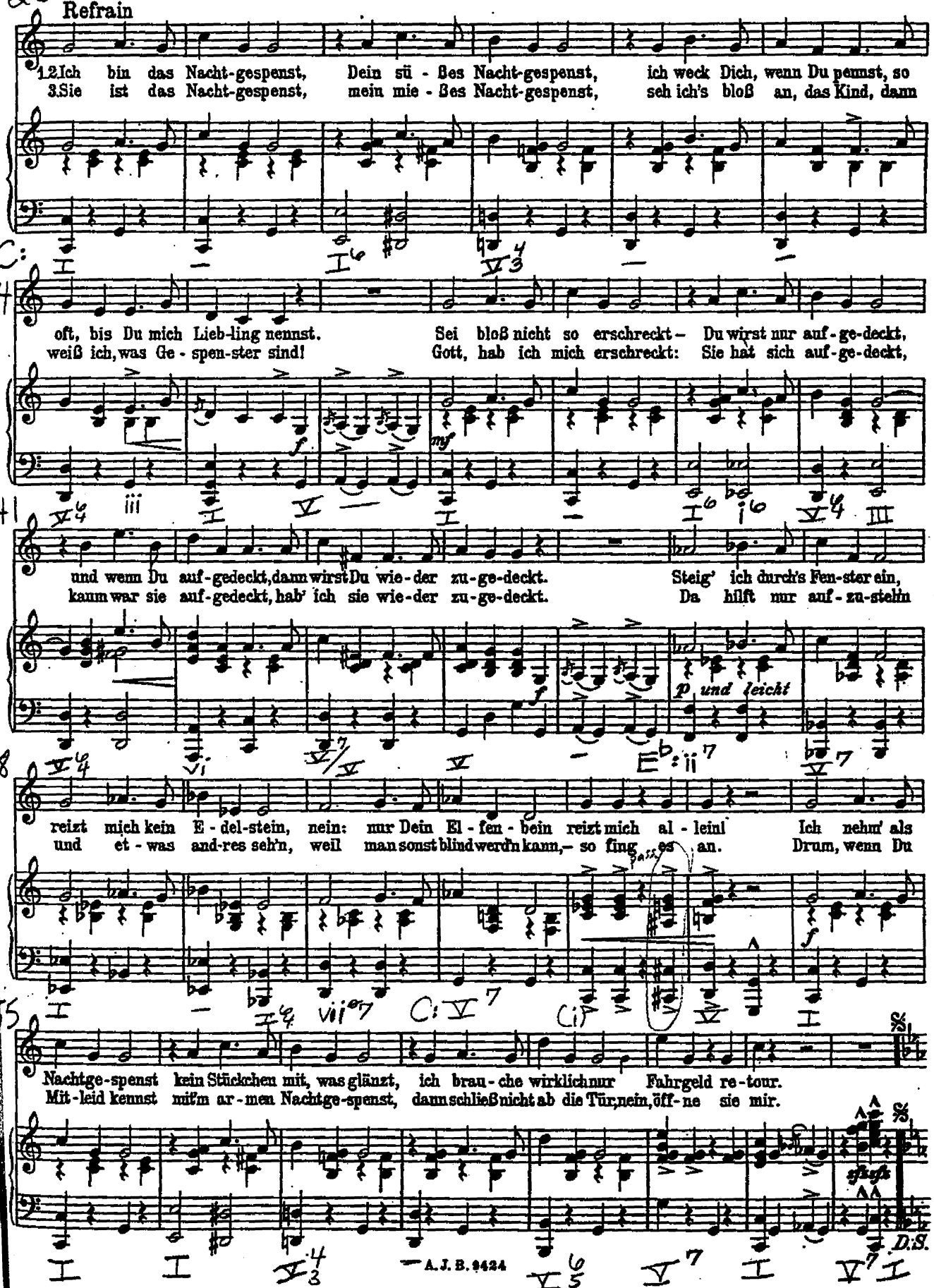
Musik von Rudolf Nelson



A. J. B. 9424

28

Refrain


1.2.Ich bin das Nacht-gespenst, Dein sü - ßes Nacht-gespenst, ich weck Dich, wenn Du pennst, so
3.Sie ist das Nacht-gespenst, mein mie - ßes Nacht-gespenst, seh ich's bloß an, das Kind, dann
C:
34
oft, bis Du mich Lieb-ling nennst. Sei bloß nicht so erschreckt – Du wirst nur auf - ge-deckt,
weiß ich, was Ge - spen-ster sind! Gott, hab ich mich erschreckt: Sie hat sich auf - ge-deckt,
41
und wenn Du auf - gedeckt, dann wirst Du wie - der zu - ge-deckt. Steig' ich durch's Fen-ster ein,
kaum war sie auf - gedeckt, hab' ich sie wie - der zu - ge-deckt. Da hilft nur auf - zu-stehn
p und leicht
48
reizt mich kein E - del-stein, nein: nur Dein El - fen - bein reizt mich al - lein! Ich nehm' als
und et - was and-res seh'n, weil man sonst blind werd'n kann, – so fing es an. Drum, wenn Du
55
Nachtge-spenst kein Stückchen mit, was glänzt, ich brau - che wirklich nur Fahrgeld re - tour.
Mit - leid kennst mit'm ar - men Nachtge-spenst, dann schließ nicht ab die Tür, nein, öff - ne sie mir.
D.S.

5-a

> posed a poem and adapted it to a well-known melody. Soon afterwards, all the people of the *shtetl* sang his rhymes. . . . When the ghetto was sealed and Yankele did not have anything on which to survive, he knew that Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski was responsible for that; and this was what most of the ghetto inhabitants thought. . . . Thus he composed the song about Rumkowski . . . and adapted the lyrics to an old folk melody. . . . (1969:34–35)

In the ghetto, where no radios were allowed, newspapers forbidden, and political gatherings outlawed, the only form of expression still permitted (albeit supervised) was singing. Thus, it is not surprising that the "king of the ghetto"—Chaim Rumkowski—became the theme of "Rumkowski Chaim," a song that was to be the ghetto's greatest "hit."

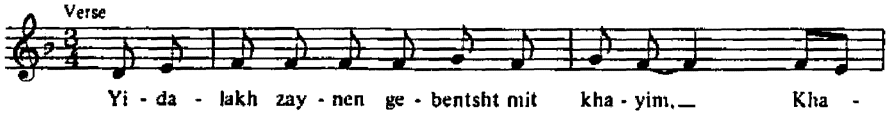
Yankele Hershkowitz was accompanied, some survivors observe, by a musical instrument. However, there is some debate over the instrument used. The conflicting reports prove one thing at any rate: his accompaniment was most likely an ad-hoc affair determined by the availability of instruments and accompanists.

Hershkowitz uses a verse-refrain structure for this song as well as for most of his songs. These are most likely contrafact, that is, songs created by setting new words to a pre-existing melody, a method traditional among folk poets who are also folksingers. According to Beregovski, the "new" satirical songs "largely use the devices of contrast and parody, as did the older satirical songs . . ." (1982:34). My research has not yielded an original source for the melody of "Rumkowski Chaim," and it is more than likely that Hershkowitz drew his melody from the body of Yiddish folk tunes.

The version I present here is one I recorded in Israel during the summer of 1985.[4] It was sung by Yaakov Rotenberg, a survivor of the Lodz ghetto who was fourteen when the ghetto was sealed. The text is transcribed into Latin characters according to the pronunciation of the informant in his special Lodz dialect. An English translation is provided along with the Yiddish. (The words in the lyrics which are marked with an asterisk are discussed in note 4.)

Song 1

Rumkovski khayim (Rumkowski Chaim)



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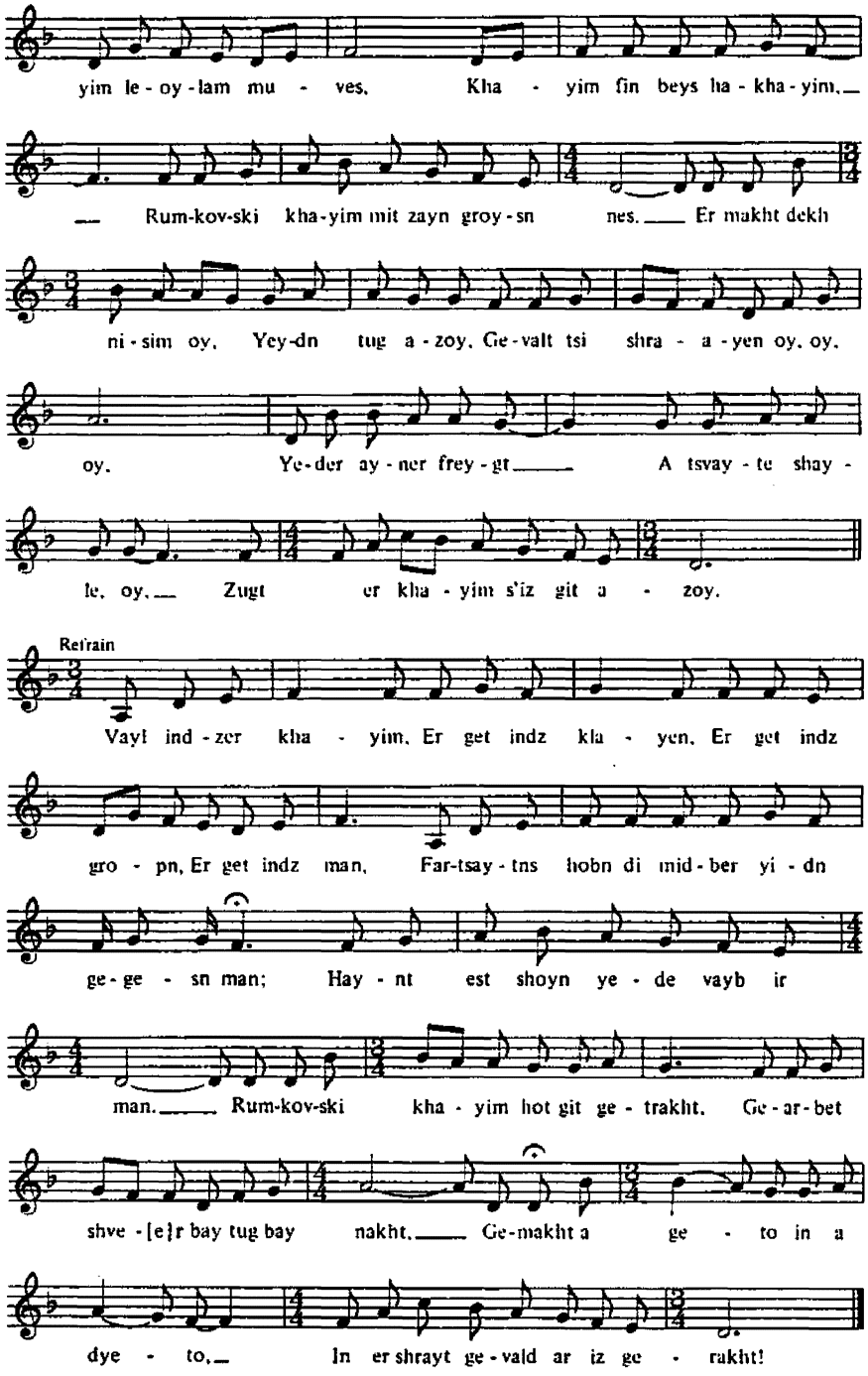
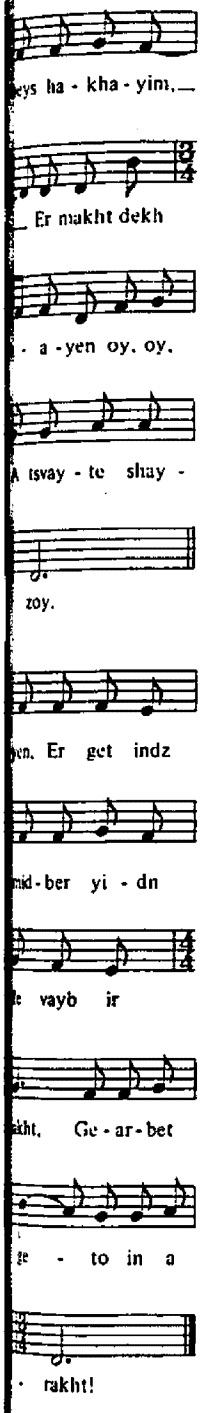

yim le - oy - lam mu - ves. Kha - yim fin beys ha - kha - yim.
Rum-kov-ski kha-yim mit zayn groy - sn nes. Er makht dekh
ni - sim oy. Yey-dn tug a - zoy. Ge - valt tsi shra - a - yen oy, oy.
oy. Ye-der ay - ner frey - gt A tsvay - te shay -
le, oy. Zugt er kha - yim s'iz git a - zoy.
Refrain
Vayl ind - zer kha - yim, Er get indz kla - yen, Er get indz
gro - pn, Er get indz man, Far-tsay - tns hobn di mid - ber yi - dn
ge - ge - sn man; Hay - nt est shoyn ye - de vayb ir
man. Rum-kov-ski kha - yim hot git ge - trakht. Ge - ar - bet
shve - [e]r bay tug bay nakht. Ge-makht a ge - to in a
dye - to, In er shrayt ge - vald ar iz ge - rakht!



Verse 1:
Yidalakh zaynen gebentsht mit khayim,
Khayim leoylam muves,
Khayim fin beys ha'khayim,
Rumkovski khayim mit zayn groysn nes.
Er makht dekh nisim oy,
Yeydn tug azoy,
Gevalt tsi shrayen oy, oy, oy,
Yeyder ayner freygt:
A tsvayte shayle, oy,
Zugt er khayim s'iz git azoy!

Refren:
Vayl [er iz] indzer khayim,
Er get indz klayen,
Er get indz gropn,
Er get indz man.*
Fartsaytns hobn di midber yidn gegesn man;
Haynt est shoyn yede vayb ir man.
Rumkovski khayim hot git getrakht,
Gearbet shver bay tug bay nakht,
Gemakht a geto in a dyeto
In er shrayt gevald a[z] [e]r iz gerakht!

Verse 2:
Khayim vaytsman hot gezugt:
Az er vil di yidn in palestine hobn.
Hot zay gehaysn akern zeyen,
Er hot zay dortn tif bagrubn;
Ober indzer khayim'l,
Rumkovski khayim,
Er get indz yeydn tug shrayim:
Aynem a shtik broyt,
In tsveytn a shtik ferd,
Me leygt bay eyem oyekh tif'n drerd.

Refren: Vayl iz indzer . . .

Verse 3:
Der driter khayim fin beys ha'khayim,
Hot mit malkhe [ha]muves a git gesheft gemakht:
Er zol im tsishteln maysim vus mer;
Er zol im tsishteln bay tug bay nakht.
Hot zekh der malekh ha'muves genimen
Tsi der arbet shnel.
Er makht fin yedn giber* oy a tel:
Er makht des flink,
Er makht des git.
Er makht di gantse geto* shvakh in mid.

Refren: Vayl iz indzer . . .

Verse 4:
In a zimer tug,
Geveyzn iz a tug a hayser,
Geyt rumkovski in der gas,
Er zet dokh oys vi a keyser.
A hele antsug, oy,
In tinkele briln,
Politsay arim bevakht.
Iekh zug aykh guer
Indzer keyser hot groue huer;
Leybn zol er gantse hindert yuer!

Refren: Vayl iz indzer . . .

Verse 5:
Rumkovski khayim der eltster yude,
Iz ungeshtelt bay di gestapo.
Meye yidalakh zaynen zayne bruder,
In er farzorgt indz di papo.
Er makht dekh nisim oy,
Yeydn tug azoy
Gevald tsi shrayen oy, oy, oy!
Yeyder ayner freygt:
A tsvayte shayle oy?
Zugt er khayim: s'iz git azoy!

Verse 1:
Jews are seen to be blessed with life,
Life until death,
Life from the house of life,
Rumkowski Chaim and his great miracle.
He makes miracles, oy,
So every day,
For heaven's sake, oy, oy, oy,
Everyone asks:
A second question, oy?
Chaim says: It's good this way!

Refrain:
Because [he is] our Chaim*
He gives us bran,
He gives us barley,
He gives us manna.*
Once upon a time Jews of the desert ate manna;
Now each woman eats her husband.
Rumkowski Chaim thought it through,

Worked hard day and night,
Made a ghetto with a diet (store),*
And claims gevald that he is right!

Verse 2:
Chaim Weizmann said:
He wants to have the Jews in Palestine.
He told them to plow, sow,
He did them in there deep;
But, our Chaim,
Rumkowski Chaim,
Everyday he gives us leftovers:
One a piece of bread,
The other a piece of horse,
And we are also done in deep.

Refrain: . . .

Verse 3:
The third Chaim of the house of life,
Made a good deal with the angel of death:
He should provide him more and more corpses;
He should provide them day and night.
So, the angel of death
Got to work right away.
He makes a mess out of every hero:
He does it quickly,
He does it well.
He makes the whole ghetto weak and tired.

Refrain: . . .

Verse 4:
On a summer day,
It was a very hot day,
Rumkowski walked in the street,
And looked like a Royal Highness.
He wore a light-colored suit, oy,
And dark glasses,
Surrounded by the police.
I tell you
Our Royal Highness has gray hair;
May he live to be a hundred!

Refrain: . . .

Verse 5:
Rumkowski Chaim, the Eldest of the Jews,
Is employed by the Gestapo.
We Jews are his brothers,

And he supplies our food.
He makes miracles, oy,
So every day,
For heaven's sake, oy, oy, oy!
Everyone asks:
A second question, oy?
Chaim says: It's good this way!

I have recorded an additional verse on Rumkowski, from Yaakov Flam, sung to the same melody. This verse was recalled and published by Frenkiel (1986b:43–44), a survivor of the Lodz ghetto who considers it an independent song and not as a verse of this "hit song," even though it is sung to the same melody:

Verse 6:
Ikh hob aykh yidelekh epes tsi zugn:
A kadakhes vel ikh aykh zugn.
Di yidelekh zugn shoyn fil nevues,
"Az di geto efenen vet men shevues!"
A tsveytn tug er redt,
Yidelekh makhn shoyn a gevet
Un lernen zekh shoyn vayter trefn;
Rumkovski fin di yidelekh lakht:
"A krenk vus ir trakht!"
Di geto blaybt oykh vayter git farmakht.

Verse 6:
I've got for you, Jews, something to tell you:
It's a big nothing I've got to tell you.
The Jews mouth many prophecies already,
"The Ghetto will open
on Shavuot!"
A second day he makes a speech,
Jews are already betting
And trying to guess;
But Rumkowski laughs at the Jews:
"Who cares what you think!"
And still the ghetto stays tightly closed.

The song, especially the refrain, is known to every survivor of the Lodz ghetto. In addition, Yaakov Rotenberg even calls it *ha-shir ha-gadol* in Hebrew, meaning the "hit" song of the ghetto. Rachmil Bryks quotes the refrain in his novel *Der kayser in geto* (The emperor in the ghetto) and describes children and adults singing it, accompanying themselves with hand clapping and foot stamping

er mit a flash.

tsu - re.

ferred positions held in the ghetto. In doing that, of course, he did not consider the relevant qualifications but rather the relationship according to his "understanding."

This song was sung toward the end of 1940 and was remembered by many survivors because of its satirical but realistic description of "Uncle Leml." "Uncle Leml" rhymes in another version with "Kuni Leml," one of the stock characters from the Yiddish theater, from the play *Kuni Leml* (1870) by Goldfadn.

Frenkiel (1986b:48) includes a second verse which presents the same idea with another example of the system of "favoritism":

A komisar ken ikh zayer a kliger.
Ikh gay mit aykh a gevet:
Az onfirn ken er nor mit flign,
Dertsu iz er an analfabet.

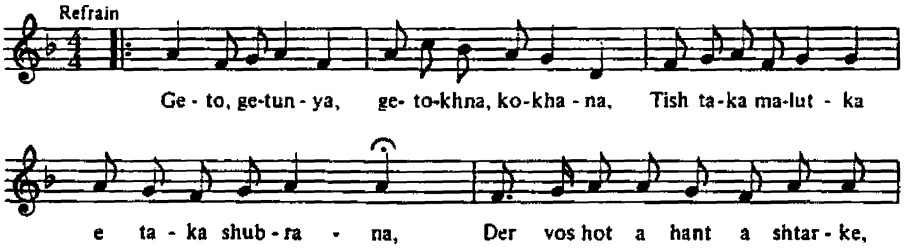
I know a clever Komisar.
I'll make with you a bet:
That only flies would follow him,
Besides which he's illiterate.

Following the publication of his article (1986b), Frenkiel claimed in a meeting with me that this song was not composed by Yankele Hershkowitz but by the theater writer Shimeon Janowski. It may have been that the song was first introduced in the theater and was later sung in the streets, a common "way" for popular tunes.

The melody, in a minor key, reminds the listener of the internationally popular tango due to its rhythmic pattern in which all beats are sharply accented and occasionally interrupted by sudden pauses or emphatically syncopated passages. The tango remained popular throughout the twentieth century, and its popularity was probably the reason for its use in this context.

Song 3

Geto, getunya (Ghetto, Oh Little Ghetto)



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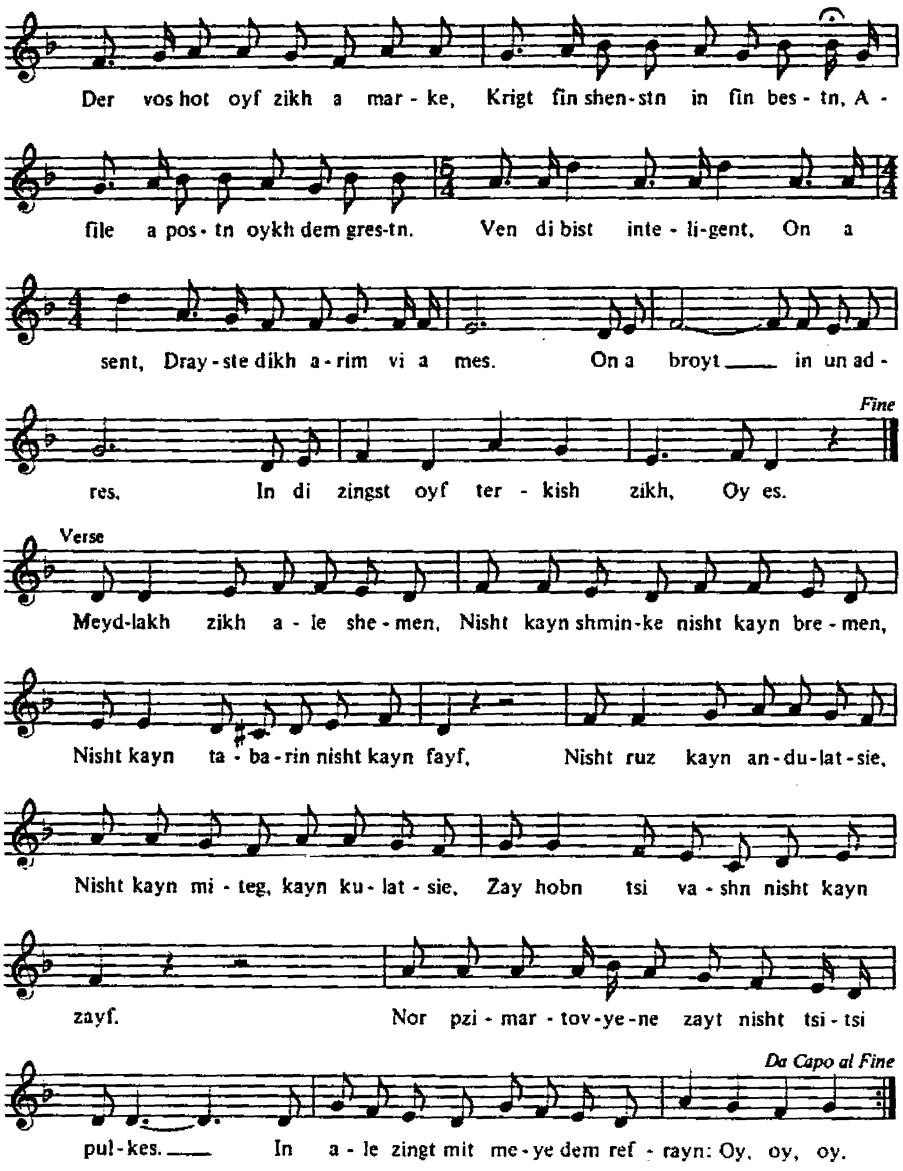

Refren:
Geto, getunya, getokhna, kokhana,
Tish taka malutka e taka shubrana,
Der vos hot a hant a shtarke,
Der vos hot oyf zikh a marke,
Krigt fin shenstn in fin bestn,
Afile a postn oykh dem grestn.
Ven di bist inteligent,

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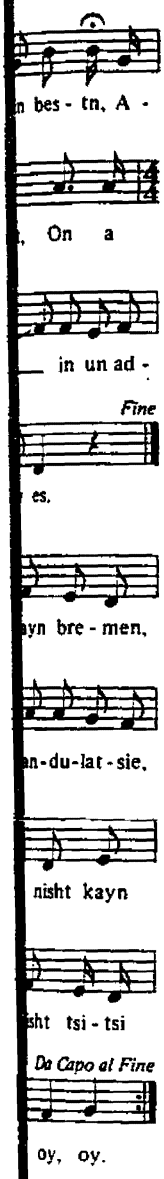


On a sent,
Drayste dikh arim vi a mes.
On a broyt in un adres,
In di zingst oyf terkish zikh,
Oy es (yes).

Verse 1:
Meydlakh zikh ale shemen,
Nisht kayn shminke nisht kayn bremen,
Nisht kayn tabarin nisht kayn fayf,
Nisht ruz kayn andulatsie,
Nisht kayn miteg, kayn kulatsie,
Zay hobn tsi vashn nisht kayn zayf.
Nor pzimartovyene zayt nisht tsitsi pulkes.
In ale zingt mit meye dem refrayn:
Oy, oy, oy.

Refren: Geto, getunya . . .

Verse 2:
Nisht zorgn in nisht kleyrn,
S'vet bay indz git nokh veyrn,
S'vet dekh kartofl oykh du zayn.
Men iz shoyn korev meykakh,
Yom tov vet men esn leykekh,
Trinkn fin gropn karmel vayn,
Nor pzimartovyene zayt nisht tsitsi pulkes.
In ale zingt mit meye dem refrayn:
Oy, oy, oy.

Refren: Geto, getunya . . .

Refrain:
Ghetto, oh little ghetto, oh ghetto my love,
You are so small and so poor,
Everyone who has a strong hand,
Everyone who wears the mark,
Gets the best of everything,
He also gets a job—the best.
However, if you are intelligent,
Without a cent,
You will walk around like the dead.
With no bread and no address,
And you will sing to yourself in Turkish,
Oy, eat! (Oh yes).

Verse 1:
The girls are all ashamed,
They've got no makeup, got no eyeliner,
No bed, no whistling,

No rouge, no permanent-wave hair,
No lunch, no dinner,
They have not got soap to wash themselves.
Just do not be cheap women.
So everyone sing with me the refrain:
Oy, oy, oy

Refrain: Ghetto, oh little ghetto . . .

Verse 2:
Do not worry and don't fret,
Someday things will be good for us here,
We will soon eat potatoes here.
The time will come, soon,
We will eat cake on holidays,
We will drink Carmel wine,
Just do not be cheap women.
So everyone sing with me the refrain:
Oy, oy, oy

Refrain: Ghetto, oh little ghetto . . .

This song, composed and sung by Yankele Hershkowitz, is a commentary on events that took place in the ghetto during late summer 1940.[4] The burdens of distress and lack of work caused the ghetto inhabitants to protest against Rumkowski, and they held demonstrations. Rumkowski, whose life was threatened, decided to establish a Jewish police for personal protection, the *Sonderkommando,* which was detailed for internal affairs. To this special police section he appointed all the physically strong men he could find in the ghetto.

Full of irony, the song begins with the refrain as a love song for a woman. The small, weak woman, however, symbolizes the ghetto inhabitants, while the strong men are the *Sonderkommando;* they are there not really to keep the women alive but to keep themselves alive, strong, and happy. The strong man gets "the best of everything, he also gets a job—the best," while the "poor, intelligent" man "walks around like the dead."

And what is left for the inhabitants? Singing. In every language they are singing that they want to eat. In one version I recorded, the informant (Itka Slodowsky) substituted "Oy yes" for "Oy es."[5] Noting the bilingual pun, she explained that it was proof the audience was sophisticated and expected to comprehend such wordplay.

In this song the whole situation is described in negative terms. The verse uses a number of ghetto slang words, such as *kolacja* (Yidd.: *kulatsie*), a Polish word for "dinner"; in this context it refers

5-c

to a meal given as a prize to the good workers once in fourteen days at the public kitchens (Dobroszycki 1984:510).

The second verse has a different ending in Frenkiel (1986b:47) and in *Min Hametsar* (Blumental 1951:132–33), which was probably forgotten by Rotenberg and even Slodowsky; they therefore repeat the same ending as the first verse. I should mention that Rotenberg and Slodowsky met to "complete" the fragments for each other.

Frenkiel's versions are very helpful in explaining some of the text's "illogical" content. In Frenkiel's essay and in *Min Hametsar*, the last two lines of the verse bring back the "favoritism" idea of Rumkowski's specially appointed henchmen:

Der vos hot vet esn dubeltove,
Un der vos nisht—
Vet grizsen a bayn.

The one who has will eat double portions,
And the one who has not—
Will chew on a bone.

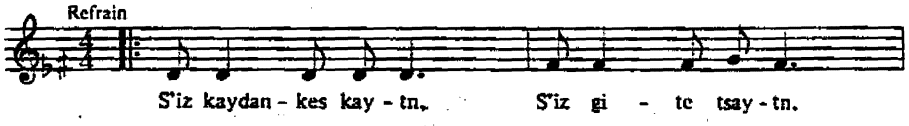
The beginning of the verse sounds optimistic. To paraphrase, "we will soon eat potatoes, . . . cakes, . . . we shall drink Carmel wine." For the singer, however, these are only past memories and hopes for the future, while for Rumkowski's favorites these benefits constitute the present.

Min Hametsar (Blumental 1951:132–33) has a third verse to the song, in which the inhabitants are called upon to produce new babies so they can get more money to buy the food rations. The underlying implication is, of course, that it is foolhardy to do that.

The melody of this song is probably of Jewish origin. It is reminiscent of a Jewish cumulative song such as "A Geneyve" (Rubin 1985:10). Humorous songs of this type are common in Yiddish folk tradition. "A Geneyve" and "Geto getunya's" verses are based on short melodic motives in sequences to which one could add ever-increasing numbers of sequences according to the lyrics.

Song 4

S'iz kaydankes kaytn (It's Shackles and Chains)



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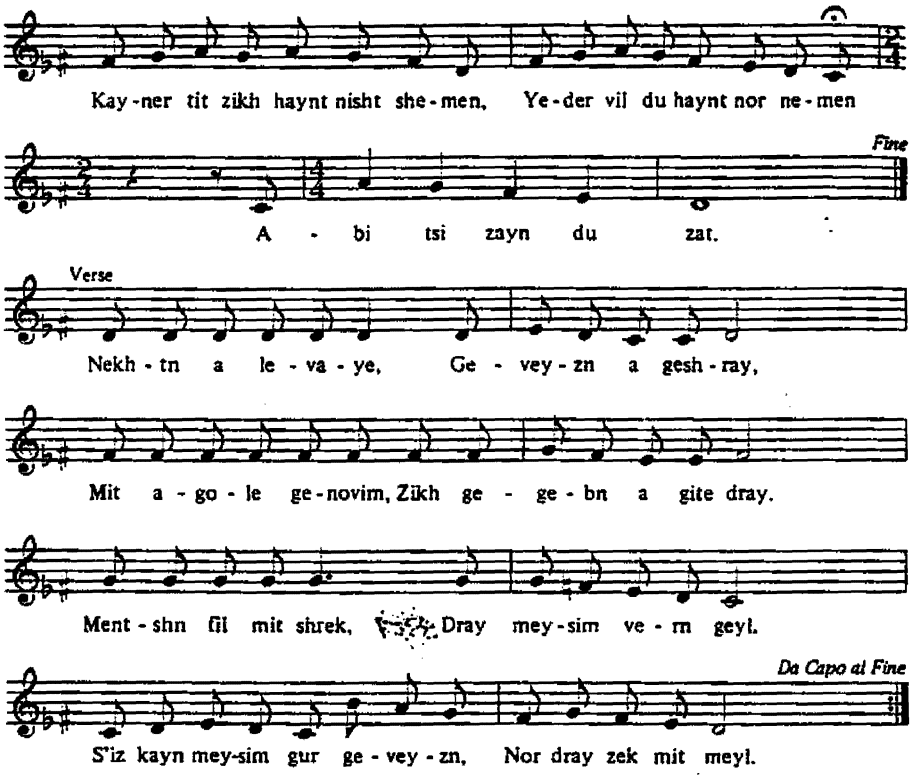
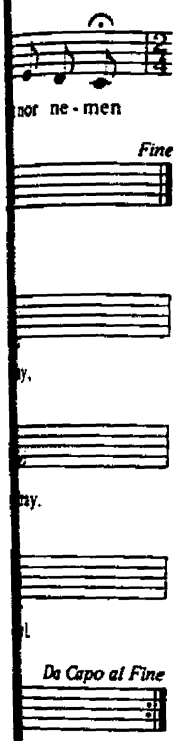


Refren:
S'iz kaydankes kaytn,
S'iz gite tsaytn,
Kayner tit zikh haynt nisht shemen,
Yeder vil du haynt nor nemen;
Abi tsi zayn du zat.

Verse 1:
Nekhtn a levaye,
Geveyzn a geshray,
Mit agole genovim,
Zikh gegebn a gite dray.
Mentshn fil mit shrek,
Dray meysim vern geyl.
S'iz kayn meysim gur geveyzn,
Nor dray zek mit meyl.

Refren:
S'iz kaydankes kaytn . . .

Verse 2:
S'ganvet moyshe, s'ganvet khayim,
S'ganvet oyekh nisl.



Mit yadayim nemt men shrayim
Fin di kohel's shisl.
Afile pesl fin'm kesl,
Nemt oyekh arup.
Yedn tug gist men vaser,
Dus iz indzer zup.

Refren:
S'iz kaydankes kaytn . . .

Verse 3:
[Rumkovski speaks:] Rumkovski zogt:
Hit aykh fil genovim,
Ikh vel aykh arestirn!
Ikh vel di gantse geto
Oyf aygene hent firn.
In oykh a priv koperativ:
Ale zenen blat!
S'iz fil meysim, fil taneysim,
Ver iz haynt dn zat?

Refren:
S'iz kaydankes kaytn . . .

Refrain:
It's shackles and chains,
It's good times again,
No one feels shame,
Everyone only wants to grab;
Just so his stomach will be full.

Verse 1:
Yesterday, a funeral,
There was an outcry,
A cart with thieves,
Turned upside down.
People were aghast,
Three "corpses" turning yellow.
But not corpses after all,
Just three sacks of flour.

Refrain:
It's shackles and chains . . .

Verse 2:
Moishe steals, Chaim steals,
Nissl steals as well.
With their hands they grab leftovers
From the community pot.
Even Pessl from the kettle
Grabs whatever's in there.

Every day they add some water,
This is our soup.

Refrain:
It's shackles and chains . . .

Verse 3:
[Rumkowski speaks:]
Be on guard, all you thieves,
I'll arrest you!
I want the entire ghetto
Under our firm, strong hand.
By decree of the Cooperative:
All of you are guilty!
There are corpses, there is mourning,
Who is full today?

Refrain:
It's shackles and chains . . .

"Kaydankes kaytn" was composed by Yankele Hershkowitz as a commentary on the thievery common in the ghetto, and on one event in particular: the theft of three sacks of flour in the guise of a funeral. The versions of the song as remembered by Yaakov Rotenberg and Itka Slodowsky are nearly identical; Yaakov Flam's rendition, however, differed in the number and order of lines. The song dates from the early days of the ghetto, probably during the fall or winter of 1940. It is also included in the 1946 recordings of the Historical Committee of Munich, which are deposited in the National Sound Archives in Jerusalem. The recordings do not include any commentary or documentation.

The refrain describes the "good times" which came to the ghetto. Once more the poet uses the idea of "good" to mean "bad"—in this case, shortages of food, and low moral standards.

The second verse supplies the details of the general phenomenon described in the refrain: Who steals? Everyone. Ordinary people like Moishe, Chaim, Nissl, and even Pessl, the one who ladles the soup. What do they steal? *Shrayim* (leftovers). Here the text clearly parallels that of the popular ghetto song "Rumkowski Chaim," but with "Rumkowski Chaim" the special leftovers become ordinary poor leftovers.

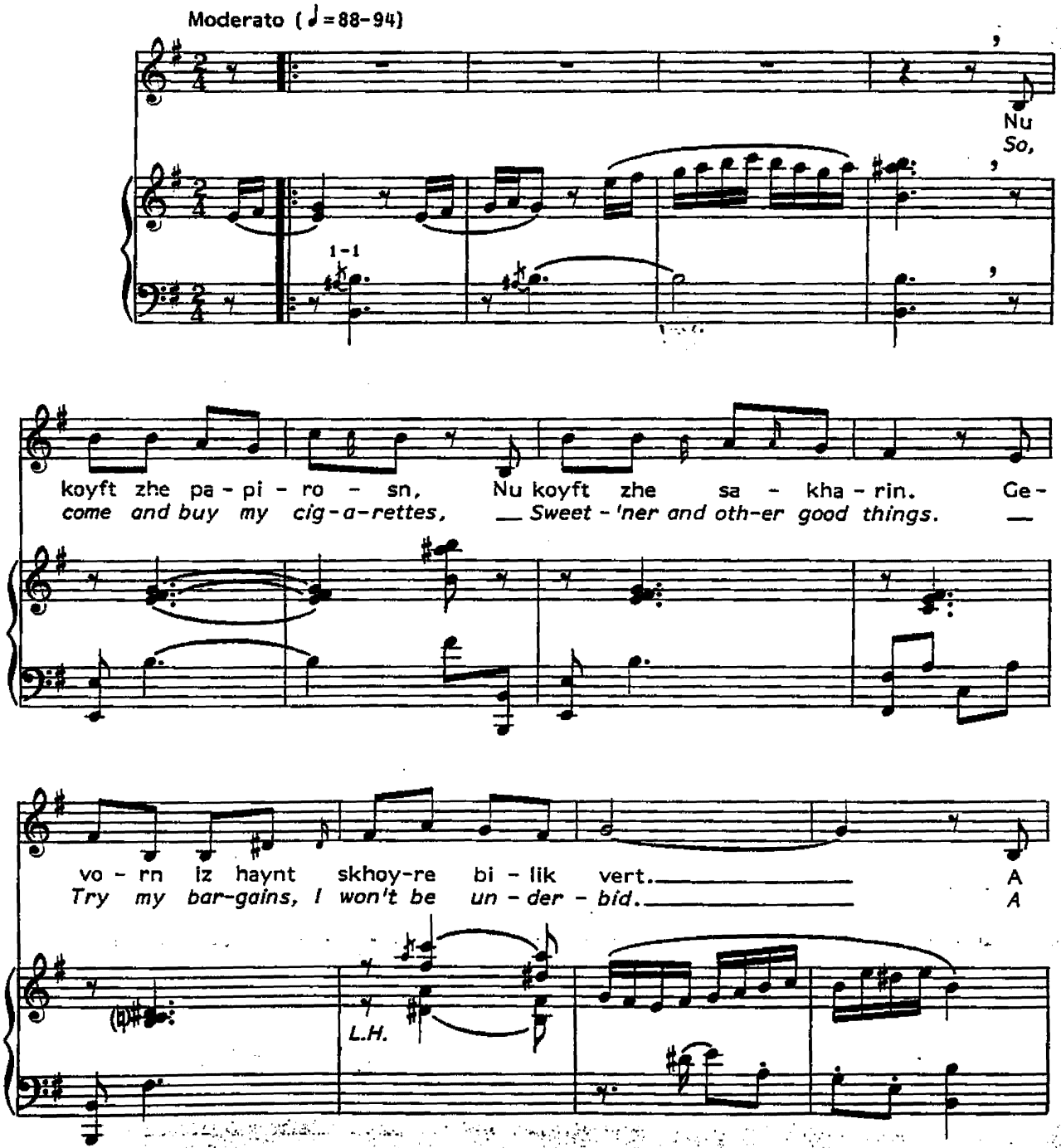
Theft, especially of food, was an everyday occurrence in the ghetto. The *Chronicle* reports many instances of thievery in the ghetto and expresses sympathy with the starving population at the same time. In the entry of 19 December 1943, for example, Oskar Rosenfeld

6-a

YISROLIK

Words by Lev Rozenthal

Music by Misha Veksler



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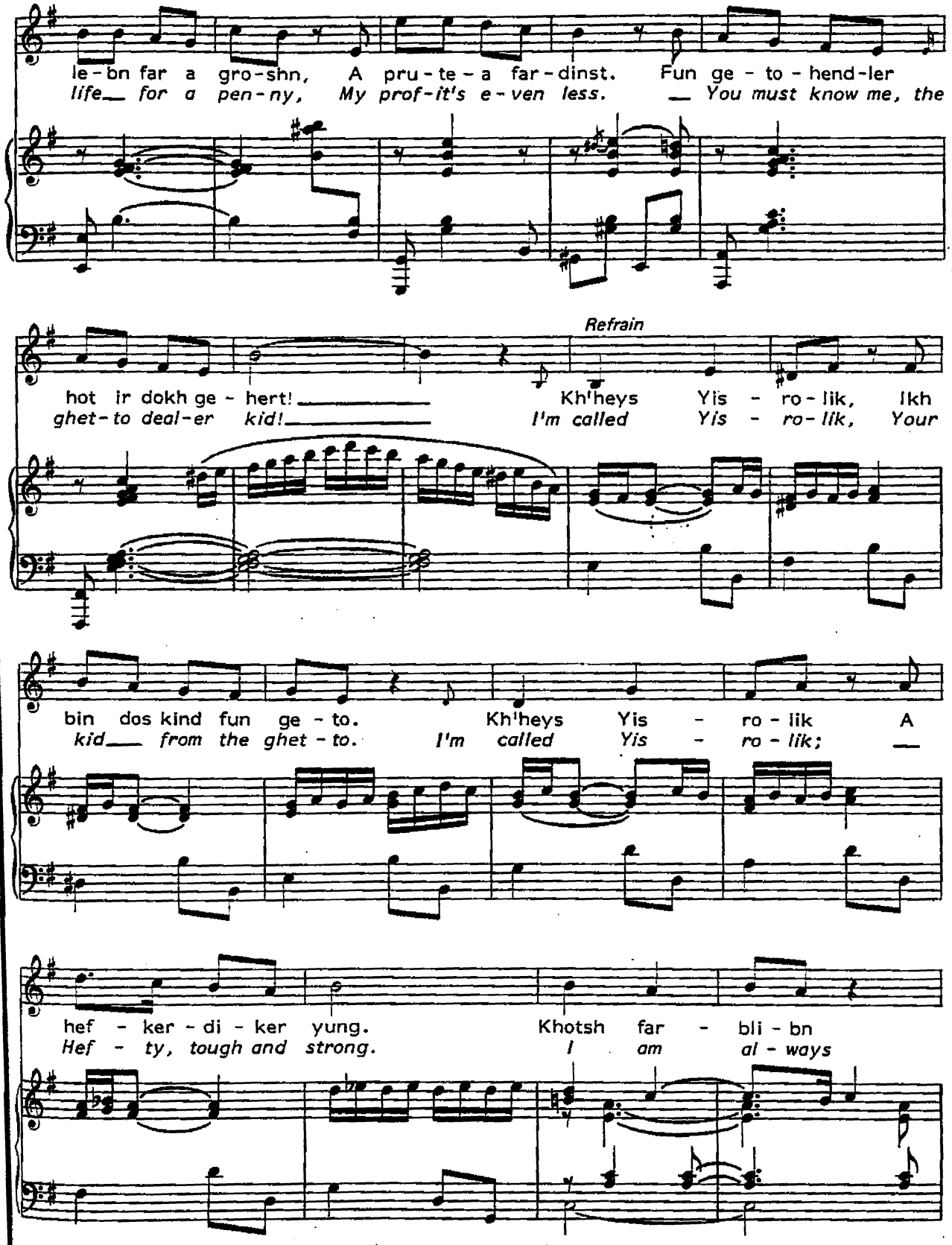
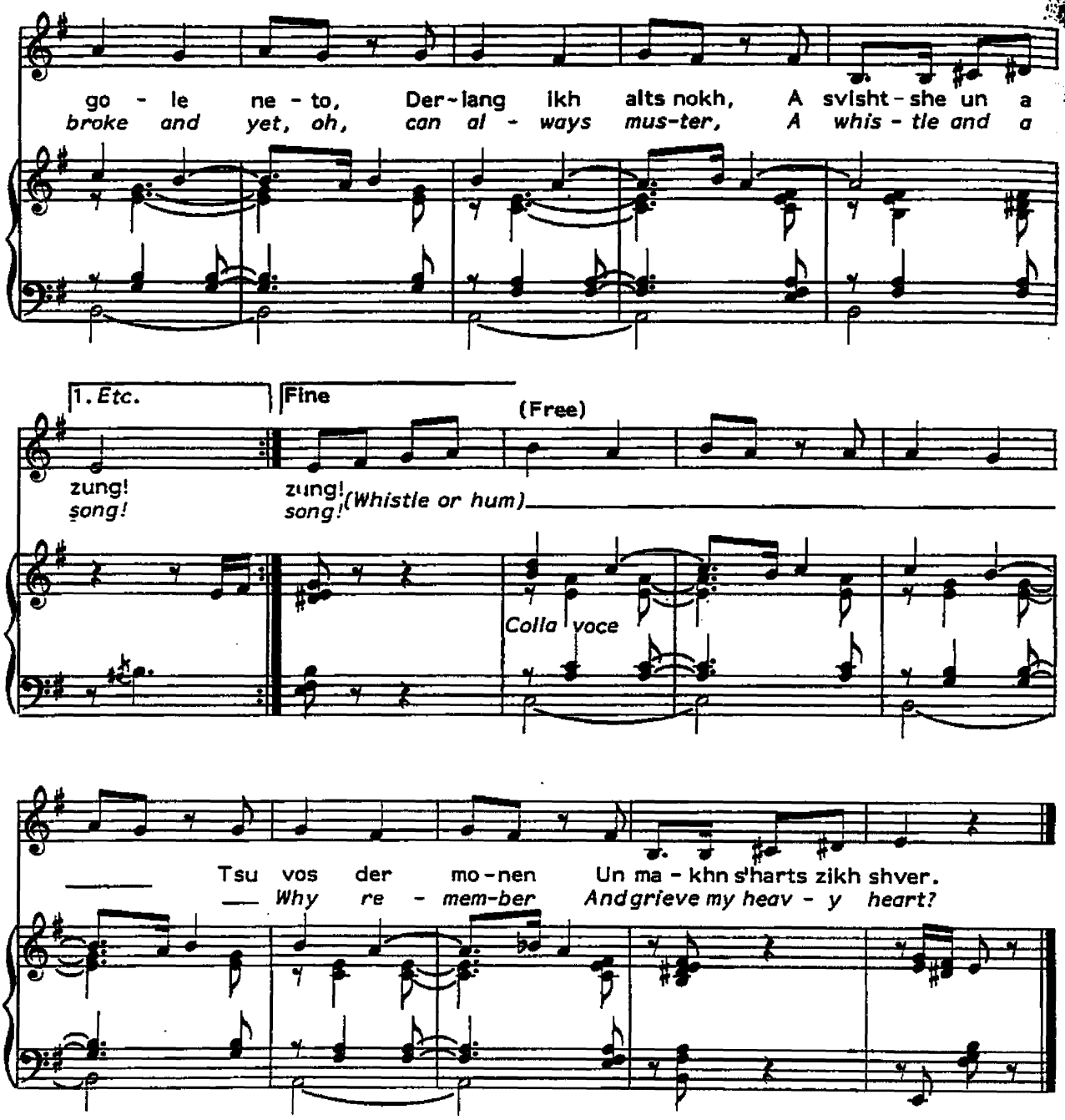

le-bn far a gro-shn, A pru-te-a far-dinst. Fun ge-to-hend-ler
life for a pen-ny, My prof-it's e-ven less. You must know me, the
Refrain
hot ir dokh ge-hert! Kh'heys Yis-ro-lik, Ikh
ghet-to deal-er kid! I'm called Yis-ro-lik, Your
bin dos kind fun ge-to. Kh'heys Yis-ro-lik A
kid from the ghet-to. I'm called Yis-ro-lik;
hef-ker-di-ker yung. Khotsh far-bli-bn
Hef-ty, tough and strong. I am al-ways

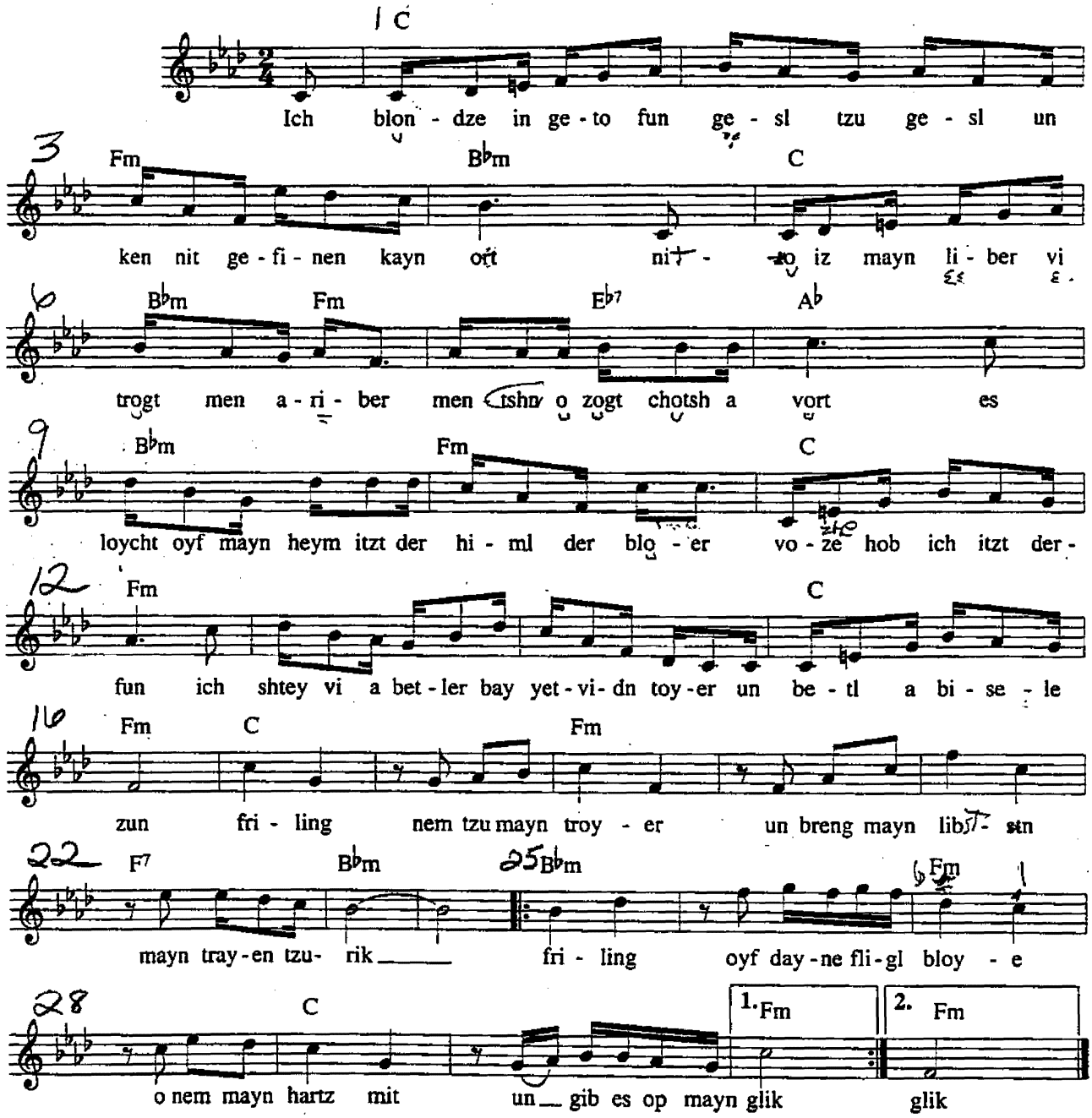

go - le ne - to, Der - lang ikh alts nokh, A svisht - she un a
broke and yet, oh, can al - ways mus-ter, A whis - tle and a
1. Etc.
Fine
(Free)
zung! zung!
song! song! (Whistle or hum)
Colla voce
Tsu vos der mo - nen Un ma - khn s'harts zikh shver.
Why re - mem-ber And grieve my heav - y heart?

Nu koyft zhe papirosn,	*So, come and buy my cigarettes,*
Nu koyft zhe sakharin.	*Sweet'ner and other good things.*
Gevorn iz haynt skhoyre bilik vert.	*Try my bargains, I won't be underbid.*
A lebn far a groshn,	*A life for a penny,*
A prute-a fardinst—	*My profit's even less.*
Fun geto-hendler hot ir dokh gehert.	*You must know me—the ghetto dealer kid.*
Refrain	Refrain
Kh'heys Yisrolik—	*I'm called Yisrolik—*
Ikh bin dos kind fun geto.	*Your kid from the ghetto.*
Kh'heys Yisrolik—	*I'm called Yisrolik—*
A hefkerdiker yung.	*Hefty, tough, and strong.*
Khotsh farblibn gole-neto,	*I'm always broke and yet, oh,*
Derlang ikh alts nokh	*I can always muster*
A svistshe un a zung!	*A whistle and a song!*
A mantl on a kragn,	*A coat without collar,*
Takhtoynim fun a zak;	*Pants made from a sack;*
Kaloshn hob ikh—s'feln nor di shikh.	*I have galoshes but no shoes inside.*
Un ver es vet nor vagn,	*No one better holler,*
Tsu lakhn; oy, a sakh—	*No one give me flak.*
Dem vel ikh nokh vayzn ver bin ikh!	*Don't laugh at me—you see, I have my pride!*
(Refrain)	(Refrain)
Nit meynt mikh hot geborn	*But that's not how I started*
Di hefkerdike gas.	*Out in this tough place.*
Bay tate-mame oykh geven a kind.	*Mother, father made me a loving home.*
Kh'hob beydn ongevorn,	*But now I'm brokenhearted,*
Nit meynt es iz a shpas—	*It's no joke to face—*
Kh'bin geblibn vi in feld der vint.	*I'm left like the wind in the field, alone.*
Refrain	Refrain
Kh'heys Yisrolik—	*I'm called Yisrolik—*
Nor ven keyner zet nit	*And when no one sees me,*
Vish ikh shtil zikh.	*Quietly I wipe away a tear.*
Fun oyg arop a trer.	*Of grief I've had my part.*
Nor fun mayn troyer—	*Let's not talk about it—*
Beser az men redt nit,	*Why remember*
Tsu vos dermonen	*And grieve my heavy heart?*
Un makhn s'harts zikh shver.	

6-b

Friling

Andante



Text - Sh. Kaczerginsky (Vilna ghetto)
Music - A. Brudno

The words were written after the death of the author Mrs. Barbara (from the house of Kufman of Crackow) in April 1943. It was later sung by Rochel Rudnitski on the small art-stage "Di Yogenesh in Fas". Later the song was sung in other ghettos, camps and partisan camps.

פרילינג

I wander in the ghetto	Ich blondzhe in geto	איך בלאנדזשע אין געטא
From street to street	Fun gesl tsu gesl	פון געסל צו געסל
And can't find any place:	Un ken nit gefinen keyn ort:	און קען נים בעפינען קיין אָרט:
My beloved isn't here,	Nito iz mayn liber,	ניטא איז מיין ליבער,
How can one stand it? -	Vi trogt men ariber? -	ווי טראָגט מען אַריבער? —
People, please, speak to me.	Mentshn, o zogt chotsh a vort.	מענטשן, אָ זאָגט כאָטש אַ וואָרט.
Now on my house shines	Es loycht oyf mayn heym yetst	עס לויכט אויף מיין היים איצט
The blue skies -	Der himl der bloyer -	דער הימל דער בלויער —
What does that mean to me now?	Vos zhe hob ich yetst derfun?	וואָס זשע האָב איך איצט דערפון?
I stand like a beggar	Ich shtey vi a betler	איך שטיי ווי אַ בעטלער
By every gate	Bay yetvidn toyer	ביי יעטווידן טויער
And beg, - a little bit of sun.	Un betl, - a bisele zun.	און בעטל, — אַ ביסעלע זון.

צ ו ז י נ ג:

Springtime, take away my grief,	Friling, nem tsu mayn troyer,	פרילינג, נעם צו מיין טרויער,
And bring my loved one,	Un breng mayn libstn,	און ברענג מיין ליבסטן,
My true one back.	Mayn trayen tsurik.	מיין טרייען צוריק.
Springtime, on your blue wings,	Friling, oyf dayne fligl bloye,	פרילינג, אויף דיינע פֿליגל בלויע,
Take my heart with you	O nem mayn harts mit	אָ נעם מיין האַרץ מיט
And return my happiness.	Un gib es op mayn glik.	און גיב עס אָפּ מיין גליק.
I go to work	Ich gey tsu der arbet	איך גיי צו דער אַרבעט
Past our little house,	Farbay undzer shtibl,	פֿאַרביי אונדזער שטיבל,
In mourning - the gate is shut.	In troyer - der toyer farmacht.	אין טרויער — דער טויער פֿאַרמאַכט.
The day is shattered,	Der tog a tsehelter,	דער טאָג אַ צעהעלטער,
The flowers wither	Di blumen farvelkte,	די בלומען פֿאַרוועלקטע,
They fade, for them it is night too.	Zey vianen, - far zey iz oych nacht.	זיי ווייַנען, — פֿאַר זיי איז אויך נאַכט.
In the evening on my way back,	Farnacht oyf tsurikvegs,	פֿאַרנאַכט אויף צוריקוועגס,
My sorrow haunts me,	Es noyet der troyer,	עס נויעט דער טרויער,
Right here, darling, you waited.	Ot do hostu, libster, gevart.	אָט דאָ האָסטו, ליבסטער, געוואַרט.
Right here in the shadow	Ot do inem shotn	אָט דאָ אינעם שאָטן
Your footstep is familiar,	Noch kentik dayn trot iz,	נאָך קענטיק דיין טראָט איז,
You kissed me lovingly and gently.	Flegst kushn mich liblich un tsart.	פֿלעגסט קושן מיך ליבלעך און צאַרט.
It is springtime again this year	S'iz hay-yor der friling	ס'איז הייַיאָר דער פרילינג
And it came quite early.	Gor fri ongekumen,	גאָר פרי אָנגעקומען,
My yearning for you has bloomed.	Tseblit hot zich benkshaft noch dir,	צעבליט האָט זיך בענקשאַפֿט נאָך דיר,
I see you as if you were here	Ich ze dich vi itster	איך זע דיך ווי איצטער
Laden with flowers,	Balodn mit blumen,	באַלאָדן מיט בלומען,
Happily you come to me.	A freydiker geystu tsu mir.	אָ פֿרייַדיקער גייסטו צו מיר.
The sun has spilled	Di zun hot fargosn	די זון האָט פֿאַרגאָסן
The garden with sunbeams,	Dem gartn mit shtraln,	דעם גאָרטן מיט שטראַלן,
The earth has spread out in green.	Tseshprotst hot di erd zich in grin.	צעשפּרוצט האָט די ערד זיך אין גרין.
My true one, my darling,	Mayn troyer, mayn libster,	מיין טרייער, מיין ליבסטער,
Where have you gotten lost? -	Vu bistu farfaln? -	וואו ביסטו פֿאַרפֿאַלן? —
You never leave my memory.	Du geyst nit aroys fun mayn zin.	דו גייסט נים אַרויס פון מיין זין.

6-C

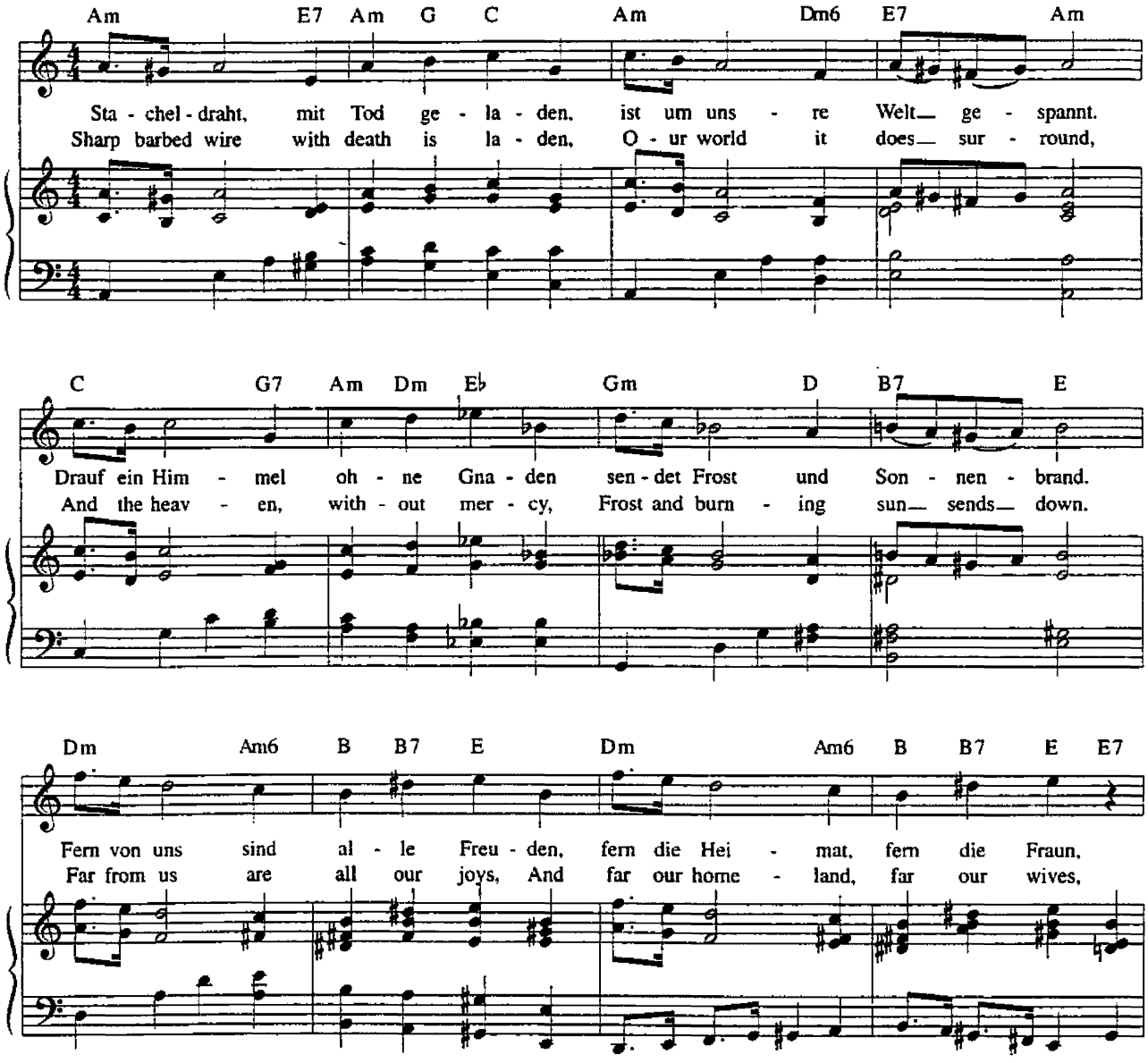
7. Dachau-Lied [a] (Dachau-Song [a])

Jura Soyfer was a well-known lyricist in the cabaret world of pre-war Vienna. He also wrote topical poetry for the *Arbeiterzeitung* ("Worker's Newspaper"). When the Germans marched into Vienna in March 1938 he attempted to escape to Switzerland but was captured and transported to the Dachau concentration camp that very same month. It was there he met the composer Herbert Zipper, and by that August the "Dachau Song" was born. The cynical inscription over the gate to the camp, *Arbeit macht frei* (Work Liberates), takes on new meaning in the chorus of this song. On his release from Dachau, Zipper brought the song to France, where it was sung in the internment camps. In March 1940 it was performed in the London exile cabaret *Laterndl* in the program "From Adam To Adolf."

Jura Soyfer was eventually transferred to Buchenwald where he died of typhus.

Words by Jura Soyfer

Music by Herbert Zipper



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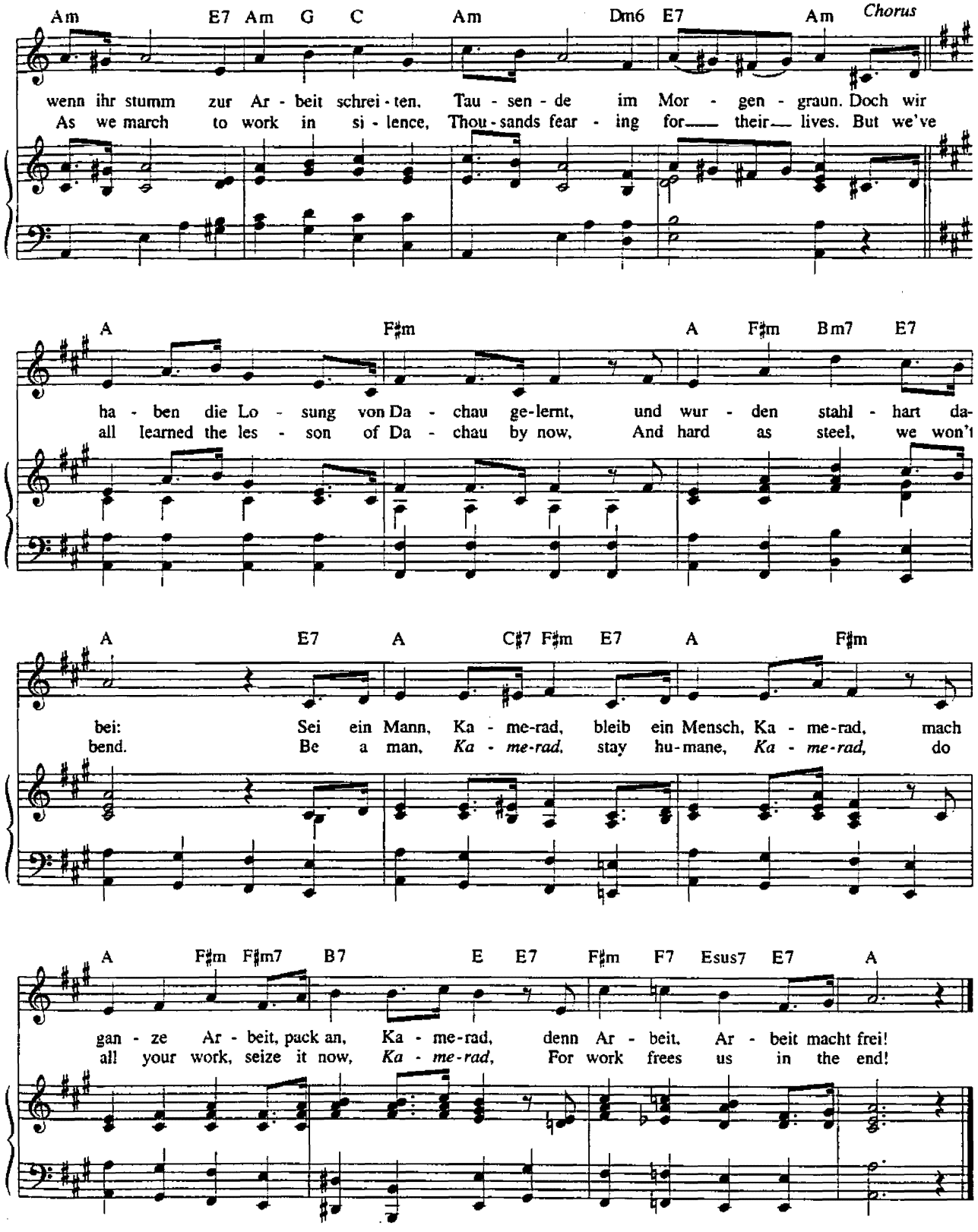
Am E7 Am G C Am Dm6 E7 Am Chorus
wenn ihr stumm zur Ar - beit schrei - ten, Tau - sen - de im Mor - gen - graun. Doch wir
As we march to work in si - lence, Thou - sands fear - ing for their lives. But we've
A F♯m A F♯m Bm7 E7
ha - ben die Lo - sung von Da - chau ge-lernt, und wur - den stahl - hart da-
all learned the les - son of Da - chau by now, And hard as steel, we won't
A E7 A C♯7 F♯m E7 A F♯m
bei: Sei ein Mann, Ka - me-rad, bleib ein Mensch, Ka - me-rad, mach
bend. Be a man, Ka - me-rad, stay hu-mane, Ka - me-rad, do
A F♯m F♯m7 B7 E E7 F♯m F7 Esus7 E7 A
gan - ze Ar - beit, pack an, Ka - me-rad, denn Ar - beit, Ar - beit macht frei!
all your work, seize it now, Ka - me-rad, For work frees us in the end!

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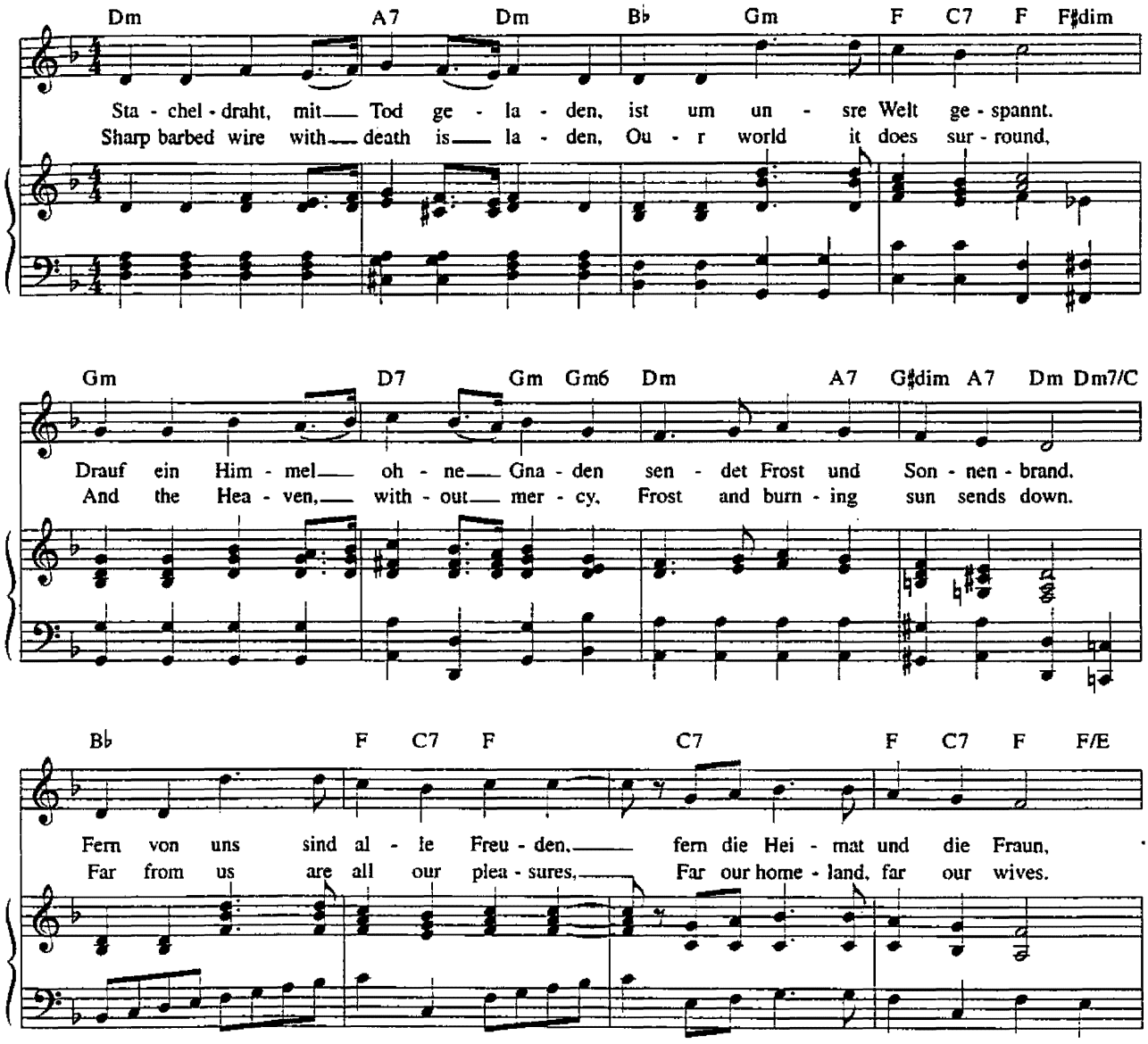
8. Dachau-Lied [b] (Dachau Song [b]) 6-d

In 1940, in the French internment camp at Damigni (near Alençon), a second setting of Soyfer's lyrics was composed for chorus and piano by Marcel Rubin. A fellow prisoner had memorized the words and brought them to Rubin's attention. During the war this version of the song was sung by political emigrés in Mexico.

Words by Jura Soyfer

Music by Marcel Rubin



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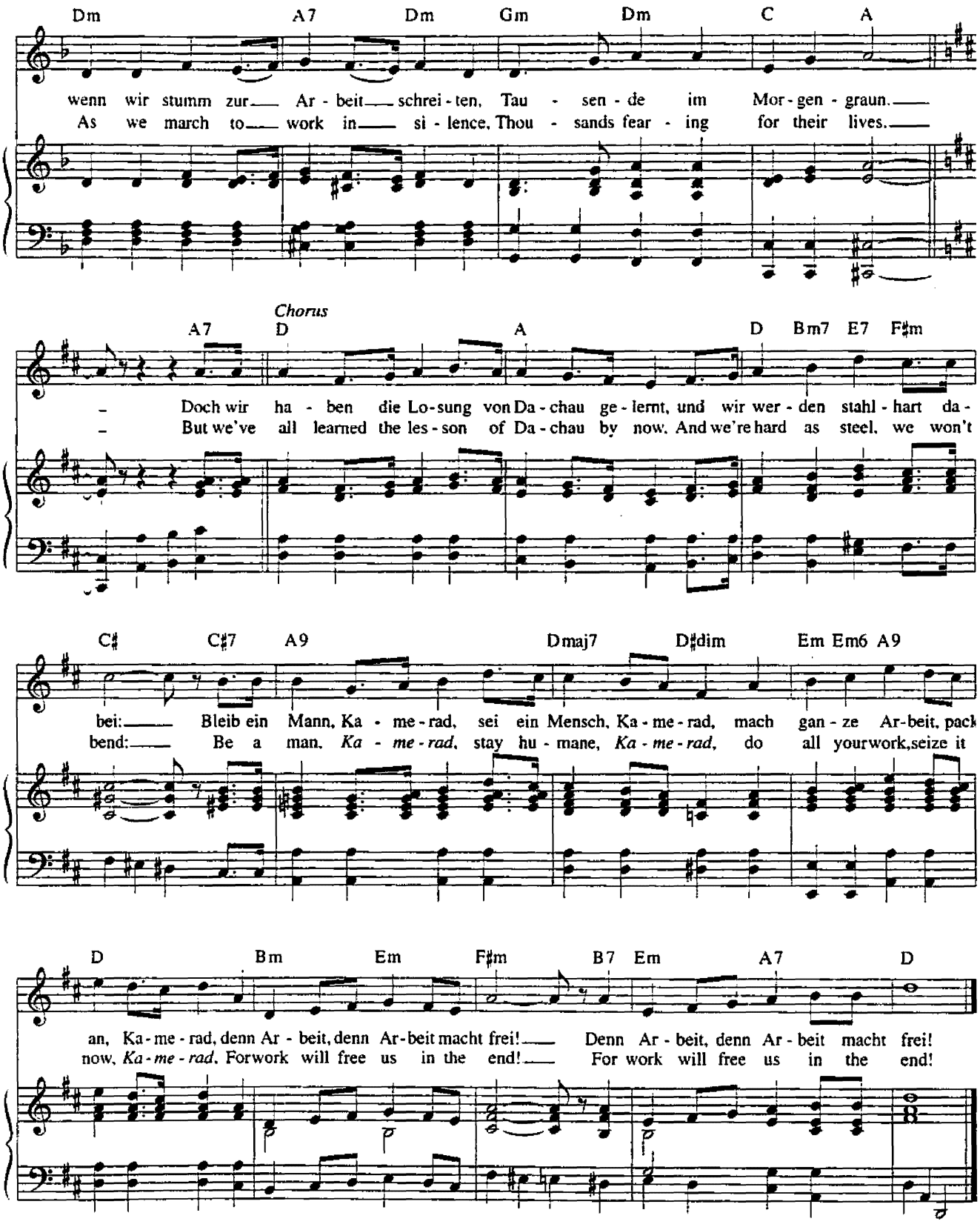
Dm A7 Dm Gm Dm C A
wenn wir stumm zur Ar - beit schrei - ten, Tau - sen - de im Mor - gen - graun.
As we march to work in si - lence, Thou - sands fear - ing for their lives.
Chorus
A7 D A D Bm7 E7 F♯m
– Doch wir ha - ben die Lo-sung von Da - chau ge - lernt, und wir wer - den stahl - hart da -
– But we've all learned the les - son of Da - chau by now. And we're hard as steel, we won't
C♯ C♯7 A9 Dmaj7 D♯dim Em Em6 A9
bei: Bleib ein Mann, Ka - me - rad, sei ein Mensch, Ka - me - rad, mach gan - ze Ar-beit, pack
bend: Be a man, *Ka - me - rad*, stay hu - mane, *Ka - me - rad*, do all yourwork,seize it
D Bm Em F♯m B7 Em A7 D
an, Ka - me - rad, denn Ar - beit, denn Ar-beit macht frei! Denn Ar - beit, denn Ar - beit macht frei!
now, *Ka - me - rad*, Forwork will free us in the end! For work will free us in the end!

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