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ISADORE FREED: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Master of Sacred Music Degree

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I

Isadore Buckman Freed was born in Brest-Litovsk, Russian Poland, on March 26 in the year 1900, the first child of Morris and Rose (Buckman) Freed. At the age of three he and his parents immigrated to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where the couple established themselves by buying a music store and becoming music dealers and publishers. There followed five siblings, all of whom became talented musicians. Sarah, the second child, was a brilliant pianist until a flu epidemic in 1918 left her completely paralyzed on her right side. She continued her life in a musical direction by becoming a music teacher for children.

The Freed's third child was named Jack. He was a violist but did not get far with his instrument because he had a mental illness and spent much of his time in and out of mental institutions. In the interim he was able to cope well and eventually married and had a daughter.

Isadore's third sibling and the fourth child in the family was David Freed. David became a cellist and worked in musical theaters in New York until he found a position with the Utah Symphony in Salt Lake City, Utah, where he lives to this day.

Fannie was the Freed family's fifth child. She was a brilliant woman who raised two sons who became a psychiatrist and a biological researcher. The youngest child is Elsa who

studied at the Tyler School of Fine Arts where her eldest brother taught musical composition to art students.

Isadore Freed's parents spent their days in their music store, although Isadore's mother Rose seemed to be the boss. Morris, Isadore's father, seemed more interested in playing chess than running a music store. He was a champion chess player, and he let his wife run the business.

Rose Buckman Freed was a domineering woman who enjoyed being the decision-maker, not only in the business, but in the home as well. She was an aggressive but practical woman, and it seems she was the person in the family who provided for Isadore's advancing studies on the piano. She adored young Isadore, and it seemed they held similar personality traits.

Young Isadore Freed made music his life from a very early age. He began his real musical career when he won a musical scholarship at the age of eight. His first and foremost love was the piano, which he played with brilliance. He was considered a child prodigy. He attended South Philadelphia High School and Brown Preparatory School in Philadelphia, but his outstanding musicianship took him to college level at the young age of fourteen. He entered the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music in 1914 and at the same time attended the University of Pennsylvania beginning in 1915. Freed graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in composition in 1918,

and in the same year was awarded the Philadelphia Conservatory Gold Medal for piano playing.

Isadore continued his studies at the Mannes School of Music in New York for a year beginning in 1918 and began private instruction with Adele Margulies for piano and Ernest Bloch for composition, a man who would become one of Freed's greatest mentors for composition of his Jewish sacred music. He continued private instruction with both teachers until 1921. At the same time, he began a teaching position at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia in 1920. In 1921 he began private instruction with George Boyle in Philadelphia for piano. He was, at this time, also president for two terms of the Philadelphia Music Teacher's Alliance. In the summer of 1923 he went to Berlin, Germany, to study piano with Josef Weiss.

Freed continued his studies at the Settlement Music School until 1924 when he taught music for one year at the North East High School in Philadelphia. He also became director of music at the Y.M. and Y.W.H.A.'s in Philadelphia for four years. It was in 1924 that he met his wife, Riva.

Riva Hoffman was a dancer with the Duncan School in Europe and came to the United States with the school. The two of them had not met and did not know of each other. They were both attending the same party and Isadore heard a beautiful, melodious voice conversing in the next room. He fell immediately in love with the voice and began looking for

the person to whom the voice belonged. When he saw the radiant woman, he fell in love all over again and fate was sealed.

Isadore Freed resigned at the North East High School in order to become a member of the faculty at the Curtis Institute in 1925, teaching piano and theory. While teaching there he studied piano with Josef Hofman. There, the Friends of Chamber Music Society presented a program of his chamber works and was encouraged to make composition his prime interest rather than piano and go to Europe for further study. He continued his directorship in music at the Y.M. and Y.M.H.A. until 1928, and then the couple moved to Paris so that Isadore could continue his musical studies there.

II

In Paris, France, Freed studied at the Scola Cantorum for two years under Vincent d'Indy for composition and Maurice Seargent and Louis Vierne on the organ.

It was in Paris that Freed began to make his mark on the music world. He had previously written several pieces for strings and some small orchestral pieces, but he now began composing large-scale works for orchestra. Influential people were beginning to take notice and his works were performed in concerts in such countries as England, Belgium, Holland, Sweden and Denmark.

During these five years abroad, he gave two joint concerts with Arthur Honegger and Albert Roussel, and a single joint concert with Alexandre Tansman. He also conducted the "Concerts Spirituels". It was here that he also met Pierre Monteaux, conductor of the Orchestra Symphonique de Paris. Isadore introduced to Pierre Monteaux a new work he had written, "Jeux de Timbres" which Monteaux subsequently performed in Amsterdam and San Francisco. The press reviews were complimentary, such as:

"The principal event of the afternoon was the first performance of "Jeux de Timbres" by Isadore Freed. Mr. Freed's suite is orchestrated in an interesting, and so far as I know, highly original fashion. The slow movement traces a fine, big, bold line, very rich, very full and very deep in its color, melody, and total meaning. The finale is a strong, vital vigorous movement making admirable

use of sonorous reeds and powerful brasses. One welcomes works so well made, so firm, direct and individual, particularly when their composers are Americans."¹

This work and six other large-scale works of Freed's were published in Paris. It was also in Paris in 1930 that Isadore and Riva had their only child, Maia.

The first memory Maia had was of her backyard in Paris. It was walled in and little stones made paths. She was fascinated with the size and shape of the stones. She had an artist's eye from the very beginning. She was named this very unusual name because the Freed's had a friend who was a Spanish aristocrat whose name was "Canto di Maia". They loved the name, and decided if they ever had a girl, they would name her Maia.

Maia remembers travelling quite often through France and Holland although the family struggled their entire lives with money. Isadore had a pupil from Amsterdam who was the daughter of a wealthy banking family named Elsie Vertheim. The Freed family was often invited to stay at the Vertheim family's summer home on the beach. They lived well with what little they had because the Freed's were frugal in their spending. The furniture they owned was bought from junkyard antique sales and was repainted and fixed up.

¹San Francisco Chronicle. Alfred Frankenstein

III

The Freed's moved back to Philadelphia from Paris in 1933 when Isadore began a new teaching position at the Settlement Music School where he again taught piano and composition. He also acquired a new position as organist and director of music at Temple Knesseth Israel, also in Philadelphia. It was here that he was introduced to synagogue music and really made the decision to compose sacred music for the synagogue. Until this time his Jewish religious roots were weak.

As director of music at the synagogue he was introduced to many different Reform composers. He found much of the synagogue music trite, and decided to do research on early influences on synagogue music. He studied Salamone Rossi and became interested in the early synagogue modes.

Freed's interest in composing new music for the synagogue was a gradual one. Such composers as Saminsky and others from the "Russian group" became mentors of Freed's. It became important for him to keep the Jewish "flavor" in his music by borrowing from the traditional modes.

When Maia was still a toddler, the Freed family moved from Philadelphia to New York City. They moved into an apartment on West 67th Street and Central Park West in a row of apartments built specifically for artists, with two-story windows letting in the northern light. Young Maia remembered

moving every year into one or another of those apartments on Central Park West. She recalled being constantly surrounded by interesting and artistic people who were often renowned or wealthy, but always intellectual. Her parents entertained frequent visitors. The Freed's would throw costume parties every year on New Year's Eve. Isadore held a faint resemblance to Franz Schubert, especially with his round glasses, and he would put on some "funny old clothes" and act like the composer. It became his standard costume. Maia also remembers having an au pair although they would not have usually been able to afford one. The young woman, Beilata Beech, was a talented artist in the Art Students League. She had an argument with her father, left home and needed a place to stay. The Freed's took her in in exchange for taking care of their daughter. Maia adored her, and watching her paint, followed in her footsteps and became an artist. Her father encouraged her to attend the Tyler School of Fine Arts in Philadelphia and get a Master's degree in art.

Isadore Freed had an uncanny ability to distinguish between what was important and not important in his life. He was a practical man who knew how to compartmentalize his life between his many different jobs and home. He was given the opportunity to move to California and compose for the Hollywood screen since he had friends in the business. He and Riva thought through their economic situation and decided against the move even though it would have freed them from ever

worrying about money again. He spent the bulk of his life commuting between Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New York and Long Island, New York, and later in Hartford, Connecticut in order to help make ends meet. He would not compromise his ideas for anything. He hated "pop music" and felt it was a "form of prostitution". He was not willing to write for something he abhorred just to make money. And so the couple stayed in New York.

Freed took many teaching jobs because it left the summers open. The Freed's would spend most of the year saving up money so that they could spend their summer months away from New York. Some of their favorite vacations were spent on some of the quiet coasts of Long Island, and later in Maine where Isadore would spend the entire summer composing.

From September to June Isadore would work in and out of the State of New York, paying little attention to his family. Maia remembers that he took many naps. He could fall asleep at the drop of a hat, and this is really how he got most of his sleep. He was constantly on the move composing and editing music and writing newspaper articles, giving speeches at music conferences, travelling and teaching. He had a very tight schedule, and he was in demand more and more often.

Maia had a daunting awareness of her father's musicianship. He was a versatile musician, technically fluent and well trained. There was no impediment between the eye and the hand with his piano playing. He could read an orchestral

score like it was a magazine. Maia sometimes felt awkward because her father, at times, placed high demands on her to play an instrument and be a musician. There came a time when Isadore decided to teach Maia how to play the piano. She had an excellent ear and could play back whatever her father played, but she could not seem to learn how to read music. Isadore was a child prodigy and was not accustomed to working with children. He was intolerant and did not have the patience to work with someone who could not pick up music as quickly as he did. He was also nonplussed that he could have a child with no musical talent. He finally found another piano teacher for Maia who taught her for eight years, but she never did learn how to read music properly.

Aside from composing his own music, Freed became an early promoter of contemporary music written by other composers. He was one of the founders of the Philadelphia Chamber Music Orchestra and conducted the group from 1934 to 1937. He also founded the first composer's laboratory called the "American Composer's Laboratory" in the United States in 1934. The Composer's Lab lasted for three seasons and was eventually taken over by WPA sponsored "Composer's Forum Lab".

In 1936 Freed left the Settlement Music School and began teaching at Temple University School of Fine Arts. He continued to work at Temple Knesseth Israel. At this juncture in his life, he was beginning to write children's music for the piano as well as his large-scale compositions.

Freed was still composing predominantly secular, large-scale works such as his "String Quartet number three" written 1936, his "Music for Strings" written in 1937, and his "Appalachian Sketches" for orchestra written in 1938.

Freed was also editing "Master's of our Day", a series of educational music for the piano by thirty-two of the world's leading composers, published by Carl Fischer, Inc. in two series, Music by American Contemporaries in 1936, and in 1940, Music by International Composers. He also conducted a choral group, "The Guild Singers" for six years and with them guest-conducted with the Philadelphia Civil Symphony performing Schumann's Rhenish Symphony and Debussy's "Nuages" and "Fetes". The reviews for the concert as well as other reviews specifically of the Guild Singers were glowing, such as:

an enthusiastic audience which taxed the capacity of the Academy of Music to its utmost last evening heard an admirable concert by the Guild Singers, under the direction of Isadore Freed. The group has been brought to a very high state of development by Mr. Freed, especially in the beautiful ensemble which has been achieved. The voices are of excellent quality, the parts balance exceedingly well and the group must be ranked as one of the very best choral organizations of the Philadelphia area. There seems to be no limit to what the Guild Singers can do from the standpoint of difficult singing.²

Although Freed was slowly becoming known for his conducting and secular composition, it was in 1938 that he composed his first work for the synagogue, his "Sacred Service for Sabbath

²Philadelphia Evening Ledger, February 2, 1939.

Morning". It was commissioned by Temple Emanuel in New York City and was first premiered at the great synagogue to reviews as:

In his finely wrought score, the gifted young Philadelphia composer has produced an important choral work, which should prove a valuable addition to the literature of sacred music. It is remarkable for which the purity of spirit and the deeply devotional atmosphere which informs it. Although richly harmonized and contrapuntally ingenious, the general effect proved to be of laudable simplicity such as belongs to all artistic creations that speak genuinely from the heart to the heart.³

Dr. Bernard Carp, one of Freed's colleagues from the National Jewish Council of which Freed was a founder, stated of Freed's sacred compositions:

...[Freed had] the heart of a devout Jew who made it his special religious task to lend an aura of beauty, spirituality, and sanctity to Biblical texts. He probed into the depths of his musical heritage to bring forth magnificent contemporary settings for the words of the great Hebrew psalmists and prophets.⁴

A year later he was the first American composer to be invited to conduct the NBC Symphony Orchestra in his own work, his Second Symphony.

In 1939, Freed became one of the founders of the Society for the Advancement of Jewish Liturgical Music, and through it the Jewish Music Forum was founded by Freed and colleagues

³New York Times. Noel Strauss

⁴National Jewish Council. Dr. Bernard Carp

Curt Sachs, Joseph Yasser, Salo Baron, Frederick Jacobi, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Stephan Wolpe and Jacob Weinberg. The Forum held meetings where a paper on a subject related to Jewish music was read at each meeting and new Jewish music was performed. Following each performance, an open discussion ensued. It was a breeding ground for new and contemporary composers of Jewish music to introduce their new works and to help make them known to the Jewish world. According to its constitution, the Forum was established for the purpose of enabling musicians who are interested in the history and development of Jewish music to meet and discuss these topics and for enabling Jewish composers to hear and critique each other's works. The Forum also enabled Jewish composers to present and perform their works to a wider audience and enabled musicologists to submit their theories specifically in the field of Jewish music. The Forum also published *The Bulletin*, which contained papers that had been presented previously to the Forum that were worthy of presentation and publication. Freed wrote several publications giving his opinions on Jewish music or on specific composers, one of which was on the topic of "The Need for an Academy of Jewish Music." During the years 1942 through 1944 Freed was president of this prestigious society.

The 1940's held many changes for Isadore and his family. The Guild Singers began a new season to reviews such as, "Freed has been able to accomplish miracles with his Guild

Singers," and, "Isadore Freed gave the first concert of the season last evening... before a large audience which heard some of the best ensemble singing in Philadelphia for a long time."⁵ He continued as director of music and organist at Temple Knesset Israel and also continued to teach at Temple University of Fine Arts. He simultaneously had private pupils for piano and organ studies and he continued to compose.

In 1943 Freed received an honorary doctorate from the New York College of Music, and by 1944, two of Freed's large-scale compositions received awards. The first was the twentieth annual "Eurydice Choral Prize" for his work, "Postscripts", a nine movement choral piece for women's chorus and piano, and the same year he won the prize from the Society for the Publication of American Music for his work "Triptych" for violin, cello and piano. More of his compositions were being performed as well, notably Freed's symphonic suite "Pastorales", which was performed by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in January of 1944. It was in this same year that he took a position as chairman of the composition department at the Hartt College of Music in Hartford, Connecticut. There he met Moshe Paranov, the dean of the college, and Edward Diemente, a man who, after being a student of his for several years at the college, became the cochairman of composition and theory at Hartt.

⁵Philadelphia Daily News and Philadelphia Evening Ledger

IV

Edward Diemente, after an interrupted education for being in the army during World War II for two years decided to take refresher courses at the Hartt College of Music. He took both theory and composition and Isadore Freed was his teacher. They got along well, and Freed pushed Edward and put him in an advanced course. He decided to stay at Hartt and receive his degree there. When he finished, Freed asked Edward to lunch and asked him what he intended to do after his studies. Diemente's answer to Freed was, "the same as you," and Freed told him to expand his horizons and take up organ. In the interim it would be a stable job. Diemente followed Freed's advice and he studied organ as a senior and got a job as the organist at a catholic cathedral.

Edward Diemente remembered Freed's composition class well. The room was filled with percussion instruments; only non-pitch instruments. He would teach his students to compose with these instruments as opposed to pitch instruments. His method was to try and train his students through the structure of music and through the experience of music, not by a textbook.

Diemente remembers Freed as being a conservative man who had a great sense of humor and used many anecdotes to illustrate his point in his classes, as well as many anecdotes about food. He was known to have strange idiosyncrasies

which students quickly picked up on and which turned some students against him. He was considered a "square" - a conservative dresser. Diemente recalls a brown suit Freed wore occasionally that had a best with lapels on it. His conservative nature was heightened by a stiff walk. But he was an intelligent and verbal man. The faculty of the college had a great respect for him. Whenever he rose to speak at a faculty meeting, everyone stopped to listen, for although he was vocal, he did not waste words. He had a great command of the English language and he only spoke when he was knowledgeable on the subject he was to speak.

Diemente considered Freed a very fair person in and out of the classroom. He accepted each student with their strengths and weaknesses and worked with each of them to improve their standards to the best of their abilities. He was also exceptionally fair towards his colleagues. As chairman of the composition department he was asked to interview an Italian composer, Arnold Franchetti, who had recently moved to the United States, for a position at the Hartt College. Freed told the composer his methods for teaching counterpoint. Franchetti completely disagreed with Freed's method - they were diametrically opposed in styles. Yet Freed hired the man regardless. Freed was known to feel strongly with the idea of a college faculty teaching different styles. One of Freed's attributes was that he at times used other methods than his own to teach to give students every

opportunity to study and learn different views and styles. He was not a jealous person and therefore was open to others' ideas.

Although Diemente claims he was open to other methods of counterpoint, theory and composition, he was very closed-minded about other forms and styles of music besides "classical" or "contemporary classical" music. While in school, Diemente played in swing bands. Freed was very vocal in his distaste for the music. He couldn't understand why Edward wanted to let "that jazz" get into his composition. Freed had no appreciation for improvisation and jazz. He felt it was a form of prostitution.

Freed's entire upbringing reflected his tastes. While in Paris, Freed studied with Vincent d'Indy, a strict and conservative teacher, while other rising composers such as Coplin studied with Nadia Boulanger. Each group of students did not accept the other because of their wide differences of style.

Edward Diemente left Hartt College to receive his master's degree at Eastman School of Music and afterward returned to Hartt and became a faculty member. After two years at the college Freed asked him to become cochairman of composition and theory. They worked together until Freed's death in 1960.

Moshe Paranov, the dean of the Hartt College of Music, and his wife, Elizabeth Warner-Paranov, were very close to Isadore and Riva Freed. After the Freeds moved to an apartment on 72nd Street and Riverside Drive in New York City, the Paranovs would stay at the Freed's spacious apartment while they were away on vacation or in Philadelphia. Moshe and Isadore worked closely together and supported each other at all times. When Freed wrote his opera, "The Princess and the Vagabond", Paranov premiered it at the college with Elmer Nagy as conductor and Paranov himself as director. The headlines about the opera premier were splashed all over the newspapers in the area, and Freed himself wrote a letter which appeared in an article after the performance as a "thank you" to Paranov and the entire Hartt College. The article by the Hartford Times in June of 1949 was headlined, "Composer Lauds Hartt School" and read:

...in a letter, Mr. Freed [complimented] Elmer Nagy and Moshe Parnov for their wonderful work on his opera, "The Princess and the Vagabond". The letter follows: "Among American composers I have been singularly favored by the Hartt School; for I have had both an opera and a one-man concert in the Institute of Contemporary American Music presented under Hartt auspices. For this reason I wish to express my deep-felt gratitude to the school, its trustees, my colleagues of the faculty, and to the students for their contributions to the success of these two events."

"Everyone who comes in contact with the Hartt School, be the student, teacher, trustee or auditor, cannot help but be impressed by its profound honesty and humanity. That was the quality that drew me to the school five years ago. It is the quality that draws me to the school today.

"Both Elmer Nagy and Moshe Paranov worked on 'The Princess and the Vagabond' for more than five months. Dr. Nagy... worked endless hours with his student cast using his great creative gifts to bring into being an artistic unity that would satisfy his perfectionistic conscience.

"Mr. Paranov labored for the musical perfection of the performance. And the miracle of his great leadership was that the performers did not sound like students, they sounded like artists."⁶

Consequently, when the Philadelphia Music Academy gave Moshe Paranov an honorary doctorate, it was Isadore Freed who recommended him for it. The two were close and fast friends.

One of the things Paranov highly respected about Isadore Freed was that he was a proud Jew. Paranov as well as Edward Diemente did not consider him to be a "believing" Jew, but rather a "cultural" Jew. He admitted it quickly. It always came up somewhere in conversation when he first met someone new. He wanted people to know it immediately. He was an honest Jew and was committed to his religion. And the Paranov's believed that because of his commitment and love

⁶Hartford Times, 1949

for Judaism, he wrote so much of his music with a Jewish "style".

Moshe Paranov also knew Freed to be an excellent musician and a man with a marvelous reputation. He knew his field and was "no bluff"; he did not waste a lot of words and spoke only about what he knew. Both Freed and Paranov felt that Ernest Bloch was their mentor and Freed established the "Ernest Bloch Award" in his honor. It was a competition open to both American and foreign composers for the best composed new work based on a text taken from or related to the Old Testament. The prize was one hundred fifty dollars and publication of the work by Carl Fischer. The competition was in conjunction with the United Temple Chorus who had the rights to the first performance of the award-winning work. Freed was always a judge along with such names as Lazare Saminsky and Hugh Ross.

VI

Freed's involvement in the music world reached its peak in the late 1940's and the 1950's. He held a strong voice and often his opinions were published in newspapers and magazines. He was instrumental in many ways in introducing new works by up-and-coming American composers and felt that every musician should have the chance to have his or her works performed. The headline on the Hartford Times opinion column by Freed in November, 1945, said, "'always more bad music than good' says Isadore Freed 'but all must have a hearing'". Freed constantly battled for new and gifted composers to be heard. In a magazine article entitled, "American Opera Outlet", Freed writes, "curiously enough, the Metropolitan Opera Company is a paradox, inasmuch as it has both killed opera in this country and kept it alive. By featuring costly name singers, the Metropolitan has made it financially impossible for other companies to compete on a star-system basis. It is in the experimental opera theater that the greatest promise lies."⁷

Freed's colleagues also worked towards introducing new music to the public. In the Hartford Times on May 9, 1948, in an article entitled "Hartford, Stage for New Operas," written by Isadore Freed:

⁷Hartford Times, November, 1945

The Metropolitan [Opera Company] is conservative and leans heavily on the star system. The City Center, [although] somewhat more progressive, has never brought out a new work and the Metropolitan does it seldom, reluctantly and often with other people's money. The Hartt Opera Guild is the brain child of two gifted men who have contributed much to opera in America—Elmer Nagy and Moshe Paranov. The Hartt Guild has consistently sought out new works for its repertoire and helped to revitalize the American operatic scene by the commissioning of new operas. The Hartt Guild approaches each new work with devotion and expectancy. So long as institutions like the Hartt Opera Guild can generate this feeling among composers, opera is not dead in our country.⁸

The highest honor Freed was responsible for resulted in a letter from the White House to Geoffrey O'Hara, the President of the Composers-Authors Guild on September 26, 1946. The letter reads:

In my opinion the determination of the Composers-Authors Guild to foster and encourage the creation and performance of native musical works that have a permanent value should advance American musical culture and is deserving of highest commendation.

I believe that we all have a patriotic obligation to advance the music of our own country. But Americans cannot be in a position to judge of the merit of American works unless they have an opportunity to hear them and to judge for themselves.

Our authors and composers would certainly be inspired to nobler efforts if their works should be interpreted by American performers. I can think of nothing that would contribute more to raising the standards of American music.

I hope for your movement the success which its laudable purpose merits.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Harry Truman.

⁸Hartford Times. "Hartford, Stage for New Operas", May 9, 1948.

In 1948 Freed established the Institute of Contemporary American Music. The Institute was established solely for the performance of concerts devoted to the works of living contemporary composers.

Freed's music was being performed all over the country. The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Pierre Monteaux opened their thirty-fifth season with Freed's "Festival Overture", a work written in the summer of 1945 at West Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Another work by Freed was also premiered during the summer of 1946 by the Chataqua Symphony Orchestra under Franco Autori. It was "Appalachian Sketches", a suite based on New England folk tunes. Ray Lev, at her Carnegie Hall recital introduced Freed's "Prelude, Cannzonet and Caprice" and continued to include it on the program of her transcontinental tour.

Freed himself in the fall of 1940 gave a series of six informal lecture-recitals based on the New York Philharmonic Symphony program featuring Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony. And one year later the Julius Hartt Musical Foundation presented a concert devoted specifically to instrumental compositions by Freed at Times Hall in New York City. Freed's "Passacaglia" for cello and piano was introduced at New York's Town Hall by Leonard Rose, solo cellist of the New York Philharmonic Symphony.

By the fall of 1948 Freed left Temple Knesset Israel and became organist and director of music at Temple Israel in

Lawrence, Long Island. It was here that he worked with the United Temple Chorus and was instrumental in making the appropriate changes to bring David Benedict, his long-time friend, to the pulpit of Temple as cantor.

VII

David Benedict met Isadore Freed as a piano student at the age of sixteen. David's teacher had been in an accident and, not being able to work, recommended he continue with Freed. David took lessons from Freed for one and a half years until he moved to New York to attend Julliard. His schooling was cut short by the army, but when he returned, he saw in the New York Times an article about a concert in Times Hall in honor of Freed and decided to attend. He went backstage after the concert and they quickly rekindled their friendship. David sang for Freed, and in 1951 Freed asked him to become the tenor soloist at Temple Israel. The cantor there was an older man and the congregation was looking for new blood. Freed then asked David if he would become the cantor of the congregation. But Benedict turned down Freed's offer, as his operatic career was just taking off. He was an accompanist and coach for many famous singers and was singing opera roles himself. By 1953 though, Benedict changed his mind and auditioned for the job and was accepted as cantorial soloist of Temple Israel. He continued to work outside the synagogue, and even premiered one of Freed's compositions.

David Benedict remembered Freed's development of the United Temple Chorus, a group of local amateurs who met once a week and gave large biennial concerts. The Chorus is still in existence under the name United Choral Society. They give

an annual concert. There were rehearsals for every service. He was a good musician and very well disciplined and expected that of his musicians as well. Freed was honest, trustworthy and helpful and appreciative of the talents of all the musicians, but he wasn't shy enough to tell them nicely to leave if they were not good enough. He just stated his opinions in a calm and fair way, with never a cross or harsh word.

Freed also established an annual Jewish Music Festival at Temple Israel. He initiated it the year he arrived there as director. He investigated different sources of music and David and Isadore worked together on the works. The annual festival became popular over a short period of time and Temple Israel became known as one of the first musical synagogues in the country at that time.

David Benedict felt that Temple Israel held a progressive attitude towards new music, and the reason for that was because Freed was its director. He stated that Freed was a man of "extraordinary quality and humanity". He remembers Freed giving organ lessons in exchange for page turning at the organ during High Holy Days. Freed was always helping good musicians make their mark as best they could in the world. He helped David get a job in opera production at the Hartt College of Music. Years before when Freed was choral conductor at a school in Philadelphia, he gave David a percussion part during one concert and brought him to New

York City to perform. And he asked David to sing the cantorial rose for the first performance of Freed's second Friday Night Service which was commissioned by and performed at the Park Avenue Synagogue. Their friendship was close throughout until Freed's death.

VIII

The year 1949 held yet another challenge for Isadore Freed. He continued to ask new challenges to his life although his days continued to be busy. In 1942 Freed was appointed professor of sacred music at the Hebrew Union College in New York City. He was the first professor to immediately begin a new class for organ accompaniment.

The year 1951 was a busy year for Freed. He guest-conducted the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of his Second Symphony, a work scored for brass alone. The orchestra's conductor, Pierre Monteaux unexpectedly asked him to conduct the work upon his arrival in San Francisco. Before his return to Hartford. He also gave his first California performance of his Violin Fantasy with Leonora Jaffe, a violinist for San Francisco.

Back in New York, Freed's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra was performed in Carnegie Hall with Leon Barzin conducting the National Orchestral Association, and with Bela Urban as soloist on the violin to rave reviews. In Hartford, the Institute of Contemporary Music held its first three concerts of the season featuring Norman Delo Joio under the direction of Isadore Freed. He became chairman of the Institute in this same year.

He continued to be awarded prizes for his compositions, and his students were making their marks as well. In April

of 1952 Alvin Epstein, a Hartford musician received the top award in a national young composers' contest sponsored by the Mannes School of Music in New York, and Robert Lombardo, also of Hartford, won the Serge Koussevitsky composition prize. In 1954 Freed won the Harvey Gaul Award for his "Trio for Harp, Flute and Viola". His works continued to be performed in such places as Tanglewood with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and he continued to give lectures at the Hartford School. He also continued to guest-conduct and compose. His last major work of sacred music was the "Prophecy of Micah", composed in 1956, and he wrote a text, Harmonizing the Jewish Modes in 1958, which continues to be used at the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion.

Edward Diemente recalled that in 1959 he received a call from Freed who said that he was considering retiring from the Hartt School because he wanted to devote his time to composing large works. He started coming in to work less so that Diemente could become the new chairman. Soon after, he had a minor heart tremor. Both Edward Diemente and David Benedict recall that it worried Freed. He was a very careful and moderate man, and so he made an appointment to see a doctor. The doctor told him to take care but gave him a clean bill of health. Several days later, on November 10, 1960, Isadore Freed died suddenly of a massive coronary in his home at Oceanside, Long Island. He was sixty years of age, and he was survived by his wife, Riva and his daughter, Maia. His

funeral was held at Temple Israel in Lawrence.

Numerous obituaries were written for the newspapers to publish, and tributes were held and sponsored in his honor. His colleagues continue to respect the man with whom they worked, and his music continues to live on in synagogues throughout the country. His music is a fitting memorial for the remembrance of a great man.