SHABBAT EVENING AND *BAR/BAT MITZVAH:* AN EXAMINATION OF TODAY'S MUSIC OF WORSHIP IN THE REFORM MOVEMENT

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This thesis is an attempt to analyze recent developments in the American Reform movement with regard to the music of worship, focusing on an examination and comparison of the *Shabbat* evening service and *Shabbat* morning *bar/bat mitzvah* service. The central focus of the analysis is the effort to meet the changing worship needs of American Reform Jews and the attempt to engage worshippers actively in the prayer experience through congregational singing. The work centers around two case studies of large Reform synagogues.

I will begin in Chapter 1 with the historical background of *bar* and *bat mitzvah*, including a discussion of its importance to Reform Jews as well as some of the problems it presents for our movement. This will provide background for the study of *bar* and *bat mitzvah* in the Reform movement today.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss changes in worship and worship music in the movement generally in the last 30 years, including the increase in demand for congregational participation in the music at services. This will help to provide further background for the case studies, which I will present in Chapters 3 and 4. I will describe and analyze the *Shabbat* evening service and the *Shabbat* morning *bar/bat mitzvah* service at each synagogue, providing context through interviews with clergy. Among the questions I seek to answer are: how do the worship leaders approach these services? What are their goals? What factors determine their choices of melody, style of leadership, instrumentation and other variables? What are the effects of those choices on the worship experience, and especially on congregational singing?

After describing the case studies, I will compare the synagogue's approaches and analyze my findings in Chapter 5. By exploring these issues, I hope to further the discussion around the best ways to meet the needs of those who worship in our synagogues.

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Introduction

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Chapter 1: The History of Bar and Bat Mitzvah

According to Jewish tradition, a boy reaches "religious and legal maturity" at age 13 and one day, and a girl at age 12 and one day (Miam.Yad, Ishut, 2:9-10).[1] The term *bar mitzvah* is used in the Talmud (BM 96a) to refer to one who is subject to the law and, starting in the 15th Century[2], it is used to refer to the occasion of reaching this legal status. Around this time and in the succeeding centuries, it became customary in many places to celebrate a boy's attainment of *bar mitzvah* status by calling him to the Torah the next time it was read in the synagogue after his 13th birthday. In some communities, the boy would simply say the blessings before and after the reading. In others, he would read the *Shabbat maftir* and *haftarah* portions. In still other communities, the boy would read the entire weekly portion or lead all or part of the morning worship service.

In addition, during these times the practice developed of hosting lavish celebrations on the occasion of a boy's becoming *bar mitzvah.* Some authorities ruled that the boy's parents must hold a banquet just as they do for his wedding – reference is made to such an order as early as the 17th Century[3]. We see, therefore, that the traditions of honoring a child on becoming *bar mitzvah* and throwing large parties for the occasion are not new to modern times. They have a substantial history in the Jewish world that goes back several centuries.

For Reform Jews in America, *bar mitzvah* has a stormy history. In the late 19th Century, the American leaders of Reform Judaism became dissatisfied with the ritual and discontinued its use. Four primary problems with *bar mitzvah* fueled their actions. First,

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[1] Zvi Kaplan, *"Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah," Encyclopedia Judaica* (NY: Keter Publishing House, Ltd. 1971), 243.

[2] R. Menachem Ziyyoni, *Sefer Tziyoni,* commentary on Genesis, verse 1:5, quoted by ibid.

[3] Reference in the *Magen Avot* commentary on the *Shulkhan Arukh* (O.H. 225:2).

the rabbis felt that the ceremony had no meaning in the modern world, because the idea of becoming obligated to Jewish ritual law had little relevance in a community that had sworn off such law. David Philipson was one of the first four Rabbis to be ordained at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He states in 1890, "If [*bar mitzvah*] ever possessed any meaning it lost it in time, and notably in this century when so many of the old laws to fulfill... have been by common consent silently disregarded and abolished as no longer expressive of the religious spirit. The *Bar mitzvah* is a soulless ceremony without any signification."[4]

Second, it was thought that the boy himself gained little from the experience of *bar mitzvah*. Philipson continues:

> And in what does the *Bar mitzvah* consist now? The boy recites no Sedrah, not even a *Perashah*; he learns the *Beracha* very often, if not in most instances, from an English or a German transliteration, ascends the platform, speaks the lesson he has learned by rote, much as a parrot would, without understanding a word he says or that he hears from the Torah, returns to his parents, and the religious conscience is satisfied. The whole proceeding partakes of the nature of a farce and the sooner it is done away with the better.[5]

The third reason was that *bar mitzvah* excluded girls, which contradicted Reform principles. In fact, in a 1913 responsum concerning *bar mitzvah*, Kaufman Kohler argues that this was the deciding factor in the movement's abandonment of the ritual. He states that the early Reform leaders "had chiefly one object in view, viz., to emancipate religion from the Oriental view which regards religion in the main as the concern of man only, and not of woman, and, therefore, essentially and intently neglects the religious training of the girl."[6]

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[4] Philipson, David, "Confirmation in the Synagogue," *CCAR Yearbook*, (Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing Company, 1890-91), 49.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Walter Jacob, ed., *American Reform Respnsa. Collected Responsa of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*, 1889-1983 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1983), 80.

The fourth problem presented by the *bar mitzvah* celebration related to its effect on Saturday morning worship in general. Opponents of the ceremonies complained that "they detracted from the congregational nature of the Saturday morning service, and the receptions that followed were often garishly ostentatious.[7]

For all these reasons, the Reform movement as a whole ceased to perform the *bar mitzvah* ceremony for several decades. Partially to replace this coming-of-age ritual, they instituted confirmation, a ceremony held for 14-, 15- or 16-year-old teens during *Shavu'ot*.[8] Michael Meyer explains their reasoning: "[I]n an era when powerful centrifugal forces were eroding Jewish identity there was an urgent need for some ceremony in which the Jewish child would solemnly declare his or her commitments."[9] Confirmation fit this bill. It included both boys and girls, it occurred when the child was older, and it centered on a declaration of faith in the Jewish religion. Confirmation continues in Reform synagogues today for teens finishing the tenth grade.

However, not all Reform Jews shared this strong contempt for *bar mitzvah*, and some congregations were strongly attached to the ceremony. Some congregations never gave up the ritual and, over time, it became even more commonly done. A 1960 survey found that 96 percent of Reform congregations had *bar mitzvah*, and a separate 1953 survey showed that 35 percent had begun using the equivalent for girls, called *bat mitzvah*.[10] What caused this revival? According to Meyer:

> [T]he emotional need they fulfilled proved irresistible. *Bar mitzvah* quickly became a powerful symbol of the link between three generations, at a time when that link was not always apparent. The occasion also provided an indispensable

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[7] David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1907), 374.
[8] Ibid., 377.
[9] Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity: a History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 40.
[10] Ibid., 374 and 472 (note 73).

> stimulus to preparatory Hebrew education and it drew large numbers to a Saturday morning service that otherwise gathered only very few.[11]

The last factor mentioned, the lack of a congregational presence at *Shabbat* morning services, requires explanation. Unlike in the Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist movements, the focus of *Shabbat* observance in the Reform synagogue is not *Shabbat* morning but *Shabbat* evening. Although *bar* and *bat mitzvah* may play a role in reinforcing this phenomenon, the phenomenon itself has its roots in the economic history of American Jewry. At the start of the 20th Century, many Jewish men worked as storekeepers. Saturday was an important business day for them. Therefore, only women and children were free to attend services, and very few of them attended. For this reason, the movement made the evening service the main event of *Shabbat* observance. Today, although most Jews hold different jobs than their ancestors did a century ago, *Shabbat* evening retains its prominent place in Reform worship. Synagogues in the other movements of Judaism generally hold their evening services early, in order to allow attendees to return home for a *Shabbat* evening meal. They then expect a large crowd to return to the synagogue in the morning for services, which include the reading of the Torah. On the other hand, in most Reform synagogues, *Shabbat* evening services start at 8:00 or 8:30 (some urban congregations start earlier) and are followed by a dessert reception (called an "*oneg*"), the main social gathering of the week. Many Reform synagogues regularly take the Torah from the ark and read from it on *Shabbat* evening, since they do not expect many congregants to be present for the reading *Shabbat* morning. In fact, they may not even have a service on *Shabbat* morning unless there is a *bar* or *bat mitzvah*.

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[11] Ibid., 374.

Bar and *bat mitzvah* continues to thrive today, and the factors cited above – the power of the ceremony as a symbol for generational continuity and the educational and attendance incentives it brings – remain its primary functions. Widely perceived as the prize signifying the end of Jewish education in childhood, *bar* and *bat mitzvah* is a mainstay of the American synagogue today. It provides a powerful membership draw and is often the reason the seats are filled on *Shabbat* morning. However, with the exception of the non-egalitarian nature of the *bar mitzvah* service (which was eliminated by the introduction of the *bat mitzvah*), all the problems outlined above by late 19th and early 20th century writers also remain. Since the 1960's, when the popularity of the rite had fully restored it to its position of prominence in the movement, much work has been done to help adolescents and their families find more meaning in the ritual. Guidebooks for this purpose have been written, including *Putting God on the Guest List* (one edition for children and one for their parents), by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin, and *Bar/bat mitzvah Basics*, edited by Cantor Helen Leneman. Both seek to prepare and enable families to maximize their experience and avoid common pitfalls, such as losing sight of the true goals of *bar* and *bat mitzvah* amidst the pressures of invitations and party planning. In addition, both books contain suggestions for dealing with the problem that so often occurs at *bar* and *bat mitzvah* services: the failure to create a compelling, inclusive experience of *Shabbat* worship. They both contain sections explaining the structure of the worship service, and Salkin even provides a sample insert to send with invitations to non-Jewish guests.

These works, which target the family of the *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, can improve the family's experience with both the preparation process and the service itself. Salkin comments as well, however, on the larger struggle in which rabbis and cantors must

engage if they strive to lead an effective, inclusive prayer service in the context of *bar* or *bat mitzvah*:

> People don't pray. Sometimes they don't even open the prayer book. They often seem lost, and may even have no idea what the service is about or what it is supposed to accomplish...
>
> In too many synagogues on too many *Shabbat* mornings at too many *bar* or *bat mitzvah* ceremonies, there is too little participation. Jewish congregations have too often become audiences, while cantors and rabbis have become performers, masters of ceremonies, talk show hosts. People are there for something, but it's not the service, and it's certainly not prayer.[12]

Given this scene, which is commonplace at Reform synagogues, it is not surprising that few congregants attend *bar* or *bat mitzvah* services at most Reform synagogues, unless they are invited guests of the celebration. As Lawrence Hoffman puts it, "The regular worshipping group, if there ever was one, long decided to go elsewhere or stay home rather than put up every week with a new set of strangers who are likely to sit blankly throughout the service, completely uninterested in it until the appearance midway through the morning of the featured *bar* or *bat mitzvah* child."[13]

As a consequence, many congregations have developed alternative services, often called "*minyans*" or "learners' *minyans*," for congregants who wish to attend a *Shabbat* morning service but not the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service. Meanwhile, at the vast majority of Reform synagogues on *Shabbat* morning, the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service is attended only by the family and friends of the teen-ager. These guests are often unfamiliar with the service and show varying levels of inclination to participate.

This situation presents a number of challenges in attempting to lead effective, inclusive, and participatory services in the context of *bar* and *bat mitzvah.* These

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[12] Jeffrey K. Salkin, *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar and Bat Mitzvah* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1996), 103.

[13] Hoffman, Lawrence. *The Art of Public Prayer, 2nd Edition: Not for Clergy Only* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 1999), 101.

challenges will be explored more in depth in the case studies presented in Chapters 3 and 4. First, however, in the next chapter I will discuss worship changes in the American Jewish community generally in the last 30 years in order to provide important further background for the case studies.

Chapter 2: Jewish Worship Changes Since the 1970's

Academics and congregational professionals alike agree on one striking fact regarding American Jewish worship during the 1970's and 1980's: it was "a period of great turbulence and innovation," in the words of Mark Slobin.[14] Many combining factors, such as the Vietnam War and 1960's movement, the 1967 Israel-Arab war, the Jewish *havurah* movement, and the success of Reform and Conservative Jewish summer camps changed the attitudes and needs of American Jewry in areas ranging from organizational affiliation to prayer. Some even argue that these changes were in the works even earlier, as the baby boomers were growing up. As Sidney Schwarz puts it, "The new American Jew tells a generational tale of being totally turned off by the synagogues of their childhood."[15] The American synagogue, however, like any institution, has been slower to change than many would like, causing leaders like rabbi and professor of liturgy Lawrence Hoffman to ask the questions, "How do we restore meaningful public prayer to our churches and synagogues? How do we make true worship happen?"[16]

Hoffman provides a powerful theoretical and theological explanation for what he perceives as "the problem of prayer."[17] He asserts that blaming the difficulty many Jews and Christians have with worship on a lack of faith is backwards thinking:

> Ritual is not the result of faith, but one of its causes – that is why we need good rituals. Ritual's power lies in its artistic capacity to present an alternative world where time and space unfold in structured ways that indicate pattern, plan,

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[14] Slobin, Mark. *Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 113.

[15] Schwarz, Sidney. *Finding a Spiritual Home* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., a Wiley Company, 2000), 19.

[16] Hoffman, 6.

[17] Ibid, 115.

> and purpose. Faith derives from trusting that the universe in which we live is meaningful and ordered, as opposed to being random, chaotic, and accidental.[18]

If ritual's purpose is to help inspire faith in its participants, if it is supposed to create an atmosphere in which they can most easily sense God's presence, it follows that the presentation of ritual in religious services must be maximally reflective of the way those participants conceive of God. Coining three terms, Hoffman calls a particular society's way of conceiving of God its "*master image.*" The master image dominant in that society is informed by what he calls the society's "*cultural backdrop.*" This simply means that each society's particular culture will give rise to a unique master image. In the quote below, Hoffman defines the third term, "*synecdochal vocabulary,*" and ties them all together:

> Synecdochal vocabulary consists of words, objects, actions, and gestures that suggest a whole greater than themselves; liturgy provides a synecdochal vocabulary to suggest a particular master image. Trained by our cultural context to recognize the reality of God in that image, we use synecdochal language to invoke God's presence in our worship.[19]

Every religious group, living in a particular time and place and informed therefore by a certain cultural backdrop, develops its own unique master image and synecdochal vocabulary. Hoffman provides the example of the Chariot Mystics, a group of Jews who lived in Palestine during the second and third century. Influenced by the cultural backdrop of Hellenism, they held a master image of a God who drove a chariot across the sky, carrying the sun from east to west. They believed they could "catch a glimpse of God in supreme glory" by using what we might find to be a strange synecdochal

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[18] Ibid., 117.
[19] Ibid., 130-132.

vocabulary: fasting for a certain number of days and then "muttering prayers with their heads between their knees."[20]

Hoffman contrasts the Chariot Mystics with the creators of the Reform movement in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western Europe. Their cultural backdrop was one of order, categorization and class separation, and therefore their master image was one of God as supreme and distant from people:

> Social classes retained their distinctiveness by erecting impenetrable barriers between themselves and others. Formal titles and strict dress codes, for example, militated against easy social mingling across class lines. Paralleling the space separating one social class from another was a veritable social chasm that separated all social classes – all people in general – from God. Thus was born the master image of God as transcendent, of God as the ultimately distant Being.[21]

Hoffman does not claim that this distant, transcendent master image was completely new to nineteenth century Europe – "it had been building for some time," he says. However, he does assert that this mode of perceiving God was solidified in that cultural context, and that "we emerged from the nineteenth century with architecture that pointed to God in the distance and with masterful choirs singing four-part harmony composed in a key marked, Angels Only."[22]

This mode of relating to God was as effective for German and other western European Jews of that period as hunger- and dizziness-induced visions were for the Chariot Mystics. Both groups "emerged with a sense that God was present in their prayers. They differed only in how God's presence was conceived, and therefore how God's presence was known."[23] However, whereas the Chariot Mystics' mode passed

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[20] Ibid., 126-127.
[21] Ibid., 134.
[22] Ibid., 135.
[23] Ibid.

more quickly with the times, the European image of the distant, transcendent God has more staying power:

> So successful was this redefinition of God in terms of wider European society that many of us still take it for granted, as if the master image of God were not just image but God's very being. A transcendent deity is really just another imperfect way of imagining the Divine, favored by one society in one particular time and place. But our liturgy was reconstructed on that image only a century ago. It was then transmitted that way to us, as if it were inevitable that only by celebrating God's regal distance from us could worship successfully invoke God's presence.[24]

What occurred in the American Reform movement during the twentieth century, Hoffman believes, is that our cultural backdrop, and therefore our master image, changed dramatically. Desire for social distance and class distinctions in Europe gave way in America to a desire for equality, informality and intimacy. Cultural examples Hoffman offers are that Monet's *Water Lilies* was challenged by Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans;* Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* by Copeland's *Fanfare of the Common Man;* classical music in general by folk, jazz and African spiritual music. With all these changes, "our master image can hardly feature a God of transcendence. It is difficult for us to imagine God as endlessly distant from us; instead, we think more easily of God being immanently present among us."

Given this new cultural backdrop and master image, it follows that we need to adapt the "words, gestures, actions, and objects that bring God into our midst." Hoffman allows that the master image of God as majesty has not been completely lost, and modes of prayer that communicate that image still hold considerable meaning for Americans in the synagogue. But primarily, he says, "synecdochal vocabulary for American worship... must point to intimacy, not distance."[25]

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[24] Ibid., 134.
[25] Ibid., 136.

A very significant aspect of synecdochal vocabulary for Hoffman is music. He lays out a theoretical structure defining five principle ways music functions in worship. Its first function is as a support system for words, occasionally by individual word painting, but more often by evoking the intended message of the text in a more general way. In this way, music helps the text come to life. Second, music can be a means to structure time: different melodies, motifs and modes are used to signal a certain time of the week or year (Shabbat, Yom Kippur, Passover), or even time of day (morning, afternoon, evening). Thus music can root us in the religious calendar and call to mind associations we have with certain times in the Jewish cycle, thereby connecting us with our past as well.

Third, music forges communal bonds between those who experience it together. (This is different from the effects of congregational participation, which will be discussed later.) Such a common experience can help to dissolve barriers such as differences in generation, status, and sex. Fourth, music produces an emotional effect on the listener, whether through associations with experiences and memories (such as the effect *the Kol Nidrei* melody might have on one who has special memories of *Yom Kippur* services during childhood) or simply due to inherent qualities of music Hoffman says are impossible to define.

Hoffman's fifth and final function of music, "music as the knowledge of God," can again be broken up into subcategories. Hoffman relates an idea developed by Cantor Benjie Schiller in which she outlines four types of synagogue music, each of which facilitates a different way of knowing God, and each of which is associated, perhaps figuratively, with a different "bodily posture." The four types are music of majesty, music of meditation, music of meeting and music of memory. Music of majesty is best

represented by the music of early Reform, which was discussed above. "It is the full-bodied music of a magnificent pipe organ filling a cathedral and thrilling the people who throng there." Hoffman provides as examples "the final strains of *Kol Nidre,* or the Great *Aleinu*, which is the version of the *Aleinu* sung on *Rosh Hashanah* as the cantor and rabbi prostrate themselves before the ark in recognition of God's rulership." The matching bodily posture for music of majesty is one of "standing erect, arms outstretched to heaven in exhaltation.."

Music of meditation is introspective, "an opportunity to know God... in the still, small voice within us." The associated bodily posture is with bowed head and closed eyes, and a typical example would be almost any setting of "May the Words..." or in Hebrew "*Yihyu Leratzon.*" This type of music existed in the synagogue music of early Reform alongside music of majesty, to provide "a sort of musical downtime."

The third musical type, music of meeting, is new to our time. It helps us to connect "with God not on high or even within, but through the miracle of community." This type of music is almost always participatory, and it calls up the image of the bodily postures of holding hands, and meeting other people's eyes with our own. Hoffman argues passionately that this type of music is the one most sorely needed today, stating:

> The single greatest need for worship is to connect individuals in community, that they may know the mystery of genuine meeting, and thereby the presence of God among us. Our single greatest lack is music of meeting. Musical experts within each faith who truly know their art will consciously and conscientiously develop a rich repertoire of music of meeting; they will teach these melodies and sing them, even if they are not as sophisticated as the accumulated repertoire of tradition. Without the ambiance of meeting, regularly satisfying worship will not occur, because the certainty of God among us will be wanting.

The final category of synagogue music, music of memory, is actually not an exclusive category of its own but rather includes music of all the other groups. It is music that ties us mentally and emotionally to our history, tradition and heritage.

Having outlined Schiller's theoretical structure of the types of synagogue music, Hoffman urges those leading services to carefully choose the music for each part of the service according to these ideas about how God is reached through prayer:

> How does God's presence become real to us in public prayer? That is the question that should determine which of the four kinds of music we select at any particular point in the liturgy. The liturgy has its own flow in this regard. Given the structure and shape of the service, should worshippers acknowledge God's majesty? Should they turn inward to know God in meditation? Should they connect as a community to know that God is among us? Or should they recollect the miracle of a community that goes back through time and will be here tomorrow just as it is today?[26]

To this discussion of worship music Hoffman adds a word about the tension he perceives between the musical standards and tastes of trained composers and musicians and the musical needs and preferences of American worshippers. Music that professional musicians agree is good, Hoffman asserts, is not always the music that most effectively facilitates prayer in current times:

> Musical expertise should certainly not be bypassed when it comes to selecting the music for public prayer, but musical quality as defined by musical elites is not the sole, nor even the most important, factor to be considered. Insistence on good music often comes at the expense of the very liturgical moments that are the whole point of the liturgy that the music is supposed to serve.[27]

To shed light on what he means by this, Hoffman provides as an example a service honoring a young composer for his contributions to his church's music. As part of the service, the musical directors included a "simple but effective" folk song the composer had written, but they performed it using a new arrangement, accompanied by the organ,

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[26] Ibid., 196.
[27] Ibid,. 180.

much slower than the original and with new harmonies. The critics hailed the new arrangement for "transforming a simple melody into a sophisticated musical event." However, the piece "failed miserably as worship." Hoffman goes on to say that while such "sophisticated" music is seen as "lasting," this does not make it better for prayer. He argues that the widely held belief that "liturgical music ought to last forever" is misguided. It is based, he says, on the idea "that the music of prayer is an offering to God, like the sacrifices in the Temple that once stood in Jerusalem," and "God deserves the best music we have to offer... But do we [really offer our words to God]? And even if we do, is our God really the kind of demagogic potentate who demands only the best, even if the best defeats the general purpose of rendering us worshipful?"[28]

Thus Hoffman, using a solid theoretical framework, argues that American Jews are no longer reached by prayer services and prayer music that dwells primarily on a transcendent, majestic image of God, and that we instead must focus on the more intimate, personal God-image that resonates for Americans. In doing so, we must also subordinate the goal of using only "the best" music, or "timeless" music for services to the goal of using music that helps worshippers to feel a connection to God and to their community, whatever type of music that may be.

Other works have added to this discussion by identifying and studying selected contemporary synagogues that successfully meet the spiritual needs of their congregations. One such work is *Finding a Spiritual Home,* by Sidney Schwarz. Schwarz studies four synagogues of different denominations (Reform, Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist). The Reform congregation, Temple Beth El in Sudbury, Massachusetts, has succeeded by empowering congregants to become involved

[28] Ibid., 181-185.

through many innovations. In the area of prayer, this includes the creation of an original prayer book for religious services. Services there are led with an orientation towards maximizing congregational participation:

> The music compliments [Rabbi Lawrence] Kushner's style in that it invites the participation of all in attendance. For years, Larry led the chanting, which also gave him the ability to control the pace and mood of worship. The addition of Lorel Zar-Kessler [the musical director] in 1990 added a more aesthetic dimension to the music. The melodies at a service alternate between soulful, wordless nigunim and hand-clapping, upbeat singing. Lorel's radiating smile is its own invitation to join in.[29]

Schwarz emphasizes the extent to which Beth El's success is based on a calculated effort not to emulate either the synagogues its congregants remember from their childhoods or the typical Reform congregations of today. "A strong common denominator among Beth El's members," he states, "is dislike for the congregations of their respective childhoods, which cover the gamut from Orthodox to Reform." He also points out that "Beth El's spontaneous style is the antithesis of the highly decorous and formal services that characterize the leading congregations of the Reform movement."[30]

Beth El, Schwarz tells us, is a unique congregation whose style and success could be replicated only with extreme difficulty. However, he suggests that the sentiment prevalent there, which shuns formality and decorum, is increasingly the norm among American Jews. He refers to a "veritable explosion of 'library *minyans*' in American synagogues," which "signals a desire on the part of laypeople for leading their own services in a distinctly 'low-church' style."[31] He also points to a "new generation of American Jewish Songwriters" whose music "draws worshippers into a spiritual mood." He includes in this group the late Shlomo Carlebach, "a hip, guitar-playing Orthodox

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[29] Schwarz, 76.
[30] Ibid., 80.
[31] Ibid., 256.

rabbi" who "created a genre of prayers set to catchy, upbeat melodies." Others he mentions are Debbie Friedman, Hannah Tiferet Siegel and Shefa Gold, whose music ranges from songs which render liturgy in both Hebrew and English to "rhythmic chanting, which allows for a more meditative tone to be set during a part of the service." Making a sweeping statement about both this new music and synagogue music of other types and times, he states, "This music, along with wordless *nigunim*, are gradually replacing the operatic cantorial music or choral selections that were so long the staple of synagogue music and is making it more possible for worshippers to feel some spiritual energy in a service through music and song."[32]

Another, more in-depth study on music and worship in contemporary synagogues is *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land,* by ethnomusicologist Jeffrey Summit. Summit explores the many factors at play for Jews, "in one metropolitan setting [Boston] at the end of the twentieth century, as they choose the music for the performance of prayer in communal worship."[33] He identifies the following variables, among others, that determine the effect music has on a religious service: how singable is the melody; how many times is a nigun or tune repeated; what is the ratio of traditional *davening* to folk or other melody; and what type of vocal style is used. "Style of worship," he argues, "even more than the content of the liturgy, plays a major factor in whether or not many Jews find prayer meaningful and fulfilling. Style makes people feel either at home or uncomfortable and alienated from communal prayer. Ultimately, it can affect whether or not they attend and affiliate with synagogues."[34] He attributes particular significance to the vocal style of the prayer leader. "For example," he says, "worshippers have strong

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[32] Ibid., 257.

[33] Jeffrey Summit, The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

feelings about the vocal style chosen by a cantor or lay prayer leader and will associate certain values and attitudes with that musical style. Earlier in this century, a leader who sang in a *bel canto*, operatic vocal style was seen as cultured and artistic – an American. Now this approach can brand a leader as being formal, egotistical, and oriented toward performance."[35]

As a theory for analyzing the prayer music he observes, Summit adapts concepts from sociolinguistics called code and code-switching, and he coins a new term, melodic code:

> Melodic codes are composed of redundant components with a high level of predictability. A code has an identifiable, stylistic profile, a bundle of recurring, packaged details, such as rhythm, melodic contour, the number of melodic repetitions, vocal quality, ornamentation, harmony, instrumental accompaniment, the relation between solo performance and congregational participation, and length of songs.[36]

Summit asserts that each melodic code carries with it associations with particular communities of identification. Among the "musical and linguistic repertoires" available to leaders of synagogue music are "*nusah*, 'traditional' tunes from Sulzer and Lewandowski, Hasidic, Israeli, Sephardic and contemporary American folk music." Each of these melodic codes resonates differently with different people and groups of people in synagogue services.

Code-switching, as defined by sociolinguist Monica Heller, is "the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode."[37] This switching occurs frequently in our everyday lives, as we juggle the many facets of our social identifications. Samuel Heilman claims that in situations where people have the option of

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[34] Ibid., 20.
[35] Ibid., 19.
[36] Ibid., 131.
[37] Ibid., 131.

using more than one language, the choice of one over the other can be seen as an "implicit victory for the community in which that language is dominant."[38] In addition, Summit employs a third term, code-layering, which can be applied very widely to American Jewish prayer music. Code-layering describes the combining of certain elements from different codes into the presentation of a particular piece of liturgy.[39] Take, for example, Jimi Hendrix's rendition of "Star Spangled Banner" on electric guitar.[40] Here a piece that originates within a certain context and is associated with unaccompanied classical voice, or voice with classical instrumentation, is transplanted into a new, rock and roll context, carrying associations from the 1960's. This theory of melodic code, code-switching and code-layering will be used to analyze melody choice and other aspects of the music in the case studies that follow.

In his five synagogue studies, Summit includes a Jewish Renewal *havurah*, a Reform congregation, a college Hillel, a modern Orthodox synagogue, and a Hassidic congregation. While the communities differ from each other in religious observance and in many aspects of the approach to worship, they all desire a great amount of musical participation among attendees of services and the need to connect with the music on a deep level. In particular, the section on Temple Israel of Boston is relevant to this thesis, since it seems to epitomize the transition currently taking place in Reform worship. In order to study this further, I have chosen this synagogue for one of my two case studies. Discussion of Summit's writings on Temple Israel will be included in the next chapter, which is devoted to that synagogue.

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[38] Ibid., 131.
[39] Ibid., 140.
[40] This is not an example used by Summit.

Chapter 3: Case Study of Temple Israel

Temple Israel of urban Boston, with over 1,500 member families, is the largest Reform congregation in New England. It employs four rabbis and a cantor. Jeffrey Summit studied the synagogue's *Shabbat* evening service for his 2000 book, *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land.* I will begin my analysis of the synagogue by discussing Summit's findings, since his work provides valuable background.

Shabbat Evening Service

According to Summit, the congregation was divided in the late 1970's and early 1980's between older members, who clung to the formal, organ- and solo- driven service, and younger members (40's and younger) who craved a more participatory, guitar-driven, informal service. This split led in 1979 to the establishment of the "early service," held in the synagogue's atrium early in the evening and conducted in a much more participatory and casual style than the existing later service in the sanctuary. For some time, both services took place each *Shabbat* evening, until it became difficult to form a *minyan* at the later service. At that point, the atrium service became the only regular *Shabbat* evening service at the synagogue.

In his study, Summit sought to flesh out the factors that caused the *Qabbalat Shabbat* service to resonate with so many congregants at Temple Israel. One important element was the intimate, personal atmosphere created by the physical setup of the room and the casual dress. Instead of in either of the synagogue's two sanctuaries (which were available), the service was held in the sunny atrium, with a portable ark, podium and folding chairs set up facing each other. Rather than standing on a *bimah* or stage, the cantor and rabbis who led the service stood on the same level with the congregants, "so close they often touch." Congregants reported that these factors made the service feel

intimate, personal, even unplanned, although the service had been carefully planned by the clergy.[41]

Since Summit's study was completed, this service has reached an even more permanent status and still enjoys attendance in the hundreds. Instead of the atrium, the service is now held in the Temple's main sanctuary, equipped with an expansive, modernist-era *bimah* and ark. Significant steps have been taken to adapt the grand sanctuary to the needs of this service, which formerly drew so much energy from the informal atmosphere created by its temporary surroundings. While taking advantage of the beauty of the room, the congregation has acted to make the space feel smaller and more intimate, thereby retaining some of the physical features afforded by the atrium. Instead of presiding from the *bimah*, standing at the podium or the ark, the rabbis and cantor place themselves in front of the stairs to the *bimah*, level with the congregation. They stand side by side, close together, with music stands in front of them. The seats on the *bimah* remain empty, instead of being filled by clergy and honored congregants who would sit above and face the congregation. In fact, the *bimah* is used very little during the service: once to open the ark for the concluding prayer, *Aleinu*, and once to call the children up for *Qiddush*, the blessing over the wine, at the very end of the service. To further facilitate the feeling of intimacy, large cloth barriers of deep colors have been placed in the rows of seats, about halfway to the back of this grand room. Since the barriers make it impossible to sit in the back rows and observe the service from afar, congregants are forced to sit closer together, preventing dispersion. In these ways, the large sanctuary is truncated on both ends to create a smaller space and, therefore, a more intimately communal worship experience.

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[41] Ibid., 51, 56.

Perhaps a more important factor in the continued success of this *Shabbat* evening service, however, is the music. Indeed, instead of "*Qabbalat Shabbat*," as the Temple has officially referred to the service since its inception in 1979, participants in the early years simply called it 'the music service." Congregants described the music to Summit as enabling them to "decompress." One said the singing helped her "to feel the tension draining out of my body," and thereby set the tone for the beginning of *Shabbat*. They also expressed a special love of the use of guitar.[42]

Cantor Roy Einhorn has been serving Temple Israel since 1983, and he has conducted the music for the *Shabbat* evening service continuously since then. Almost the whole service can be sung by the congregation, which reflects the goals Einhorn articulated to Summit:

> I like people to walk out of here feeling like they've sung the melodies that they wanted to sing, or they've heard me sing something that's nice, or provocative in some way, and gives them something to think about... But by and large, I want them to feel that the music is familiar and that they're able, if they want to, to sing.[43]

This statement, made to Summit several years ago, remains a relevant description of the service today. However, the service's music has changed substantially over the intervening years. Initially, while the music was indeed mostly congregational, Einhorn told Summit, "I generally have several pieces within the service that cannot be sung by the congregation."[44] Today, this is no longer true. "There is not as much solo singing by the cantor anymore," Einhorn says, "just a line here and there." He still sees these lines as essential to the effect of the service as a whole, however. "It's my voice, and it's important that the congregation hears my voice. Not for my ego -- that's not who I am.

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[42] Ibid., 56.
[43] Ibid., 58.
[44] Ibid., 60.

It's just to have a different feel. Plus, I'm the only trained singer, so it's good to have that one voice coming through." The times during which the rabbis refrain from singing along include the *Hatsi Qaddish* and the *Barechu*, where Einhorn chants the lines traditionally reserved for the prayer leader (this does not stop a significant minority of the congregants from chanting with the cantor). Only at a few other moments does the cantor sing alone, such as *Vene 'emar* (the short scriptural passage which follows *Mi Khamokha*) and, sometimes, a traditional chant of *Veshameru*.

To look more deeply at how the balance between solo and congregational singing has changed in the last few years in Temple Israel's *Shabbat* evening service, we will study as an example the settings used for *Lekhah Dodi*. This example will also allow us to explore how the synagogue's melody choices have changed over the years

Until a few years ago, Einhorn most commonly sang *Lekhah Dodi* using the refrain from a setting by Louis Lewandowski (please see Musical Ex. 1[45] in the Appendix). The refrain moves slowly in waltz time. The melody, in a major key, flows easily, and each two-measure phrase ends on the tonic or dominant chord. The 16-bar tune is made up of an arpeggio pattern and an ascending and descending scale, which finally falls gently to the tonic. The absence of any syncopation makes the rhythm as predictable as the harmony, and similarly free of musical or emotional tension. The effect of the refrain as a whole is at once regal and comforting, commanding and hypnotizing. This seems to fit well the mood demanded by the classical Reform devotion to decorum. For the verses, Einhorn would chant a *recitative* during which he could add some drama by varying the tempo and dynamics. The congregation was not able to join

[45] This transcription of *Lekhah Dodi* as sung at Temple Israel at the time of Summit's study is copied from ibid., 61.

in on these verses, since he chanted them differently each time. However, they could join in again each time the refrain was repeated.

A few years ago, the clergy as a team decided to stop using this setting for *Lekhah Dodi* because, Einhorn says, "everyone should be able to participate and the argument of being able to interpret the words musically didn't win out in the end. And I don't think I fought a battle on that. I was comfortable." The settings he currently uses all lend themselves easily to congregational participation in the verses as well as in the refrain. The two we will discuss here, one by Abie Rotenberg and one by Craig Taubman, are widely used in Reform congregations today. A look at each will shed light on the development of liturgical music in the movement.

The Rotenberg (Musical Ex. 2[46]) is almost the Lewandowski's antithesis. The melody of the refrain, in a minor key, cries out with passion and urgency, beckoning all to welcome the coming Sabbath. The singing of fast-moving rhythmic phrases on nearly a singly pitch calls up the image of running through the night, crying out in search of the Sabbath bride. This pattern repeats sequentially, with three-note pickups to the first downbeat of each, on "la." These pickups lead to a surprising eighth note rest on that downbeat and send us running through the next phrase. Finally, the refrain ends with a two-measure phrase, climbing and winding to a resolution and release on the relative major chord. The music of the verses sits at a lower level of intensity. The cry of the refrain gives way to a lamenting tone created by a *legato* melody punctuated by lingering four-three suspensions. The final measure of the verse builds up tension, ending on the dominant chord, and then gives way to the three-note pickup to the crashing refrain.

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[46] Abie Rotenberg, "*L'cha Dodi*" (Originally titled, "*Bo-i V'shalom,*") in *The Complete Shireinu,* ed. Joal N.. Eglash, et. al. (NY: Tramscontinental Music Publications/New Jewish Music Press, 2001), 372.

The Taubman (Musical Ex. 3[47]) bursts with emotion of a different sort. Written to a swing beat, which emphasizes the off beats of every measure (2 and 4), the melody dares anyone present not to move with the rhythm and sing along. Taubman uses word play at the end of each verse, transforming the "lah" which happens to be the last syllable of all four stanzas used in most Reform synagogues into a short sing-song interlude leading into the chorus: "*Leshem ultiferet velithilah la la la la la la Lekhah Dodi.*" He even plays with repeating the words "*Lekhah*" and "*Liqrat,*" which creates a rhythmic play of its own: "*Lekhah, Lekhah Dodi. Likrat, likrat kalah.*" The jazzy feel of the tune transforms worshippers into *klezmer* singers, and the playfulness creates a joyful mood. The differences between these two settings of *Lekhah Dodi* and the Lewandowski exemplify how in the past three decades the decorum of Reform worship is being transformed, and its orderly, dignified music is being replaced with more outward emotion and enthusiasm. Using Hoffman's terms (see Chapter 1), the European majestic, distant approach to God through prayer has given way to an American intimacy and to personal contact among all the participants, including the leaders.

At both the *Shabbat* evening and *Shabbat* morning services, Einhorn performs the accompaniment himself on guitar. On *Shabbat* evening, he is joined by a flautist. The flute compliments the guitar and the voices in the room, adding to the celebratory atmosphere. However, it draws little attention – the flautist plays no solos and sits inconspicuously at the side of the room, in front of the *bimah*.

Einhorn and the rabbis at Temple Israel have carefully structured their service, using music to create momentum and energy. After the rabbis and cantor sing a few songs together privately on the *bimah* at 5:15 p.m. (congregants arriving early can

[47] Craig Taubman, *"L'chah Dodi," Friday Night Live Songbook* (Sherman Oaks, CA: Sweet

observe them singing together, which sends a strong message), they descend to their music stands at 5:30 to begin singing with the congregation in preparation for the beginning of the service. As the room slowly fills with a steady stream of congregants of all ages, Einhorn leads those present in folk-style melodies such as Craig Taubman's *Romemu,* Psalm 99, *Kol Hanshamah* (Psalm 150:6) (these two melodies will be discussed later) set to a Sufi melody, and Hassidic *nigunim*, or melodies without words. The melodies he chooses share the same infectious rhythm that will soon be heard when the service begins with the Taubman *Lekhah Dodi,* described above. The introductory singing serves a dual purpose. It provides an energetic, exciting atmosphere in which arriving congregants can greet each other. Also, after the congregants sit down, it compels people to join in, moving and singing as a community of hundreds in anticipation of the beginning of *Shabbat*. Einhorn's guitar provides a harmonic and rhythmic support for the voices in the room. It does not, however, overpower the main source and focus of the energy: the voice of the congregation, led by the amplified voices of all four clergy in the front. The music stops momentarily. Then after a brief welcome by one of the rabbis, Taubman's *Lekhah Dodi* begins, and the assembled congregation is ready to join together in song.

With an English reading and the lighting of the candles, the energy of the service changes. Excitement of the coming of *Shabbat* gives way to the peaceful moment of the arrival of *Shabbat* as the congregation chants Binder's setting of the *Shabbat* candle blessing. In contrast to the up-tempo, rhythmic music of *Lekhah Dodi,* Einhorn plucks the guitar gently, scantly implying the chords. After this quiet moment, the mood is set for Einhorn to put down his guitar and begin the *Hatsi Qaddish,* with the traditional

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Louise Publications, 1999).

Shabbat evening chant, *a cappella.* As mentioned before, the rabbis remain silent during the portions of this prayer traditionally reserved for the prayer leader. Thus, the *Hatsi Qaddish* is one of the few moments in the service when Einhorn chants alone, although some congregants do join in. Using the terms set out by Summit (see Chapter 2), a switch has been made in the melodic codes brought out by the music. While until this point, Jewish and American folk languages had been combined together, now a traditional prayer is chanted, unadulterated by any other cultural languages.

The next section of the service, which includes *Barechu, Shema* and *Ve'ahavta,* could fairly be called the quiet before the storm. The *Barechu* setting by Taubman (the first section only) is slow and reflective, sung responsively by cantor and congregation. The other two prayers may be done upbeat or reflectively, depending on Einhorn's choice of setting (Sulzer or Pik for *Shema* and Isaacson or *Torah* cantillation for *Ve'ahavta*). However, with the arrival of the *Ge'ulah,* the celebration of the Jews' exodus from Egypt, the service begins to build toward a climax. Einhorn sometimes precedes *Mi Khamokha* with Debbie Friedman's "Miriam's Song," a joyous folk song retelling how Miriam led the Israelite women in song and dance after the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea. *Mi Khamokha* follows, and Einhorn uses a Hassidic melody, arranged by Silverman, which will be discussed later in the context of the *bar/bat mitzvah* service. During the singing, percussion instruments – tambourines, rice shakers and more – are distributed around the room. It is as if while they sing of the redemption of the ancient Israelites at the Red Sea, the congregation is preparing its own celebration of God's redemptive power, using similar instruments to the ones used long ago. The music slows down for a moment as Einhorn chants the liturgy at the end of the *Mi Khamokha* text, "*Vene'emar.*" Whereas usually, for such a traditional Ashkenazi chant, he would put

down his guitar, this time he accompanies himself with a soft, sustaining strum. The accompaniment keeps the tension building. Then the congregation's celebration -- the service's climax -- begins. Einhorn leads the group in two songs, usually Taubman's *Rom'mu* and the Sufi melody of *Kol Han'shamah,* Psalm 150. Both of these settings were sung during the song session before the beginning of the service, so they are fresh in the congregants' minds. Used one after the other, they lead up to a frenzy of voices, guitar and percussion instruments. Taubman's *Romemu* (Musical Ex. 4[48]) moves with a moderate-tempo, deliberate beat in 4:4 meter. With syncopation in just a few select spots, the rhythm stays steady and yet keeps participants' feet tapping. The tune provides perfect preparation for the next piece, the Sufi melody of *Kol Hanshamah* (Musical Ex. 5[49]). This one has two sections that are sung in repetition, one after the other, in 4:4 time. The first section sits around the tonic of the minor key. One word, "*Hallelu* (praise God)," is repeated again and again. The pronounced beats of the melody and the constant repetition build in strength and intensity until the second section jumps to the fifth of the scale and stays up high. This second section bursts with energy, stretching congregants' voices with sustained high notes. The effect of the song is like a trampoline, coming down for a moment, building tension and then jumping back up to the high energy level again and again. Thus Psalm 150, a text not even found in the *Shabbat* evening liturgy, is the vehicle for the service's climax.

After this climax, the tone of the music transforms with *Adonai Sefatai Tiftah,* the *kavanah,* or meditation, to prepare for the *Amidah.* The prayer is sung using Taubman's setting, a Hassidic-style arrangement, sung with guitar, and beginning with a *nigun.*

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[48] Craig Taubman, *"Rom'mu,"* ibid.

[49] *"Kol HanN'shamah,"* in *The Complete Shireinu,* 115. The first section (Part A) of this piece is adapted from a Sufi chant.

After this, the mood is set for the reflective *Amidah*, traditionally the heart of the Jewish service. The first two of the seven blessings are chanted together, *a cappella.* The next musical selection, *Shalom Rav,* is sung with guitar, using either Jeffrey Klepper and Daniel Freelander's or Ben Steinberg's settings, both standards of Reform worship music. The Klepper/Freelander, which comes out of the Reform camp setting, sounds most natural on guitar. The Steinberg, however, was written for keyboard accompaniment and choir. Einhorn's rendering of this piece using folk guitar, without the choral arrangement, is a perfect example of Summit's theory of code layering. The piece fits well into the category of classical Reform repertoire. It pulls the heartstrings of many attendees of the service precisely because of their memories of it from that context, either from earlier points in their lives or from the High Holy Day service. Here, however, the piece is adapted to this new setting and performed in a folk style. Similar code layering is found throughout the service, using the same folk guitar to accompany *Hassidic* or other traditional text melodies. Code switching is found too, as traditional and modern folk singing are juxtaposed with the chanting of prayers using *nusah.* The use of guitar and *a cappella* chanting seems to have the effect of switching back and forth between modern American folk culture and traditional East European style. Although few congregants are likely to be specifically aware of these pulls on their cultural identifications, the balance seems to be an important factor in the service's effectiveness in creating a fulfilling prayer experience for the congregation.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service

Temple Israel is a typical Reform congregation in that the *Shabbat* evening service is the focal point of congregational *Shabbat* worship. While hundreds of congregants assemble in the sanctuary on *Shabbat* evening, hardly any attend the *Shabbat*

morning service. Since Einhorn started working there 20 years ago, the clergy has worked to make the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service a congregational event, not just a life-cycle event for one or two families. But their efforts have been to no avail. As Einhorn put it in a November 2002 interview:

> We said, 'this is our service, and everyone is invited, and it's a congregational service. We purposely don't have the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* reading the *Ve'ahavta* or the *Avot imahot* or *Gevurot* [prayers of the service]. Our philosophy was, 'it's not their service, it's open to the congregation, and we have a service every Saturday morning, whether or not there's a *bar* or *bat mitzvah* or a baby naming or a wedding blessing.' But the reality is, that's not the case. No one comes.

Two years ago, resigning itself to this reality, the synagogue started a 30-minute "*minyan*" service on *Shabbat* mornings, not held in the sanctuary. This service is meant for those 40 to 50 congregants who regularly come to the *Torah* study but have never been interested in attending the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service. The minyan is led two weeks per month by one of the congregation's four rabbis and the other two weeks per month by a cantorial soloist hired this past year.

The non-congregational nature of attendance at Temple Israel's *bar or bat mitzvah* service does not stop Cantor Einhorn from making a concerted effort to create a congregational atmosphere for the guests who do attend. He feels Temple Israel is "ahead of the curve" in minimizing the difference in feel between the *Shabbat* evening service and the *Shabbat* morning *bar/bat mitzvah* service. According to Einhorn, the two primary factors he must work against in the *bar/bat mitzvah* service are: 1) "most attendees are unfamiliar with the prayers and with Hebrew in general, and 2) "the clergy don't know 95 percent of the people sitting in front of them... they're all family from out of town."

To create a feeling of community and participation, Einhorn says he relies on *nigunim*, catchy, singable melodies without words. At the beginning of the service, the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* and the immediate family proceed with the clergy into the sanctuary through the lobby, singing a *nigun* adapted from Shlomo Carlebach's song, *"Ki Va Mo'ed"*. This start to the service is meant to create an atmosphere of informality and participation. The family is asked to form a semicircle at the front, facing the congregation, still singing the *nigun*. "We don't want you to sit down right away," he tells the family. "We want the congregation to see you singing, participating." The *nigun* itself (Musical Ex. 6[50]), in a major key, is joyful, catchy and builds in energy level throughout. Like all others of this style, it intensifies as it unfolds and repeats – especially when being sung by a group. Partly because of its quite simple melody, a group can sing it easily and confidently. (Its structure is made up of sequential patterns that repeat in a somewhat predictable way.) As the patterns repeat, and even as more and more people are able to join in, the tempo can get faster and the volume louder. In addition, the rhythm of the melody is such that the strong beats (1 and 3) are virtually always punctuated, especially in the first and second sections. The third section provides a break from the motif, singing long, sustained notes. With a critical mass of clergy and the family of the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* singing, the room fills with voices celebrating with song the beginning of this *Shabbat* morning and this life-cycle event. Even if many attendees do not join in the singing, an atmosphere has been created in which they feel included, and the idea has been communicated that the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* family is invested in the whole service, not just the section in which their child is at the center.

[50] Adapted from Shlomo Carlebach, *"Ki Va Mo'ed,"* in *The Shlomo Carlebach Anthology*, ed. Velvel Pasternak (NY: Tara Publications, 1992), 27. Transcribed by Jeffrey Saxe.

After opening remarks by one of the rabbis, including an encouragement to participate in the service through singing, Einhorn continues with *Mah Tovu*, again using a *nigun* at both the beginning and the end to facilitate participation. The setting, using a Hassidic tune, is printed as Musical Ex. 7[51]. Those in the service who do not know the words of this prayer can join in during the *nigun*. In this way, Einhorn follows up on the rabbi's invitation to sing along with a piece that the whole group can sing without difficulty. Some guests, therefore, will join in, although others will not. Most *bar* and *bat mitzvah* guests are not accustomed to participating in services, and they will not do so, even when they are able, and even when they have been gently encouraged. However, the *Mah Tovu* has reinforced the atmosphere of inclusion the clergy has created. The melody also provides musical contrast with the *nigun* used to begin the service. It is set in a minor key and sung slowly, reflectively, with *legato,* winding up a full octave and climbing back down. It serves to refocus the energy that was established by the opening *nigun* and set a quiet mood for the beginning of the main part of the service.

The prayers that follow, *Hatsi Qaddish, Barechu, Shema* and *Ve'ahavta* are all chanted, without guitar, by Einhorn, the rabbis, and any attendees who are able to join. Not many do. The lines of the *Hatsi Qaddish* and *Barechu* traditionally reserved for the prayer leader are chanted as a solo by Einhorn. The feel of the service has now changed dramatically. During the opening *nigun* and the *Mah Tovu,* those who knew no Hebrew nonetheless had the option of participating, and the singing consisted of folk tunes. In this new section, the prayers are all chanted using *nusah* or *Torah* cantillation. Although

[51] Charles Davidson, arr., *"Mah Tovu," Chabad* melody, in *Gates of Song,* ed. Malcom Stern et. al. (NY: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1987), No. 18. Note: The chords specified in this arrangement may not be the ones used at Temple Israel.

Einhorn chants in a style that welcomes participation (except for the solo parts mentioned above), participation is only possible when one is familiar with the Hebrew prayers. However since many guests were participating earlier, the sensation of inclusiveness seems to last for this few minutes, until participation can again be more fully facilitated. Further, the choice to chant this section, rather than to use folk tunes (even the *Barechu* is chanted, rather than choosing the Taubman tune used *Shabbat* evening or another folk tune such as the Pik) allows the establishment of the feel of a traditional Jewish service.

After the English readings that follow *Ve'ahavta, a cappella* cantillation again gives way to folk song as Einhorn takes up his guitar to lead *Mi Khamokha* (Musical Ex. 8[52]). He sings the same *Hassidic* setting by Silverman that he uses for *Shabbat* evening. As with *Mah Tovu*, a *nigun* is sung before the text to enable those who do not know the Hebrew to participate. This time, however, the melody of the *nigun* is the very same melody for the text. Thus, singing the *nigun* results in the learning of the prayer's melody as well. Since many guests are familiar with the first stanza of this well-known Hebrew text, and because transliteration is made available, guests can easily join in the singing. The melody itself, in 2:4 time, consists of two alternating four-measure phrases which end with the same catchy, two-measure hook (e.g. on the words *"Ba'eilim Adonai"* and *"oseh feleh"*). "I'm kind of stuck on [the Silverman *Mi Khamokha*], Einhorn says, "but there's a good reason for being stuck there," because the tune lends itself so well to joyful, congregational singing. It's 2:4 meter, its lively beat, and its leaps up and down between the tonic and fifth notes of each chord give it a bouncy, playful feel. While many other settings for the *Mi Khamokha* inspire awe and inspiration at the

[52] Richard B. Silverman, *"Mi Chamocha,"* score, 1969.

wonder of God's works, this setting seems to emphasize the joy of community and of singing together.

Einhorn makes a special effort to achieve the highest level of participation here, especially because many guests were unable to participate in the preceding section of chanted prayers. Below, Einhorn describes his presentation of both *Mi Khamokha* and *Yismechu* (Musical Ex. 9[53]), which comes later in the service:

> When I get to *Mi Khamokha*, I start with the *nigun*. I stop. I introduce it. I talk about the Israelites passing through the Red Sea. I say, "Imagine the excitement of feeling that they've been saved, that those chariots that were coming to kill them got stopped in the mud. And you can sing this with a feeling of joy, of excitement that there's a future. And that has to be in your voice. And all you have to sing is 'la.'" So I give them an introduction, and I'll start, and if I don't hear anything I'll stop, or I'll say sing after me. And I'll go through the two parts, and it takes 30 seconds to do. And I'll do the same thing with *Yismechu*...It's all to encourage people to feel that they can participate.

What Einhorn is doing during these two points in the service is certain to catch first-time guests at Temple Israel off guard. This type of teaching is very unusual in the middle of a *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service at a large congregation. The "startle effect", as we might call it, is part of Einhorn's goal. As mentioned earlier, most guests will not participate, even after being gently encouraged to do so. In fact, it seems that *bar* and *bat mitzvah* services in Reform synagogues almost invariably begin with an impassioned invitation from a rabbi or cantor to participate fully in every part of the service. Attendees seem to hear such an invitation as an insincere pleasantry, like a distant acquaintance saying, "You must come to dinner sometime." However, by actually stopping the service and directly addressing the fact that people are not participating, Einhorn surprises these guests and leads them to question their impression that participation is either unwanted or unneeded. In addition, he brings to their attention the

fact that the Hebrew words they are singing have relevance for them as Jews and as people. Even more, he makes a personal connection with those in the room, walking up and down the center aisle and speaking unexpectedly, seemingly out of turn, and from the heart. When he did so during the service I attended, it made an appreciable difference. Guests who knew the Hebrew but had not been singing earlier sang *Mi Khamokha* in its entirety. Guests who did not know the Hebrew joined in singing the *nigun*, and I could see some even try to sing the Hebrew without knowing any of the words.

During the *Amidah*, when all stand to recite the *Avot, Gevurot* and *Qedushah,* participation fades. The rabbis and cantor turn around to face the ark, with their backs to the congregation. Attention is now directed towards the front of the room, and the service leaders can no longer engage those behind them directly to encourage them to chant along. Very few voices are heard, and even the rabbis are quieter. "It's mostly Roy singing," (Roy) Einhorn says, and this is not surprising. If guests are not accustomed to chanting these blessings, they can be expected to fall silent. However, Einhorn makes certain to bring back the participation following *Qedushah,* with the singing of *Yismechu.* As mentioned earlier, he uses the same mode of presentation as *Mi Khamokha*, teaching the melody and actively encouraging those present to sing along. The energy that comes out of this effort carries over to the remaining prayers of the *Amidah,* which are sung to congregational melodies.

At the start of the Torah service, the focus shifts – we have arrived at the meeting point between what was a communal *Shabbat* worship service and what feels now more like a life cycle event. The *bar* or *bat mitzvah* becomes the center of the proceedings. He/she helps to remove and return the Torah to the ark, reads aloud from the prayer book,

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[53] G. Hedaya, arr., "*Yism'chu,*" folktune, in *Gates of Song,* No. 48.

chants from the Torah and gives and receives numerous speeches. In addition, instead of standing on the floor, level with and close to the congregation, the clergy now steps onto the *bimah*, where they remain for the duration of the service. The chairs on the *bimah*, which sat vacant until this point, are now filled with clergy and immediate family of the *bar* or *bat mitzvah*. Further, although all the melodies sung (now *a cappella*) are simple and widely used for Torah services at many synagogues, Einhorn is no longer able to make the same effort to connect with the guests or involve them in the singing. They are welcome to sing, and they may be more likely to do so after experiencing the earlier part of the service. However, the action is now taking place farther away from them, and the clergy's attention has shifted from focusing on the congregation of guests as a whole to the Torah, the *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, and his or her family. This subtle but dramatic shift may be the synagogue's way of reaching a compromise between the need to create a service with a sense of community for all present and the need to give the child and his or her family the attention necessary for a meaningful life-cycle event.

For one sitting in the pews, the *bar/bat mitzvah* service at Temple Israel does feel significantly different from the *Shabbat* evening service. *Shabbat* evening radiates with a unique, festive atmosphere. The sanctuary is packed with members of the local community, who greet each other happily and sing along with almost every prayer. The rabbis and cantor, comfortable in their surroundings, occasionally joke with one another while singing, and relatively little is required in the way of explanations of the service or teaching of melodies. On *Shabbat* morning, this camaraderie is absent. The clergy does not know those in attendance, and this changes the relationship between the leaders and the led. Further, as Einhorn says, many guests have a limited familiarity with the service, and thus the energy level the clergy tries to create can only reach a certain level. Indeed,

at some points in the service, when knowledge of the prayers and melodies are truly necessary to participate, the energy level drops, as was explained regarding the *Amidah*.

However, taking the service as a whole, the tactics used by Einhorn and the rabbis to create an inclusive, participatory atmosphere have had the intended effect. Guests do sing in several sections of the service. Especially notable is the fact that the teaching of *Mi Khamokha* and *Yismechu* seems to have a lasting effect on participation: for at least a few minutes after the end of those prayers, worshippers join in more than they had before. Moreover, the effect of this limited participation on the whole of the service is significant. A mood of community and a sense of purpose in gathering together have been established beyond that of witnessing a life-cycle event, and this mood even carries through the prayers that prove too difficult for the average guest to sing.

The level of informality and the emphasis on participation at the Temple Israel *bar/bat mitzvah* service represents the culmination of years of development and reflection on the part of the ritual leadership. Until recent years, the service was conducted every week with cantor, organ and choir. The choir stood in a hidden choir loft until the late 1980's, when they were moved to the side of the sanctuary, in view of the congregation, in order to reduce the effect of formality. This was only the first in a series of far-reaching changes. Einhorn explains:

> Around three years ago there was a professional quartet and an organist, and we'd sing a *Mah Tovu* at the beginning... We used to do the Lewandowski or the Braun. We started and there was just silence. There was no participation, they were just looking at us, or they were talking to each other. So I started pulling those things away, because I was uncomfortable with that, and my rabbinic colleagues were way uncomfortable with it. So the choir was just there to try to encourage the congregation to sing. But when we came to *Yismechu* [setting printed below], and again the congregation was looking at the quartet... And they're not there anymore. We just made a decision to take them out in 1999.

For two years after this decision, Einhorn allowed each *bar* or *bat mitzvah* family to decide whether the choir would be present at their service and whether the accompaniment would be organ (and some guitar) or guitar only. However, no more than four families per year were choosing the choir or the organ. The options were discontinued in 2001, and every *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service is now conducted using guitar and unaccompanied chanting. Discussion of the differences between these types of accompaniment and their effect on the service, in addition to further analysis of Temple Israel's services, can be found in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Case Study of Central Synagogue

Central Synagogue, located at 55th Street on Manhattan's East Side, has a membership of nearly 1,800 member families. The congregation's journey since its establishment in 1839 has been an evolution from its strong initial leanings towards classical Reform to its current orientation, in which yarmulkes and prayer shawls are worn, the Torah is chanted in Hebrew and congregational participation is a high priority of synagogue worship. The congregation has a rigorous, constant process of examining its worship services through interaction of the clergy with the ritual committee. In addition, the clergy consults regularly with an outside expert in worship. In fact, since the synagogue is currently in the process of experimenting with and revising its worship services, it must be said that the services are changing substantially from month to month, and therefore the observations made for this thesis are a snapshot of the synagogue's development. Some of the changes in recent years to the synagogue's worship program have been efforts to adapt the grand sanctuary to the needs of today's congregants. Since these changes are symbolic of the synagogue's evolution, I will begin by discussing them and then follow up with analysis of the synagogue's *Shabbat* evening service and its *bar/bat mitzvah* service.

The synagogue's website describes the sanctuary building as "a National and New York City historic landmark... the oldest Jewish house of worship in continuous use in the city, and a magnificent example of late 19th century American synagogue architecture." Traditional ornamentation pervades almost every element of the room, and the size of the space and height of the ceiling convey a feeling of distance, majesty and grandeur. The *bimah* and ark sit five steps up from the level where the congregation sits. A fire severely damaged the sanctuary in 1998, and the three-year restoration process

provided the congregation with an opportunity to build into the sanctuary the capability of rearranging aspects of the room that they saw as important to the prayer atmosphere. Thus during the High Holy Days, the sanctuary setup is essentially as it was before the fire. During the rest of the year, however, the sanctuary is altered in three primary ways.[54] First, several of the front and back rows of pews are removed, and the remaining rows are angled inward so that instead of facing fully forward, they slightly face each other while also facing the podium at the center of the *bimah*. Second, the podium itself, which has been made smaller, is placed forward and down a few feet, to bring it closer to the congregation. These changes, according to Senior Rabbi Peter Rubinstein in a December 2002 interview, are meant to alter one's experience in the room "so that there is a somewhat greater sense of encompassing the pulpit," and so that the clergy can stand closer to the congregation. Third, a new area has been constructed to house the choir and organ. While in the more formal setup the choir stands with the organist in the choir loft at the rear of the sanctuary, in the new everyday arrangement both choir and organist are seated in front of the first row of seats and off to the side of the *bimah*. This change was especially important to Rubinstein:

> ...[B]ecause music should not be disembodied. The idea that you hear music and you don't see the people singing creates a sense of this ethereal group somewhere, and therefore you feel disconnected from what's going on. So I believe people should see singers... The choir and the organ need to support congregational singing, not replace it. So we were very deliberate in thinking about this.

In addition, a fourth change was made which remains in place in the restored sanctuary all year round: small microphones were hung from the ceiling to amplify the congregation's singing. This was done to address what may be a common problem in synagogues with large sanctuaries and amplification for the cantor, choir and organ.

[54] The High Holy Day setup is used for a few other formal occasions throughout the year as well,

"Very often," Rubinstein says, "congregations don't hear themselves, and they sing and they think they're silent, or they think they're the only ones singing." In fact, this problem is not an accident. Reform sanctuaries built in the 19th and most of the 20th centuries were designed to optimize the acoustics for the cantor, choir and organ and minimize distracting noise from congregants. After all, the goal was not congregational singing. However, this design can work against modern-day synagogues seeking to encourage congregational participation in the music at services. If individual congregants have the impression that no one else can hear their voices but them, they may have no motivation to join in. Alternatively, if they believe they are the only congregants singing, they may feel self-conscious and, again, remain silent. Thus, either impression can diminish the perception that the congregation has a musical role in the service. In addition, this setup can create a sense of isolation for the individual congregant, undermining the feeling of connection the synagogue is trying to create among everyone in the room. The innovation of hanging microphones over the congregational seats and actually amplifying congregants' voices along with the cantor, choir and organ bypasses this acoustical issue and enables congregants to hear their collective voice in the service and to feel connected to those sitting around them.

Shabbat Evening Service

Rubinstein states that "the congregation really does come in great mass on Friday night, so that becomes the service of the congregation." On a typical *Shabbat* evening, the sanctuary is filled with 400-800 worshippers. Rubinstein shares the nonmusical aspects of leading the service with his two rabbinic colleagues, Sarah Reines and Ruth Zlotnick. Cantor Ida Rae Cahana, the synagogue's interim cantor, conducts the music.

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but not for regular *Shabbat* evening or *Shabbat* morning services.

The service has undergone far-reaching musical changes over the last several years. Cantor Emeritus Richard Botton retired five years ago and was succeeded by Cantor Jordan Franzel. According to Rubinstein, Franzel's service at the congregation brought a radical change in the music used at Central Synagogue, both in repertoire and instrumentation. Franzel introduced guitar and many new congregational melodies that remain in the service. Cahana, who has served in her interim position since Franzel left in July 2002, has been maintaining the momentum Franzel developed and leaving the service largely intact. She does not play guitar, and therefore the organ is used exclusively except during those passages that are chanted without accompaniment. However, Cahana does plan to experiment with bringing in a guitarist for parts of the service. In addition, she says, a congregant who plays flute joins in occasionally.

One *Shabbat* evening in November 2002, hundreds of congregants filter in during the few minutes before the service begins at 6:00. Cahana leads the congregation in a *Hassidic nigun* (Musical Ex. 10[55]), accompanied by the organ. The eight professional voices in the choir join her from their position just in front of the congregational seats and off to the side. The melody is from Shlomo Carlebach's "Angel Song." In 3:4 time, slow, quiet and in a minor key, it is gentle and calming, with little harmonic tension and no rhythmic syncopation. The lullaby-like tune mingles with the sounds of conversing congregants, inviting them to sit, join in the singing and begin to shed the pressures of the week. When the melody concludes, one of the rabbis welcomes the congregation. She asks congregants to turn, greet each other and introduce themselves to anyone nearby whom they do not know.

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[55] *Nigun* as sung at Central Synagogue, transcribed by Jeffrey Saxe. Adapted from Shlomo Carlebach, "Angel Song."

Both the congregational *nigun* and the rabbi's request stand in conspicuous contrast to the atmosphere set up by this grand room, whose architecture was intended to instill awe, formality and a sense of distance in the people sitting in the pews. The congregants, however, seem perfectly comfortable with this balance, appreciating both the majesty of the space they call home and the *heymish,* familiar style established for the beginning of the service.

The clergy itself treads a thin line between the two extreme modes created here. Congregational singing is encouraged and achieved throughout most of the service, and the rabbis' addresses to the congregation are aimed at connecting the people in the room with each other and with a personal concept of God. At the same time, every note sung or word said by a cantor or rabbi, and every move made by one of the several honored congregants sitting on the *bimah,* shows care in behaving in a way appropriate with the majesty of the room. The effect is a service of beauty and polished grandeur that still enables engagement and connection between the service leaders and the congregants.

The music for the *Shabbat* evening service at Central Synagogue is eclectic, often juxtaposing and sometimes combining different styles and therefore different melodic codes (see Chapter 1). The most extreme example of this is the Rotenberg setting of the *Lekhah Dodi,* which was discussed in the context of the Temple Israel *Shabbat* evening service and is printed as Musical Ex. 2. A folk melody with a Sephardic feel, the piece cries out to the approaching Sabbath bride, pulsing with a powerful, forward-reaching beat. (Please see Chapter 3, page 5 for a more complete description of the piece.) Cantor Franzel, who preceded Cahana, introduced the setting into the Central Synagogue service, using guitar. However, as explained above, guitar has not been used at the synagogue since Franzel moved on. Singing the Rotenberg *Lekhah Dodi* with organ accompaniment

in Central Synagogue's grand sanctuary is a true marriage of divergent styles. The organ, with its sustained chords and lack of percussive quality, tends to neglect the piece's rhythmic complexity and make it sound like a hymn. Cahana compensates for this, however, by maintaining the emotional intensity in her singing, and the congregation can be heard heartily joining her in this passionate expression of anticipation for *Shabbat.*

Another example of code layering can be seen in the unison reading and chanting of *Ma'ariv Aravim* and *Ahavat Olam.* In a more traditional (Orthodox or Conservative) setting, each congregant might *daven* (chant) the whole of each prayer to him- or herself. The prayer leader would then chant the *hatimah,* the "seal" of each prayer, improvising within the traditional melodic formulas (*nusah),* and the congregation would respond with "*Amen.*" Another common variation of this mode of davening is the congregation chanting the *hatimah* along with the prayer leader. During his time as cantor of the synagogue, Franzel adapted this traditional worship mode for use in a Reform congregation. He taught congregants simple settings of *nusah* for these concluding lines and led the entire congregation in singing them. Thus, although neither the prayer leader or the congregation actually recited the Hebrew prayer in its entirety (only the *hatimah* is printed in the prayer book), traditional davening is simulated by chanting the *hatimah* together. Cantor Cahana continues this practice in her interim position. The hanging microphones amplify the congregants' voices, and Cahana's does not overpower them. The organ is silent. The more obvious trappings of classical Reform and American folk styles fall away, and in these moments the congregation expresses more purely its roots in Eastern Jewish liturgical tradition. However, the effect of unison singing rather than a cacophony of individual voices or the solo voice of a cantor marks the moment as significantly influenced by the Reform emphasis on decorum (rather than chaos) and the

more recent American emphasis on congregational participation. The sensation of participating as one of several hundred voices chanting these modal phrases, without accompaniment, is powerful. It seems to emphasize the presence of the congregation and the sense that the congregation's participation is the backbone of this *Shabbat* evening service. Congregational *a cappella* chanting occurs at only a few other times in the service including, most importantly, the *Avot* and *Gevurot,* the first two blessings of the *Amidah.* However, its effect on the tone of the service as a whole is remarkable. Cahana barely has to start the chant, and her voice blends in quickly with the voices of the congregants. With the large number of congregants present and their voices amplified, the room comes to life. The slow, melancholy cadence of the traditional *Shabbat* evening *nusah* creates the pulse of a community beginning to enter the sacred time of *Shabbat.*

At a few points during the service, Cahana's singing is clearly meant as a solo. Depending on the particular week, these may include the verses of the Finkelstein *Veshameru* and the entirety of the Isaacson *Vene'emar.* Every week, the cantor sings solo the lines of the Naumbourg *Hatsi Qaddish* that are traditionally reserved for the cantor or service leader as well as a short introduction to the mourner's *Qaddish.* However, the service is dominated by congregational participation. One of the rabbis stands next to Cahana nearly at all times, singing quietly during the congregational moments. At any given point in the service, congregants who are unsure as to whether it is appropriate to sing along can look to the rabbi for guidance. During these times, the choir blends in with the congregation. There are few, if any, parts of the *Shabbat* evening service in which the choir sings without congregational participation – the exception to this is when, occasionally, the choir sings a reflective piece following the silent prayer. Their new position at the side in front of the *bimah*, seated next to the organist, helps

them to blend in. They cannot be seen from most of the seats in the room. At the same time, they are not hidden in a loft but seated with the congregation, and they sing along with the congregation, their harmonies making for a fuller sound.

Because Friday evening is the only time many congregants come to the synagogue on *Shabbat,* the *Torah* is read. In the interest of time, however, the *Torah* service is abridged, allowing for only a few musical selections: songs for a short *Hakafah,* or procession around the sanctuary, *Vezot Hatorah* while the *Torah* is lifted and wrapped, and *Eitz Hayim Hi/Hashkiveinu* as the *Torah* is returned to the ark. The whole *Torah* service, including the reading and a *Devar Torah,* takes less than 10 minutes. While the congregation feels it is important to read from the *Torah* and hear the rabbi's comments on the portion during their time in synagogue, clearly the main priority for *Shabbat* evening is creating a communal worship experience for the congregation. That experience seems to center on the congregational singing, reading and chanting of prayers. The Torah reading seems almost symbolic.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service

While several hundred congregants attend the weekly *Shabbat* evening service at Central Synagogue, Rubinstein says, "Saturday becomes almost like a rental." He estimates that between 35 and 50 "core people" come on *Shabbat* morning. The rest of the hundreds in the room are guests of the family, or sometimes two families, of the *benei mitzvah.* Rubinstein identifies three challenges brought on by this phenomenon. First is the challenge to maintain a sense of congregational ownership over the service when guests so heavily outnumber congregants. To this end, the congregation limits the number of guests who can be invited to the ceremony as well as the extent to which the family can participate in the leading of the service. In fact, the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* does

not appear on the *bimah* until the beginning of the Torah service. In addition, since the synagogue is determined to make this *the* congregational service, there is no concurrent alternative *minyan* which congregants can choose to attend instead. The second task is to control the potential for excess with regard to decorations, food and other peripheral aspects of the ceremony. Such excess could contribute to a feeling of pressure for families to spend beyond their means and could detract from the atmosphere the synagogue wants to create for *Shabbat* morning. The synagogue therefore specifies a particular floral arrangement and a modest *Qiddush* to be served after the service, both of which are to be sponsored by the family or families of the *benei mitzvah.* In addition, it is prohibited to hand out special yarmulkes or service information packets, in order to ensure that the particular yarmulkes or packets chosen do not become a focus of attention.

The third and most difficult challenge presented by the makeup of the service attendance, Rubinstein believes, is to provide this group, many of whom are unfamiliar with the synagogue's service, with the chance:

> ...[t]o participate and find something meaningful, so that they leave the service, if not wanting to come back, at least feeling that they have engaged in something which will change the tone of their day and their week...

The *Shabbat* morning *bar/bat mitzvah* service is a vastly different experience from the *Shabbat* evening service. On *Shabbat* evening, the sanctuary is full because several hundred members of the community have come to share the first moments of *Shabbat.* On *Shabbat* morning, the crowds have gathered to attend a life-cycle event of a friend or relative. Most do not know the melodies used by the congregation, and, having perhaps attended many *bar* and *bat mitzvah* ceremonies in which guests had little or no participatory role, they do not expect to participate or to be engaged.

The clergy endeavors to encourage singing by the guests attending the *Shabbat* morning service as well as the few congregants present – Cahana by her style of singing (see the next chapter for further discussion of this) and her choice of settings and the rabbis by singing along. In addition, the rabbi who begins the service issues a verbal charge to those present to join in, even if they do not know the words. "It's not just the words" that matter, said Rabbi Reines one morning when I attended, "but the intention, even the breath." However, the vast majority of those in attendance do not participate, and many do not even open their prayer books or read the English at the appropriate times. Because participation is so limited, the service has a different feel from *Shabbat* evening. The congregation's voice, which on *Shabbat* evening is so integral to the service that it is now even amplified, is missing. The lips of the 35 to 50 congregants who do come regularly can be seen to move, and some guests occasionally look down at their prayer books and sing quietly for a moment. However, the general effect is of a congregation of guests watching others pray.

The thrust of this service, as it is *Shabbat* evening, is toward music that can be sung by those sitting in the pews. However, Cahana says, the service is "of necessity a little more formal... I do think it's a reflection of the fact that there is usually a *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, and I think part of it is that there's a fuller Torah service. So there's that expectation of formality, too, which doesn't have anything to do with the *bar* or *bat mitzvah*." This added formality, Cahana explains, makes it appropriate to choose perhaps one solo piece by the cantor. It might also include two or three choral pieces or pieces sung by the cantor and choir together. "It's still not a tremendous amount of big, elongated cantorial pieces. That's not what happens here."

On a typical *Shabbat* morning, Cahana and the choir follow the rabbi's introduction and invitation to participate with Danny Maseng's *Mah Tovu* (Musical Ex. 11[56]). Although Maseng wrote the piece to be sung by a congregation, the *bar* and *bat mitzvah* guests are generally content with listening. With eight professional voices and those of a few people on the *bimah* joining in, the room is filled with song. The positioning of the choir almost amongst the guests (in its new regular location at the side in front of the *bimah*) even makes it feel as if more guests are singing than actually are. The text perfectly fits the atmosphere, since it expresses the awe of one seeing Israel's places of worship for the first time -- many of the guests have never before experienced Central Synagogue's ornate sanctuary. The setting of the text also fits. Its tone is full of wonder and glory: every repetition of the words "*Mah Tovu*" (how wondrous) swells with a legato, descending arpeggio, each one higher than the last. The phrases thus take on an exclamatory quality. Yet the melody is accessible to anyone who would choose to join in – it is simple and predictable, with sequential, repeating phrases. In this way, the piece blends the majesty of the sanctuary with the informality and participation the synagogue tries to encourage.

A balance is struck in the service, not between congregational and solo singing, since the guests typically do not join in, but rather between the solo voice of the cantor at certain times and the ensemble voice of the cantor, choir, and rabbis at other times. In Eliyahu Schleifer's *Elohai Neshamah Shenatata Bi* (Musical Ex. 12[57]), chanted shortly after *Mah Tovu,* Cahana's solo voice proclaims the miracle of the human soul reawakened each morning. The piece is in the *recitative* style, allowing the cantor to

[56] Danny Maseng, *"Mah Tovu,"* 1999, from the album *Soul on Fire,* (Recorded NY: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 2000).

acknowledge the greatness of God's gift of human creation with a full range of musical expression. Although the setting is in a minor key, an open, ethereal tone is set by the avoidance of the third note of the scale almost entirely. Intervals of fourths and fifths, and phrases jumping higher and higher, create a sense of heavenly mystery. At the point in the prayer where thanks are offered to God for the act of creating such a soul, the recitative becomes a metric tune, and voices of those on the *bimah* and in the choir join. All sing together a rhythmic chant, in 4:4 time, still punctuated by frequent jumps of a fourth or more. Now, however, the chant is grounded more solidly in the minor key by the presence of the third, as if grounded by conviction in understanding, from the text, that we owe our souls to God. This piece is an example of how the service seeks to strike a balance between a sense of grounding in community, with group participation, and a reach for the divine through artistic expression.

One style of music that is conspicuously absent from the balance struck at this service is the booming, majestic cantorial solo. The moments of majesty and awe, such as the *Mah Tovu* at the beginning, are all congregational or choral. The *Qedushah,* which in many synagogues is seized as a prime opportunity for such a piece with solo and choir, is instead sung using the understated congregational setting by Bonia Shur. The pieces Cahana does sing as a solo, with or without choir, are more intimate and introspective. The *Elohai Neshamah Shenatata Bi* discussed earlier, while it does allow Cahana a wide range of expression, remains in the realm of reflection and gets no louder than *mezzo-forte.* After the silent prayer at the end of the *Amidah,* Cahana and the choir often sing *Elohai Netzor* by Danny Maseng (Musical Ex. 13[58]), a piece Cahana says is popular at

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[57] Eliyahu Schleifer, *"Elohai, N'shamah Shenatata Bi,"* score, 1988, Cantorial Program, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jerusalem.

[58] Maseng, *"Elohai N'tzor,"* 1999, from the album *Soul On Fire.*

the synagogue. The text begins by seeking help from God in resisting the temptation to speak deceitfully or with malice. The performance builds gradually from a single voice, singing the words on a single low pitch, to a three-part harmony in soft tones. Finally, the choir supports with harmony Cahana's expression of the hope that God will receive our prayers favorably, *"Yihyu leratzon"* (still part of the Maseng piece). The rhythm in this section, with its repeating pattern, creates musically the urgency inherent in the words. The word "*Adonai,*" in the phrase *"Adonai Tzuri,"* is repeated over and over, alternatively by the cantor and choir, and the melody reaches higher each time.

After Rabbi Rubinstein delivers a sermon, weaving a connection between the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* and the *Torah* portion of the week, a "*Bar/bat mitzvah* anthem" is performed. Twice when I visited, Cahana and cantorial intern Mark Opatow sang a duet setting of *Mi Ha'ish* (Psalm 34:13-15), by Baroukh Khait. The two singers stand together a few steps back from the pulpit, facing the ark. The text instructs that the path to a good and long life is to avoid evil, do good and pursue peace. The setting is a slow ballad in 4:4 time, with long, sustained tones. Its alternating sections provide contrast, one pitched low in the voice and one high. While guests reflect on the *bar* or *bat mitzvah,* beginning his or her life as a young adult, this piece can provide an emotional expression of hopes for the teen-ager's future, or a meditative moment to explore one's own private thoughts. This liturgical moment, and the moment after the *Amidah,* when Cahana and the choir sing the *Elohai Netzor* (discussed above), facilitate the two primary opportunities for the assembled guests to reflect individually on the life-cycle event and the *Shabbat* prayer service of which they are a part.

At the beginning of the *Torah* service, we see the greatest example of majestic synagogue music. The choral arrangement of *Av Harahamim* provides a grand backdrop

for the drama of approaching and opening the ark. Although the cantor is surely singing as well, she has her back to the congregation and her eyes on the ark. The rabbis, instead of singing, take this opportunity to greet the *benei mitzvah* with light, private exchanges as they join them on the *bimah.* The setting is not the most commonly used for this liturgy in American synagogues (Dunajewski) and, therefore, it is not generally familiar to the guests. Thus, with all present standing, facing the ark and listening to the organ and choir, we see perhaps the last remaining glimpse of Central Synagogue's purest roots in classical Reform.

At the very end of the service, the guests' silence is broken. During the *Qiddush* blessing, Cantor Cahana leads everyone in singing a single chorus of the Rothblum *Veshameru* (Musical Ex. 14[59]), *a cappella.* Every time I attended the service, a critical mass of guests and congregants alike joined in, thus beginning to create an effect similar to that of the *Shabbat* evening *a cappella* congregational chanting in the same room. After this, now accompanied by organ, the group also sang together the concluding *Ein Keloheinu* by Freudenthal (Musical Ex. 15[60]). This is one of the best-known concluding hymns in the movement. It is essentially made up of the repetition of a single, one-measure rhythmic phrase in 4:4 time, moving sequentially up the major scale. Like the *Veshameru,* the *Ein Keloheinu* commanded wide participation whenever I attended. These two moments do help to transform the mood in the room to one of group prayer, even coming at the very end of the service.

In some contexts, congregational music sounds incomplete when the congregation does not join in the singing. A single voice attempting to lead a group in singing sounds exactly like what it is, and it is painfully obvious that the intended effect is not being

created. However, the nature of the cantor-*choir*-organ presentation at Central Synagogue causes the music of the service to sound complete, even if the congregants (or, in this case, the guests) are silent. The impressive organ sound fills the room, and the combination of the voices of the cantor, choir and rabbis fills the void left by the absence of the congregational voice. Therefore, in spite of the lack of participation in the service as a whole, the rendering of the music doubtless impresses many attendees with its beauty. However, according to Rubinstein, the congregation's leadership is not fully satisfied with this result. They feel that without participation, the community of worshippers is not fully engaged. Rubinstein laments,

The guests probably think it's stunning, but they think it's stunning as a performance. They don't necessarily think of it as stunning as impacting them. And the words they'll use to describe it are beautiful, and awesome, and spiritual, but they don't mean that it was an experience they themselves had, they mean it was something they saw happening.

The synagogue is now beginning to reexamine all aspects of the *Shabbat* morning service, aiming to change the reality Rubinstein describes. One significant change they plan to try is this: At the beginning of the service, the members of the clergy will step off the *bimah*, with portable microphones, and spend a few minutes teaching the melody for the opening prayer, *Mah Tovu*. In addition, they will teach those present how to read transliteration. Rubinstein says the clergy plans to teach "in a playful way... that engages people's interest," without breaking the appropriate mood. He adds his belief that "informality... is not the equivalent of indignity – people make that mistake." Although the ongoing discussions regarding future changes to the service cannot be discussed in

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[59] M.J. Rothblum, arr. C. Davidson, *"V'sham'ru," Gates of Song*, song no. 44.

further detail, Rubinstein says the thrust of the changes is "towards ownership of the music by the congregation," so that they can be further "involved in the music both as singers and as listeners."

[60] J. Freudenthal, arr. H. Fromm, *"Ein Keloheinu,"* *Gates of Song,* song no. 140.

Chapter 5: Comparison and Analysis

It is my hope that this study of prayer services at Temple Israel and Central Synagogue will help to shed light on the development of music in Reform worship and the increase in demand for congregational participation. Two synagogues cannot be assumed to represent the Reform movement as a whole. However, when taken in context with the other research on Jewish worship discussed in Chapter 2 as well as other sources, these large urban congregations do appear to represent significant trends in the North American Reform Jewish community. In this chapter, I will further analyze and compare some of the observations I reported in the case studies. I will start with a more general discussion of their worship services and then move to the more particular challenges of *bar/bat mitzvah* services. Where appropriate, I will also explore how these observations may reflect larger trends in the development of worship music in the Reform Movement.

Central Synagogue and Temple Israel share many similarities. Both are large, urban congregations (1,800 and 1,500 families, respectively) in the northeastern United States, and they share a historical connection with classical Reform Judaism. In both synagogues, congregants attend the *Shabbat* evening service in great numbers, and each community possesses a strong commitment to achieving maximal participation in the service, through the music. The synagogues even use many of the same musical settings for the liturgy of the service (e.g. *Mi Khamokha* by Silverman, *Adonai Sefatai Tiftah* by Taubman, *Lekhah Dodi* by Rotenberg).

However, key differences in the two synagogues' approaches result in services of vastly different styles that leave equally different impressions on the worshipper. Those

differences lie primarily in instrumentation, the presence or absence of the choir and the use of the sanctuary.

In each of these areas, Temple Israel has distanced itself decisively from its classical Reform roots. Organ has been replaced by guitar, and solo singing by the cantor has been nearly eliminated. No choir is present. In addition, the ways in which the synagogue has modified its use of the sanctuary (see Chapter 3) create the impression for the worshipper that the room is much smaller than it is. Further, the physical distance between the congregation and the clergy is eliminated, since the cantor and rabbis stand below the *bimah* throughout the service. The cumulative effect is an informal, intimate and high-energy service.

At Central Synagogue, by contrast, the move away from classical Reform style has been much more subtle. The congregation continues to use organ for the whole service, creating a more formal tone than that of Temple Israel. In addition, although the choir has been moved to the front of the room and sings primarily to support the congregational singing, its presence adds further to the formality of the atmosphere. The quality of the choir's professional voices lends to the singing a polished, rehearsed sound which prevents the more natural, spontaneous kind of interaction that can be achieved without a choir. Also, rather than removing nearly all the solo singing by the cantor, the congregation seeks to maintain a few more moments when the cantor sings alone or the choir sings without congregational participation (on *Shabbat* morning). Finally, the clergy still stands and sits on the *bimah* (as do honored congregants) and, while the sanctuary has been modified in very important ways (see Chapter 3), the size and grandeur of the room, with its high ceilings and ornate decorations, still bears its full effect. This balance results in a warm, calming service and a strong feeling of

community. Still, a perceptibly greater level of formality remains, along with a greater sense of distance between clergy and congregants.

However different the two synagogues' services may be, the powerful presence of congregational participation at the Friday night service unites the two experiences, as does the clear impression that each service is meeting the needs of its worshippers. Congregants vote with their feet, and both services command attendance in the hundreds. What can be said, then, about the different choices each congregation has made and their effects when creating a participatory, fulfilling worship experience?

Merri Lovinger Arian is director of music for Synagogue 2000, a national institute that works to help synagogues re-examine and improve their comprehensive programs, including worship. "I don't think that what people say is true," she says in a July 2002 interview, "that if you want them to sing along, use guitar, if you want them to listen to you, use organ or piano. That's just not the way I believe it happens." Rather, she believes that congregants will participate in services, and will be able to appreciate portions of the service that are sung without their participation, when two primary factors are present. First, those attending the service should always be certain about what their involvement should or shouldn't be. "If the goal is to sing something for the congregation, then that should be made explicit so that no one gets embarrassed by singing along." On the other hand, when participation is desired, this must also be communicated clearly. Arian recommends that such messages be given either verbally (introducing a piece that "I will sing for you," or other words to that effect), or through one's style of singing and body language.

I never witnessed clergy at either Temple Israel or Central Synagogue communicate verbally that congregants were not invited to sing on a particular piece.

Rather, in both congregations, rabbis issue a verbal invitation to sing along throughout the service as a whole, and other cues are used to communicate these messages more specifically. Cahana and Einhorn both lead in a way that communicates quite clearly the intention for participation. At times when the music is intended as a solo, both cantors sing with more freedom of rhythm and dynamics, in such a way that simultaneously lends added expression to their singing and makes it too confusing for others to sing along. Notes may be extended or shortened according to the improvised expression of the cantor. Pauses between words and phrases are of an unpredictable length. The leader takes more freedom to crescendo and decrescendo, also according to the expression of the moment.

In addition, both cantors use body language to communicate with the congregation. If the intent is to sing as a solo, eyes might turn up or down, away from those of congregants, and the cantor either withdraws into him or herself or directs attention to an understood, yet unseen presence. When the intent is to lead the group in song, attention is directed more fully towards the others in the room, as if all, by singing the words together, are communicating a commonality of purpose. Far from taking extra freedom of rhythm and dynamics, the cantor takes pains to stay together with the congregation and bring it along. He or she may even slow down or speed up at certain points just to ensure that he or she is in time with the group.

At the same time, both Einhorn and Cahana have rabbinical partners who communicate to their congregants whether it is appropriate to sing along by modeling correct participation themselves. This is more obvious in the case of Central Synagogue. At nearly every moment during which congregational singing is desired, one of the rabbis

stands at the podium alongside Cahana, singing softly and swaying to the music. When it is intended that Cahana sing solo, she usually stands at the podium alone.

At Temple Israel, the rabbis' examples are more difficult to perceive. Einhorn never stands alone in front of the congregation, since all four clergy members stand together throughout the service. Therefore, if congregants are not listening closely for whether or not the rabbis are singing, they may sing regardless. If Einhorn wishes to sing alone, he must make an exerted effort to sing in such a way as to cause congregants to stop and listen. He does this at a few points in the service, such as in *Vene 'emar,* which comes directly after *Mi Khamokha.* His chant is expressive and unpredictable, not falling into any even rhythm or repeating musical phrase that could be imitated. At other times when Einhorn attempts to sing a solo, however, such as during *Hatsi Qaddish* and *Barechu,* he is nonetheless joined by some congregants. He could vary his singing and raise the volume of his voice enough to silence congregants, or he could explicitly indicate that silence is preferred. However, he chooses not to do so. This may be because these chants are so well known to the congregants that if Einhorn sang them differently he could be perceived as showing off rather than simply expressing himself more fully. Further, if any member of the clergy explicitly stated that participation was not welcome during these moments, congregants who had been singing these words for ages might feel embarrassed or insulted.

In addition to providing clear messages regarding whether congregational singing is desired, the second factor Arian identifies as crucial for achieving participation is the volume of the leader's voice. He or she can control volume either by singing louder and softer or by singing closer to or further from the microphone. When congregational singing is intended, the volume should be dependent on the level of congregational

participation. If the group's singing is weak, or "if there's a part you know they are not strong on, make sure you can be heard to lead them." On the other hand, she says, "As they get it, you step back a little... When I am boomed at from a microphone, it doesn't feel good to sing along."

Both Cahana and Einhorn control their volume sensitively. This factor seems particularly essential at Central Synagogue, where the power of the grand sanctuary, the organ and the choir could potentially overwhelm those present if combined with a booming cantorial voice. Cahana is careful to control the volume of her singing, so that congregants feel welcome and can hear their own voices as well. At Temple Israel, on the other hand, the entire setup sends the message that congregational participation is expected. From the presence of the whole clergy together, level with the congregants, to the unified sound of all the rabbis singing strongly with the cantor, there can be no mistaking this message. As mentioned earlier, Einhorn's more difficult task is to signal when congregational singing is not desired.

Beyond the question of participation, I am also interested in assessing the success of the two synagogues I studied in providing a generally fulfilling prayer experience. On Friday night, both synagogues have succeeded in creating a service in which congregants have the chance to connect with one another as a community and welcome the *Shabbat* with song, in moments of joy as well as moments of reflection.

One area in which both synagogues see room for growth is in the breadth of styles found in the service, including instrumentation. Just as Arian does not see any one instrumental choice as being exclusively well suited for congregational singing, she does not feel that any instrument is confined to one type of worship or mode of prayer. (Arian is referring to Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller's four modes in which we use music for

prayer, discussed in Chapter 2: majesty, meditation, meeting and memory.) In other words, the organ is not only suited for music of majesty and the guitar not only for music of meeting, etc. However, she adds, instrumentation does matter:

> The instrumentation should highlight the tone or mood you want to create for that piece. There are moments of majesty where nothing can work like an organ, and there are moments of intimacy where nothing can work like a guitar.

The fact that the service at Temple Israel is conducted virtually exclusively using guitar and the service at Central Synagogue is conducted almost exclusively using organ highlights the point Arian has made above: different instruments are especially effective for creating a certain ambience. The guitar, in addition to nurturing a feeling of intimate connection, also has a percussive and spontaneous quality that is conducive to "rocking the house." On the other hand, it lacks the sustaining quality and harmonically rich tone of other instruments, such as the organ and piano, that can bring a certain drama to moments of either glorious power or comforting warmth. It is not coincidental that the Temple Israel service particularly excels in creating an exciting, energetic experience, and the Central Synagogue service excels more in creating a comforting, grounding experience. Just as Arian states that these categories of musical style are far from exclusive, it should be emphasized here that each of these services has elements of other types of ambience. Still, the overall tone of each synagogue's service (i.e. exciting and energetic or comforting and grounding) is influenced by the instrumentation used.

Arian goes on to say that given the specific strengths of any type of instrumentation, more diversity means more breadth:

> I think using different types of instrumentation in the same service helps to ensure that you've covered all those different types of moments...The goal is to be able to help [the congregation] pray at every given moment, so [for example] where do we want their head and heart to be when we get to *Mi Khamokha?* If it's joyful and liberating, is organ going to do it? Wouldn't it be great to have something

> percussive? Wouldn't it be great to switch to piano? Whatever it is. But there's a thoughtfulness about not saying, "How many guitar pieces to we have, how many organ pieces, how many piano pieces?" The goal is not any of that. The goal is to enhance the prayer experience.

As was discussed in the case study of Central Synagogue, the Rotenberg *Lekhah Dodi* is an example of a prayer melody that, while it is done successfully in the *Shabbat* evening service, may not be ideally suited for organ accompaniment. Similarly, at Temple Israel, accompanying Steinberg's *Shalom Rav* with guitar is an example of this phenomenon. Again, as explained in the case study, the piece is successfully adapted, through "code layering," into the genre of American folk melody. However, with piano or organ accompaniment, the piece could more easily reach its full range of expression while still allowing for congregational singing.

Both Einhorn and Cahana expressed the desire to expand the breadth of instrumentation they use at services: Cahana plans to seek ways to incorporate guitar on *Shabbat* evening, and Einhorn wishes to incorporate keyboard both on *Shabbat* morning and *Shabbat* evening. They two cantors seem to agree with Arian that the use of only one instrument throughout a service can limit the range of moods that can be created.

Like many, if not all American Reform synagogues, Central Synagogue and Temple Israel share a common challenge: how to bring the success of the *Shabbat* evening congregational service to the *Shabbat* morning *bar/bat mitzvah* service. Using the strategies described above, both have been consistently able to facilitate participatory, communal services on *Shabbat* evenings. However, these strategies are not sufficient to accomplish the same at the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service the next morning. Indeed, perhaps nothing would be sufficient, since the essential ingredient of a strong congregational attendance is missing.

Both synagogues are seriously engaged in seeking to involve *bar* and *bat mitzvah* service attendees more actively in prayer. Temple Israel's strategy appears to be twofold: the first part is to enable those present to sing. However, even after the synagogue has removed from the service as much difficult or inaccessible music as possible and taken all the steps described above to encourage participation, there remain several portions of the service that may not be singable for the average guest. To sing these prayers (primarily *Shema, Ve'ahavta, Avot, Gevurot,* and *Qedushah*) requires familiarity with the basic Hebrew liturgy of the *Shabbat* morning service. Further, the music for these texts, while fully accessible to those who have attended many Jewish services (with the exception of the Freed *Qedushah*), would be impossible for the uninitiated to attempt even with the transliteration provided. The synagogue will not remove or alter these portions of the service, because it sees them as crucial for a Jewish worship experience.

Therefore, the second part of Temple Israel's strategy becomes essential: to deliver three potent injections of musical energy and communal participation into the service, spaced strategically throughout – one at the very beginning and the other two at points midway through. The first of these injections features the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* family leading its guests (the congregation) in singing the Carlebach *nigun* at the beginning of the service. The other two consist of Cantor Einhorn teaching, then leading the guests in the melodies to *Mi Khamokha* and *Yismechu* and urging them to sing along in a way that forces them to notice that his invitation is serious. These insertions serve first to convince and then to remind guests of their role as participants in the proceedings. They also infuse a communal, joyous tone into the service that even effects the mood when there is no group participation. When the Torah service arrives, the tone shifts to that of a life-cycle event, and participation is no longer pursued at the same level.

Central Synagogue's primary goal with regard to the *Shabbat* morning service is the same as Temple Israel's: to engage those attending, mostly guests, in active worship. The emphasis is on congregational singing. However, in this endeavor Central Synagogue has not yet reaped the same success as has Temple Israel.

At this time, Central Synagogue generally uses the same formula for achieving participation at the *bar/bat mitzvah* service as it does *Shabbat* evening. The impassioned charge by one of the rabbis at the beginning of the service to sing along seems to fall on deaf ears, and most guests either do not know the prayers or the melodies or do not feel sufficiently motivated to sing. No strategies like those used by Temple Israel have been used and, beyond this initial invitation, there no explicit encouragement to sing along: no interruptions of the flow of the service to teach a melody, no halt in the middle of a refrain to urge participation. If congregants and guests do not take the initial invitation to heart (and it appears they seldom do), the service continues through the end, with little participation.

However, as described in Chapter 4, the synagogue is currently undertaking a serious review of the way this service is conducted. Rabbi Rubinstein indicates that the committee has already conceived of a plan in which members of the clergy will step down from the *bimah* at the beginning of the service to teach *Mah Tovu.* They will also give a lesson in the reading and pronunciation of transliteration. This is remarkably similar to the strategies that have been so successful at Temple Israel, made all the more remarkable when juxtaposed with the more formal atmosphere generally present at Central Synagogue. Because the synagogue's process of reviewing the service is still underway, it is impossible to know what its effect will be or whether more such measures will be taken in other parts of the service. However, the information available now does

suggest that these two synagogues seem to be headed in the same direction, albeit with one a few years ahead of the other. Given the two distinct worship styles that prevail in these two communities, this phenomenon may suggest the presence of a larger trend as well, towards more direct and provocative ways to urge *bar* and *bat mitzvah* guests to participate in the singing.

When examining these potential future efforts by Central Synagogue, one important question concerns the effect the choir may have in encouraging or discouraging participation by guests. The answer may depend on the types of measures that come out of the synagogue's change-planning process. If all goes as planned, and the lesson in transliteration reading and the teaching of the opening melody cause guests sing substantially more than they do presently, the choir may only support that added participation. However, if the synagogue decides to take more measures akin to those adopted by Temple Israel in its *bar/bat mitzvah* service, the choir's participation could make this difficult for the following reason. At Temple Israel, Einhorn is able to listen to the congregation, assess the level of involvement and respond spontaneously in any way he sees fit. In other words, part of the cantor's role in leading participation is to be constantly listening to congregants so that he or she can respond and appropriately direct them. Does the participation of a full choir make it more difficult to listen to the congregation in this way? Since the changes being contemplated by Central Synagogue are unfinished, it is impossible to predict what affect this issue will have.

One important, final point remains in comparing the synagogues' approaches to *bar* and *bat mitzvah.* Although both synagogues share the goal of communal participation, beyond this their goals for the service diverge. While Temple Israel has recently abandoned the hope of making its *bar/bat mitzvah* service congregational,

Central Synagogue maintains as an essential goal the "ownership" of this service by the congregation. These different goals have important implications for each synagogue's future plans. Currently, in both synagogues the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* does not become the focus of attention until the beginning of the Torah service. This serves to preserve the congregational quality of the service until that point. Central Synagogue, as part of its current program of re-examining the *bar/bat mitzvah* service, is considering steps to further maximize the congregational feel of the service and minimize the extent to which it becomes exclusively a life-cycle event. (Rubinstein estimates that each week 35 to 50 congregants who are not invited to the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* celebration attend *Shabbat* morning services.) For example, Rubinstein states that the ritual committee plans to change the blessing of the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* in such a way as "to give the congregation ownership of that moment so that they too feel that they're blessing a child." In addition, he says, the congregation is dissatisfied with the way gifts are given to the *bar* or *bat mitzvah.* "We're changing that rather radically," he says, in order to minimize the interruption of the service.

Temple Israel, on the other hand, may be moving in the opposite direction. Because the synagogue no longer sees the *bar/bat mitzvah* service as the congregational *Shabbat* morning service, the goal of congregational "ownership" of the service has become irrelevant. (Because no congregants were attending the service unless invited to the reception, the synagogue now offers an alternative "*minyan*" for interested congregants.) Since it is presumed that all present at a *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service have come for the purpose of witnessing a life-cycle event, it is not necessary to minimize the extent to which the teen ager is made the focus of attention. In fact, it might be preferred to have the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* lead as many prayers and possible. This way the teen-ager

has an incentive to learn more prayers, and his or her friends and family have the pleasure of seeing their loved one in the spotlight. Therefore, the synagogue may soon decide to allow the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* more of a role (e.g. leading the chanting of *Shema, Ve'ahavta* and/or *Avot*).

Although the issue of participation in *Shabbat* evening and *bar* and *bat mitzvah* services has been the primary focus of this study, the question of the congregational vs. life-cycle nature of the *bar/bat mitzvah* service is also very important in shaping the future of our movement. Most would agree, of course, that a participatory, communal service where young people's coming of age can be celebrated in the context of congregational worship is an ideal goal for any congregation. Whether that ideal can be achieved in more than a few, special communities is a topic of current debate. In this study we have seen two synagogue communities whose opinions differ as to whether such a goal is realistic for them at this point. Time will tell how each community's service will develop and how each synagogue's goals may change.

Conclusion

This thesis has allowed us an in-depth look at two important aspects of Reform worship: *Shabbat* evening services and *bar* and *bat mitzvah*. By reviewing the history of *bar* and *bat mitzvah* in the movement, we gained insight as to how the ceremony became so crucial for Reform Jews: the ceremony is a powerful symbol for Jewish continuity in the family; it provides important educational incentives for the teen-ager; and it helps to fill our sanctuaries on *Shabbat* mornings. We also began to learn what the principal challenges are in conducting these important life-cycle events and integrating them into our *Shabbat* morning services. For purposes of our study, we focused principally on the fact that *bar* and *bat mitzvah* services in nearly all Reform synagogues are attended overwhelmingly by guests of the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* family. Many of these guests are unfamiliar with Jewish worship, and thus their ability to participate in prayer is limited. In addition, they have often never met the clergy leading the service, which makes it difficult for the clergy to connect with them meaningfully. Finally, having little experience with *Shabbat* worship, they may not approach the service with much interest beyond watching their loved one on the *bimah*.

In Chapter 2, our examination of the changes in American Jewish worship over the last few decades helped provide further context for a full understanding of the challenges presented by *bar* and *bat mitzvah* services. In today's worship, American Jews seek above all to connect deeply with the others in their community and with a personal concept of God. Participation in worship and an intimate connection among those in the room – the very goals that are so difficult in the context of *bar* and *bat mitzvah* – have become crucial to conducting effective prayer services in the American Jewish community.

For a moment, let us set *bar* and *bat mitzvah* aside. Even on *Shabbat* evening, many synagogues in our movement have not been able to achieve participation or facilitate the intimate feeling of community and connection with God that their members seek. It is for this reason that I sought to examine both services. By doing so, I could analyze the factors necessary for conducting effective services on *Shabbat* evening, without the complications of a life-cycle event and scores of guests. At the same time, I could consider the question of how to bring the success of the *Shabbat* evening service to the *bar* and *bat mitzvah* service.

At both synagogues studied for this thesis, worship services are highly successful. Each draws hundreds of people into its sanctuary to pray together on *Shabbat* evenings. Services at both synagogues command wide participation in the singing, and the congregants seem to get what they are seeking: a chance to bond with other members of their community, a release of tension from the work week, a taste of the spiritual connection they seek.

Both Central Synagogue and Temple Israel have modeled for us many strategies for achieving participation and creating an ambience of intimacy and warmth. In several areas, these strategies are the same or similar. For example, both synagogues seek to reduce the physical distance between clergy and congregants; provide clear messages regarding when congregational singing is and is not desired; and choose musical repertoire that is accessible for congregational singing and that creates the appropriate mood. In some important areas, the synagogues' styles and strategies diverge: for example, instrumentation; the inclusion of choir; the use of the sanctuary; and the balance of congregational and solo singing. These differences show the diversity of styles possible while still achieving the common goal of participation. In addition, the similar

choices in some of the musical repertoire of the synagogues, given their divergent styles, suggest trends taking place across the movement.

Both synagogues featured in this study have made a practice of monitoring their communities closely and changing to keep up with the communities' needs. Indeed, Temple Israel's current *Shabbat* evening service grew out a bold innovation in 1979: a service using folding chairs in the atrium, outside the sanctuary. Central Synagogue turned its tragic 1998 building fire into an opportunity for innovative and far-reaching alterations to the sanctuary.

Thus, it is not surprising that these two congregations are proving to be pioneers in the Reform movement's struggle to lead engaging, participatory *bar* and *bat mitzvah* services. Since each synagogue has such a successful *Shabbat* evening service, each has an ideal model to emulate for the *bar/bat mitzvah* service. However, because of the particular challenges presented by *bar* and *bat mitzvah*, a large part of the task for both synagogues is to determine what can be transferred into this service from *Shabbat* evening and what must be done differently.

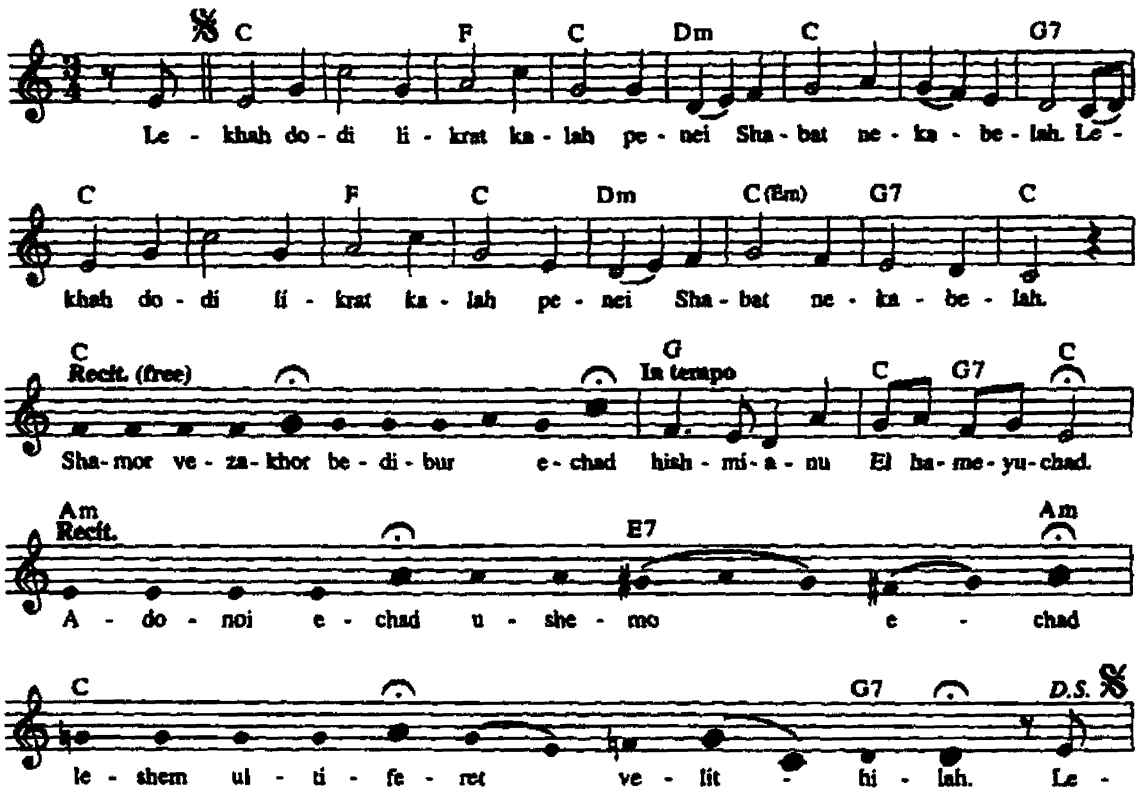
With the strategies described in Chapters 3 and 5, Temple Israel has already taken many steps toward achieving this goal. Central Synagogue, whose ritual committee is currently working in high gear, stands poised to start down its own path. One striking aspect of these developments is that the two synagogues, with their divergent styles of worship, have taken or are contemplating some very similar measures, from stepping off the *bimah,* to actively teaching guests how to participate in the service, to using some of the same repertoire. This similarity in the directions of the two congregations strongly suggests the primacy of the goal of maximal participation in today's Reform synagogue, including the *bar/bat mitzvah* service. Indeed, even though these two synagogues differ

in their approach to the question of congregational "ownership" of the *bar/bat mitzvah* service, the goal of participation and the general sense of what it takes to achieve it are dominant and are shared by both congregations.

Of two synagogues that constantly grow and change, this study can be no more than a snapshot. However, it may also suggest a glimpse of what is to come for many synagogues in the Reform movement. If so – if many synagogues follow the lead of Temple Israel and Central Synagogue in learning to meet the changing needs of their congregants, that future for the Reform movement will be bright.

Appendix: Musical Examples

Musical Ex. 1



Musical Ex. 2

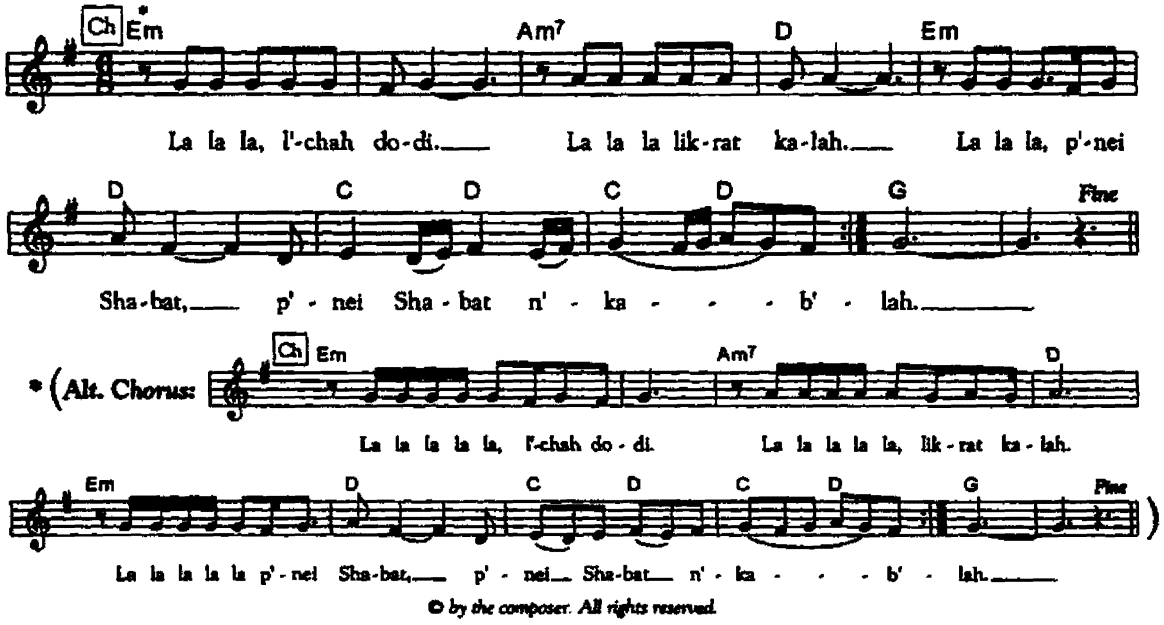
L'chah Dodi

247B

Music: Abie Rotenberg
Text: Shlomo Alkabetz (16th c.)

(Originally titled "Bo-i V'shalom")

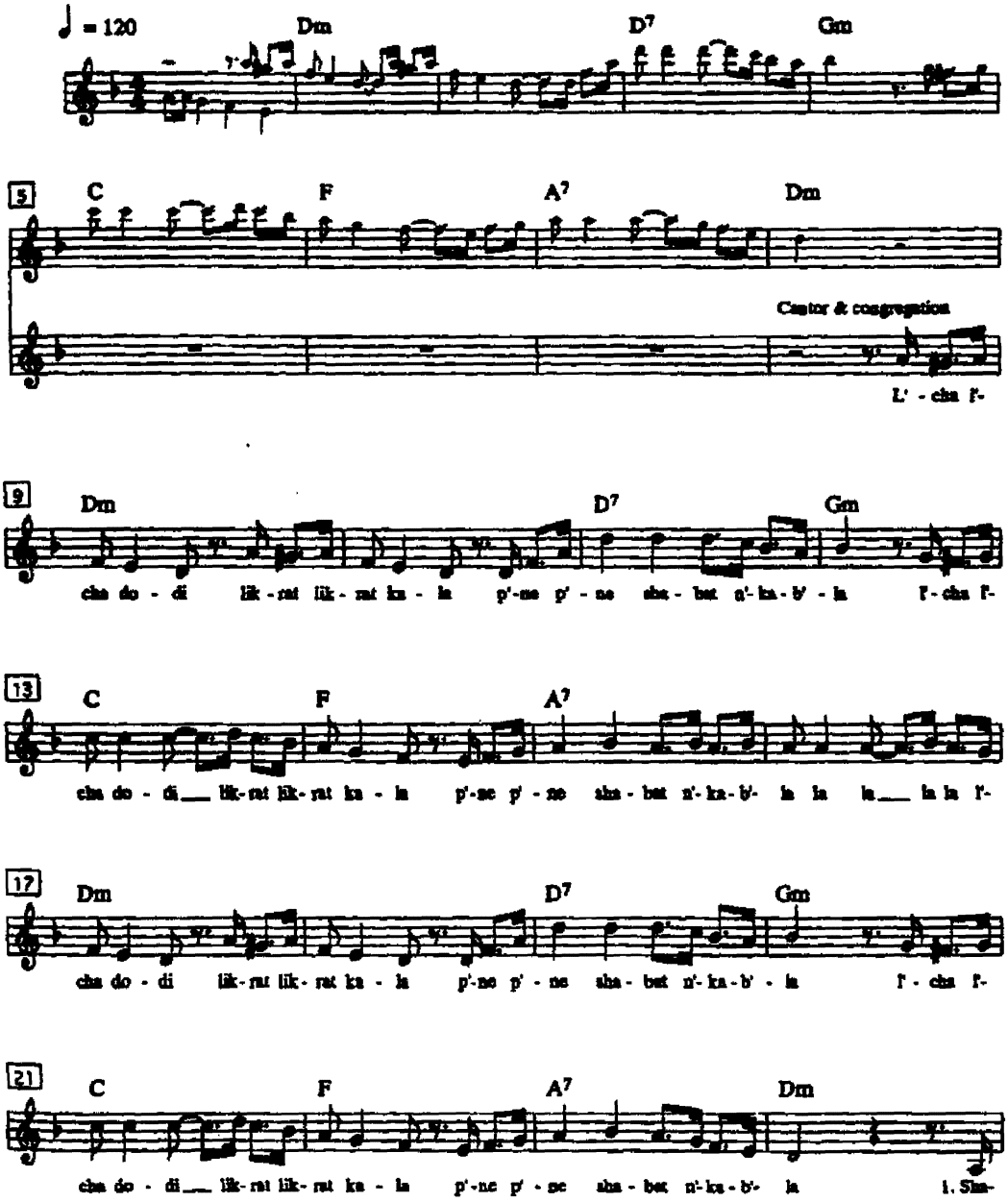
With feeling ($\dot{\text{.}} = 46$)

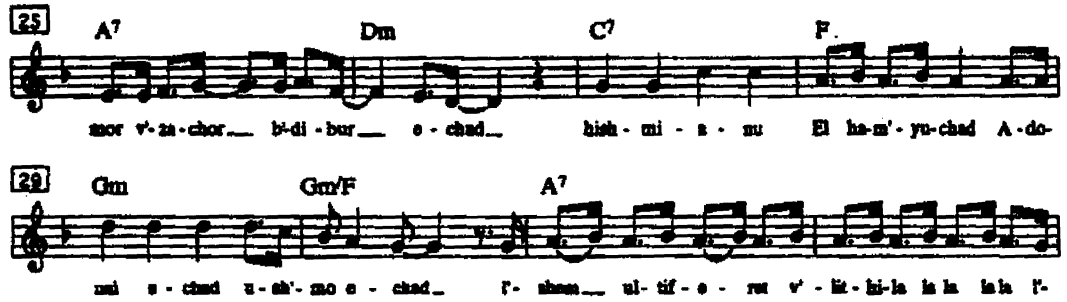


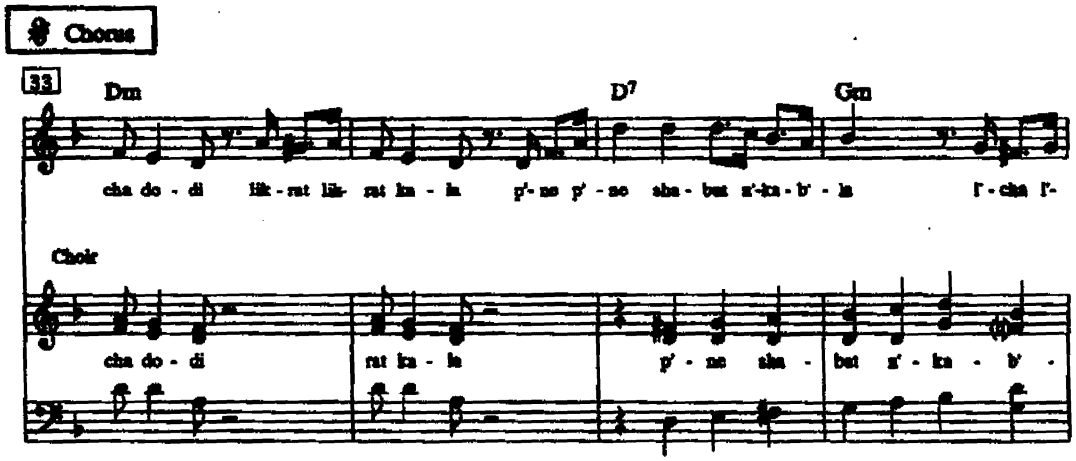
Musical Ex. 3

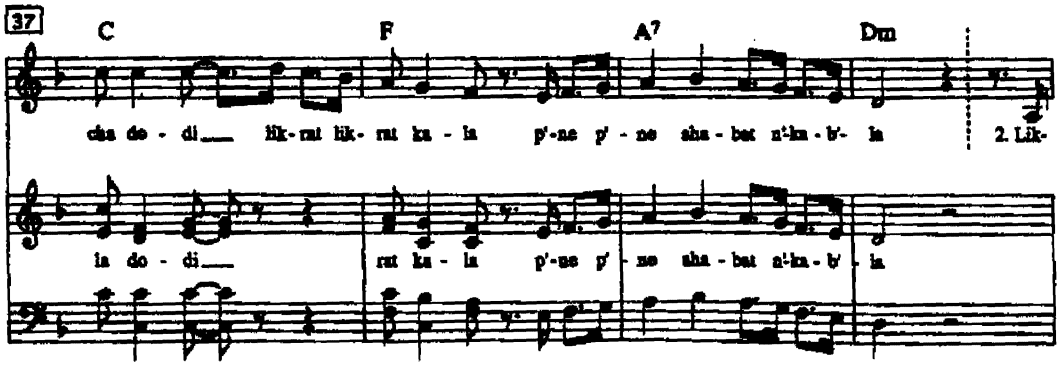
L'cha Dodi

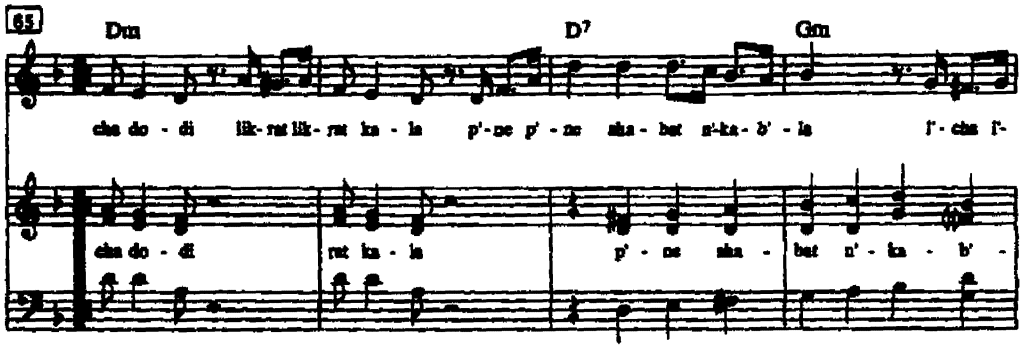
Craig Taubman
arr. Alan Weiner

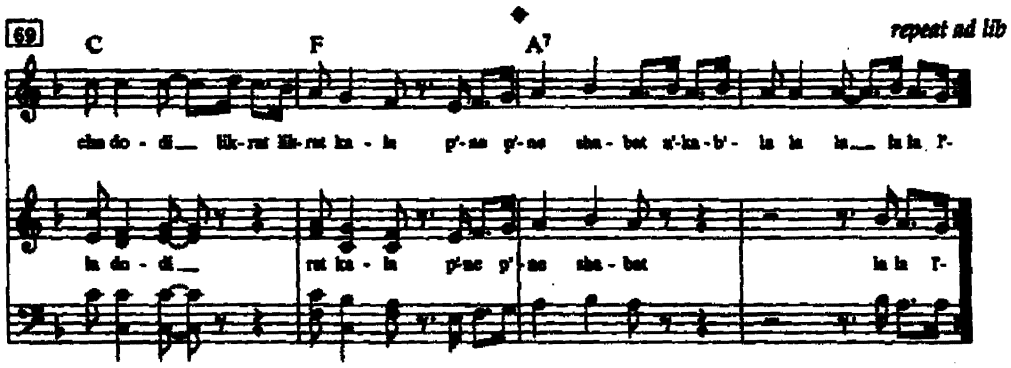


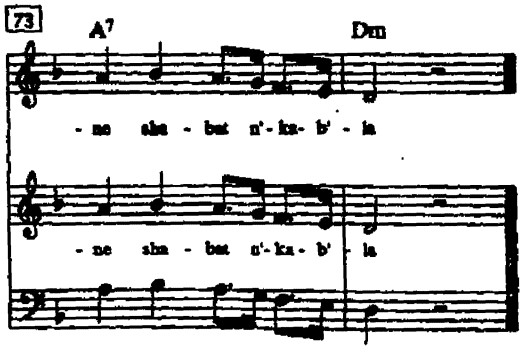

25
A7
Dm
C7
F
mor v'-za-chor bi-di-bur e-chad hish-mi-a-nu El ha-m'-yu-chad A-do-
29
Gm
Gm/F
A7
noi e-chad u-sh'-mo e-chad l'-shem ul-tif-e-ret v'-lit-hi-la la la la la l'-


Chorus
33
Dm
D7
Gm
cha do-di lik-rat lik-rat la-la p'-ne p'-ne sha-bat n'-ka-b'-la l'-cha l'-
Choir
cha do-di
rat ka-la
p'-ne sha-
bat n'-ka-b'-


37
C
F
A7
Dm
cha do-di lik-rat lik-rat ka-la p'-ne p'-ne sha-bat n'-ka-b'-la 2. Lik-
la do-di
rat ka-la p'-ne p'-ne sha-bat n'-ka-b'-la


65
Dm
D7
Gm
cha do - di lik-rat lik-rat ka - la p'-ne p'-ne sha - bat n'-ka - b' - la l'- cha l'-
cha do - di
rat ka - la
p' - ne sha -
bat n' - ka - b' -

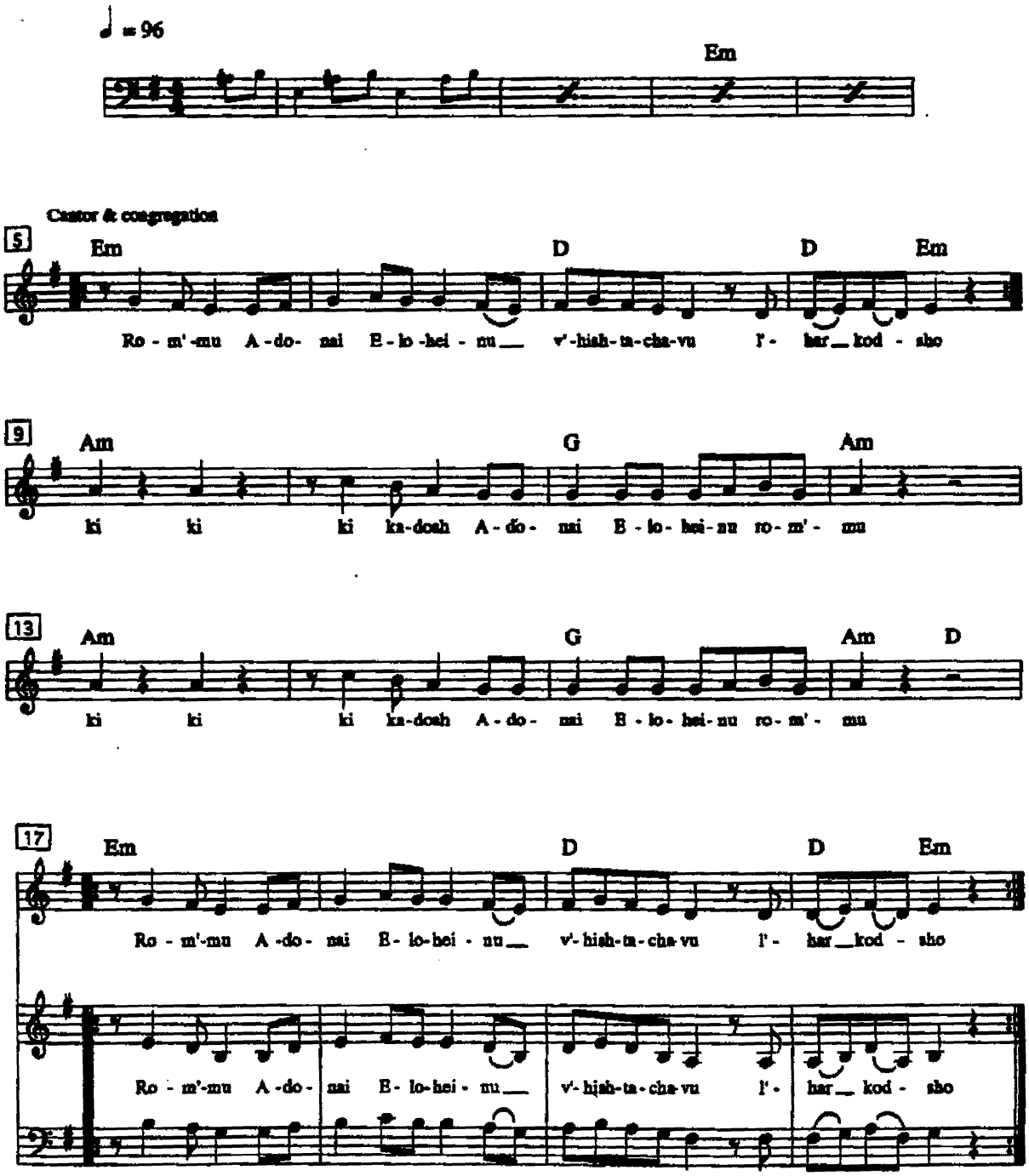

69
C
F
A7
repeat ad lib
cha do - di lik-rat lik-rat ka - la p'-ne p'-ne sha - bat n'-ka-b'- la la la la l'-
la do - di
rat ka - la p'-ne p'-ne sha - bat
la la l'-


73
A7
Dm
- ne sha - bat n'- ka- b' - la
- ne sha - bat n'- ka - b' - la

Musical Ex. 4

Rom'mu

Craig Taubman



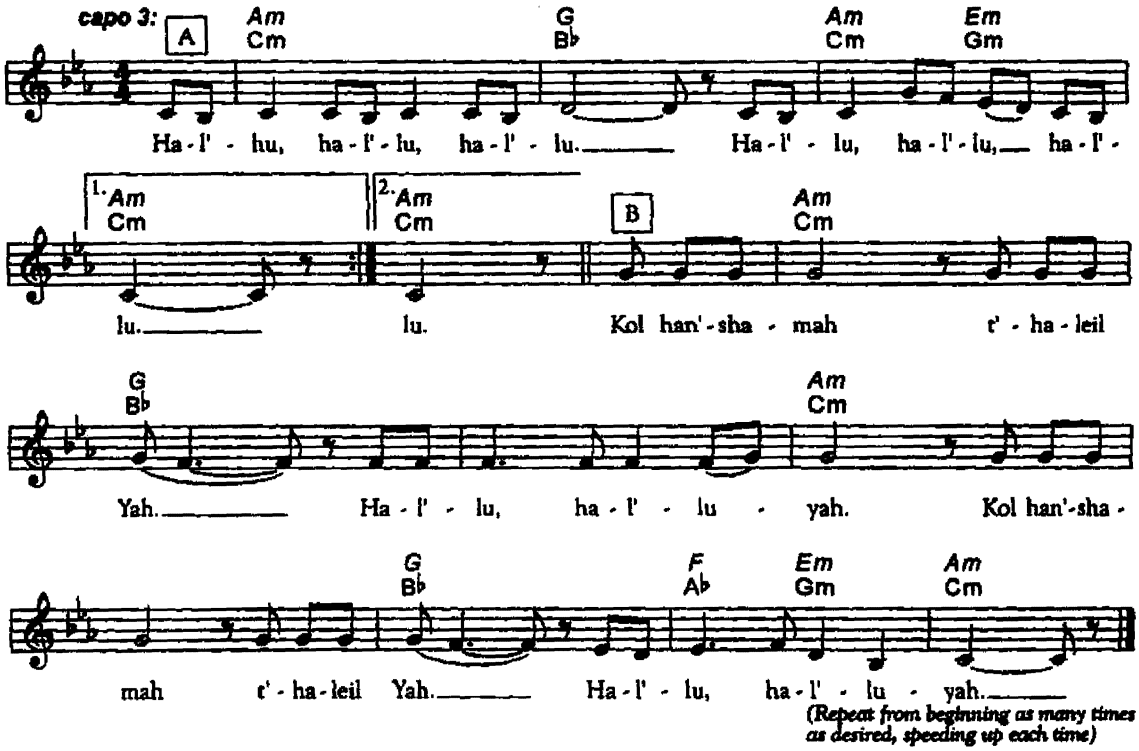
Musical Example 5

Kol HaN'shamah

838

Music: Part I – Sufi Chant; Part 2 – unknown
Text: Psalm 150:6

With energy (♩= 104)



(Repeat from beginning as many times as desired, speeding up each time)

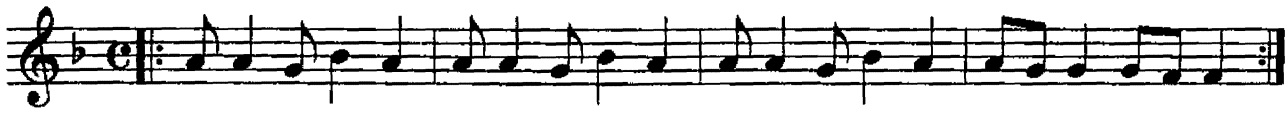
כֹּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְּהַלֵּל יָהּ. הַלְלוּיָהּ. *May everything that has breath praise God. Praise be to God.*

Musical Ex. 6

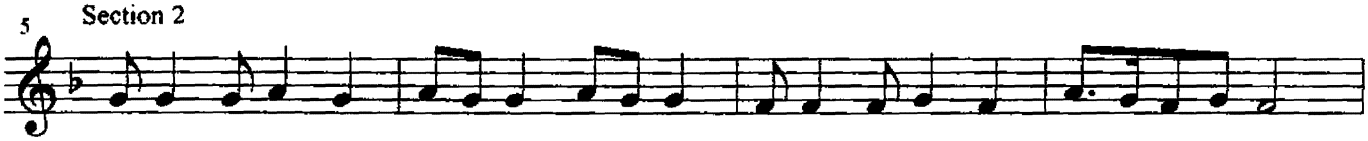
Nigun

Adapted from *Ki Va Mo'ed* by
Shlomo Carlebach
Transcribed by Jeffrey Saxe

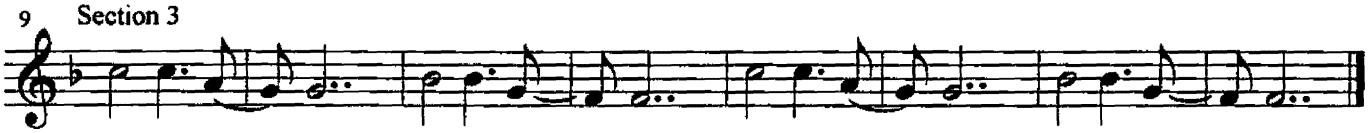
Section 1



5 Section 2



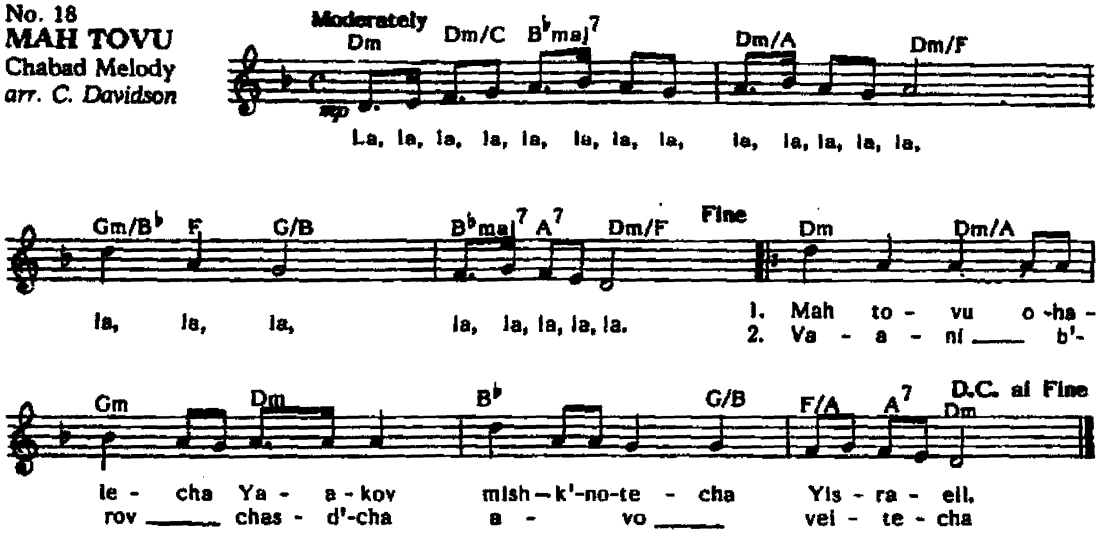
9 Section 3



Musical Ex. 7

Capo 5th fret, play in A minor

No. 18
MAH TOVU
Chabad Melody
arr. C. Davidson

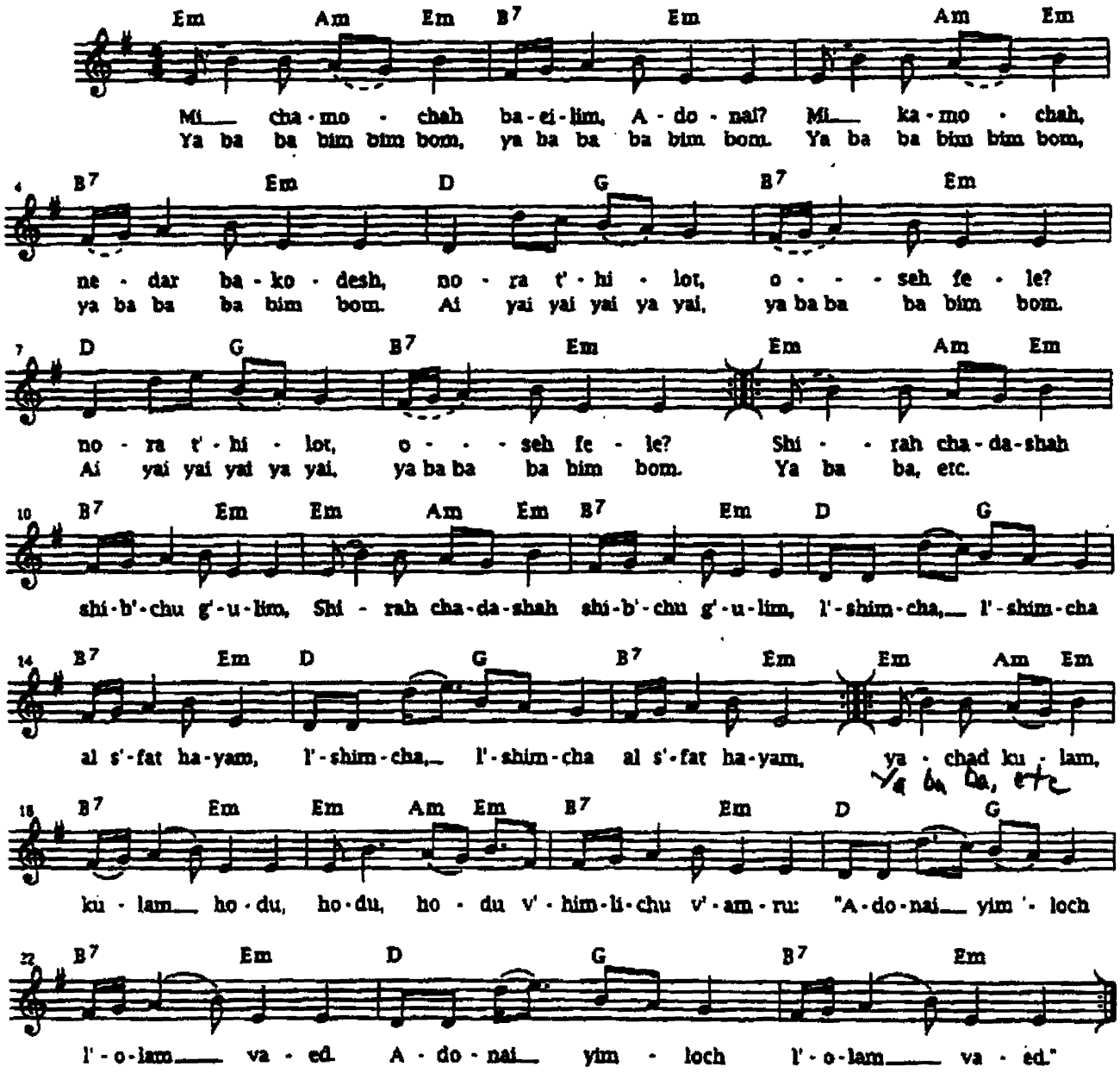


Musical Ex. 8

Mi Chamochah (for Morning)

Text: Psalm 93

Music: Richard B. Silverman

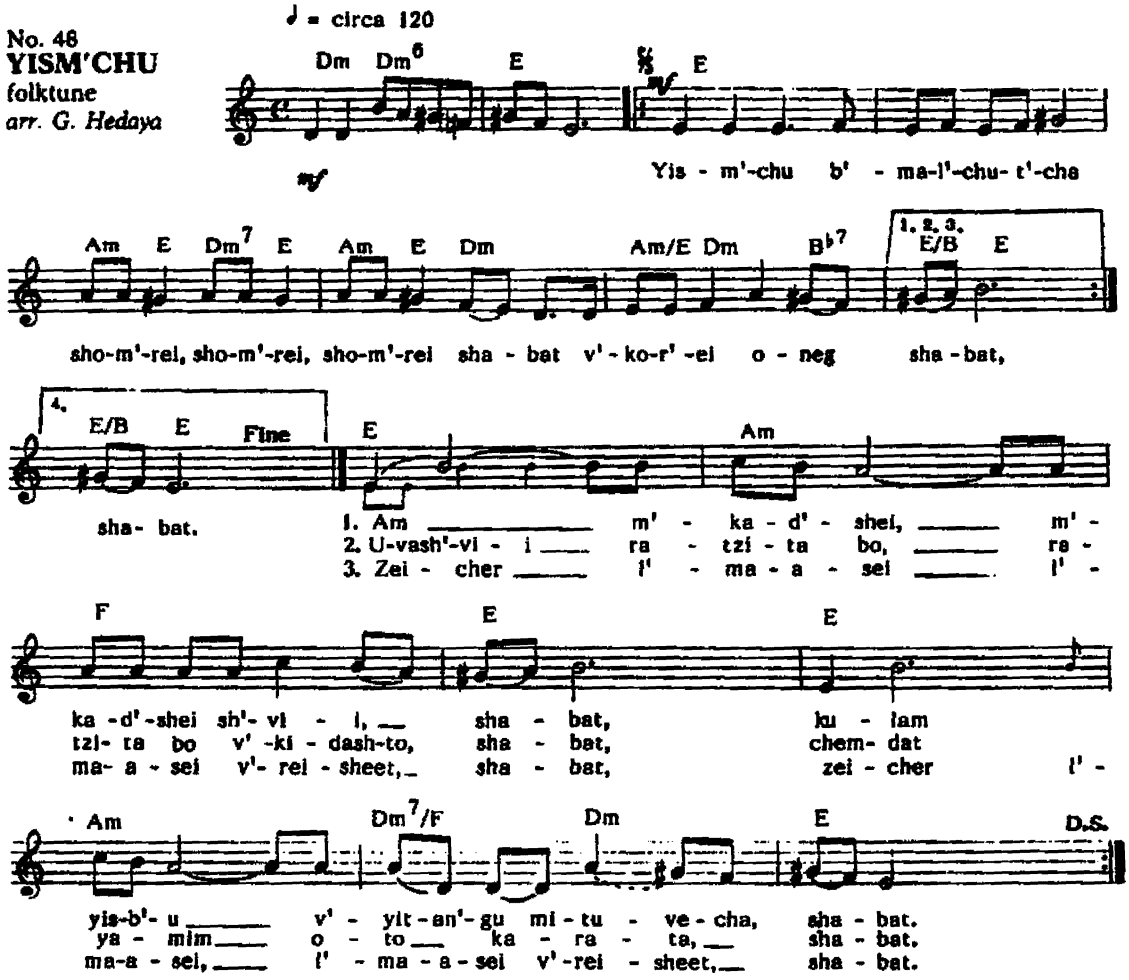


מִי־כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם, יְיָ מִי כָּמֹכָה, נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ,
נוֹרָא תְהִלֹּת, עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא?
שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְּחוּ גְאוּלִים לְשִׁמְךָ עַל־שְׂפַת הַיָּם;
יַחַד כֻּלָּם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ: "יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!"

Who is like You, Eternal One, among the gods that are worshiped? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders? We, the redeemed, sang a new song to Your name. At the shore of the Red Sea, saved from destruction, we proclaimed Your sovereign power: "The Eternal shall reign for ever and ever!"

Musical Ex. 9

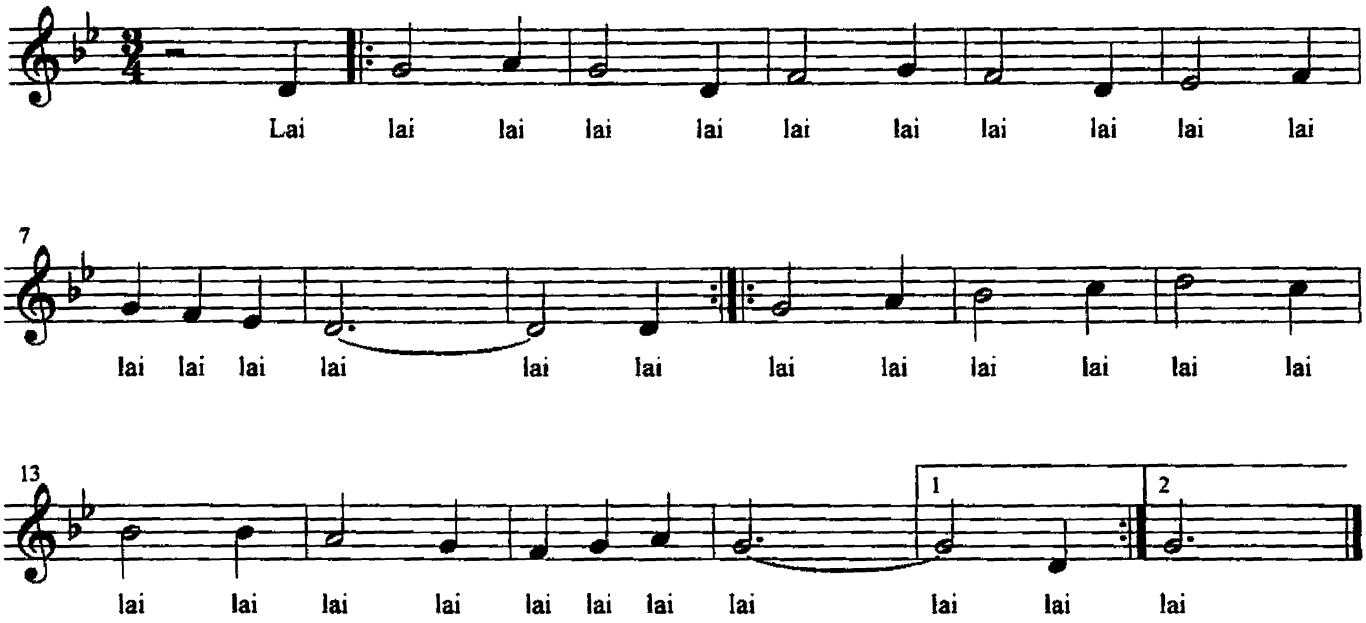
No. 46
YISM'CHU
folktune
arr. G. Hedaya



Musical Ex. 10

Angel's Nigun

unknown



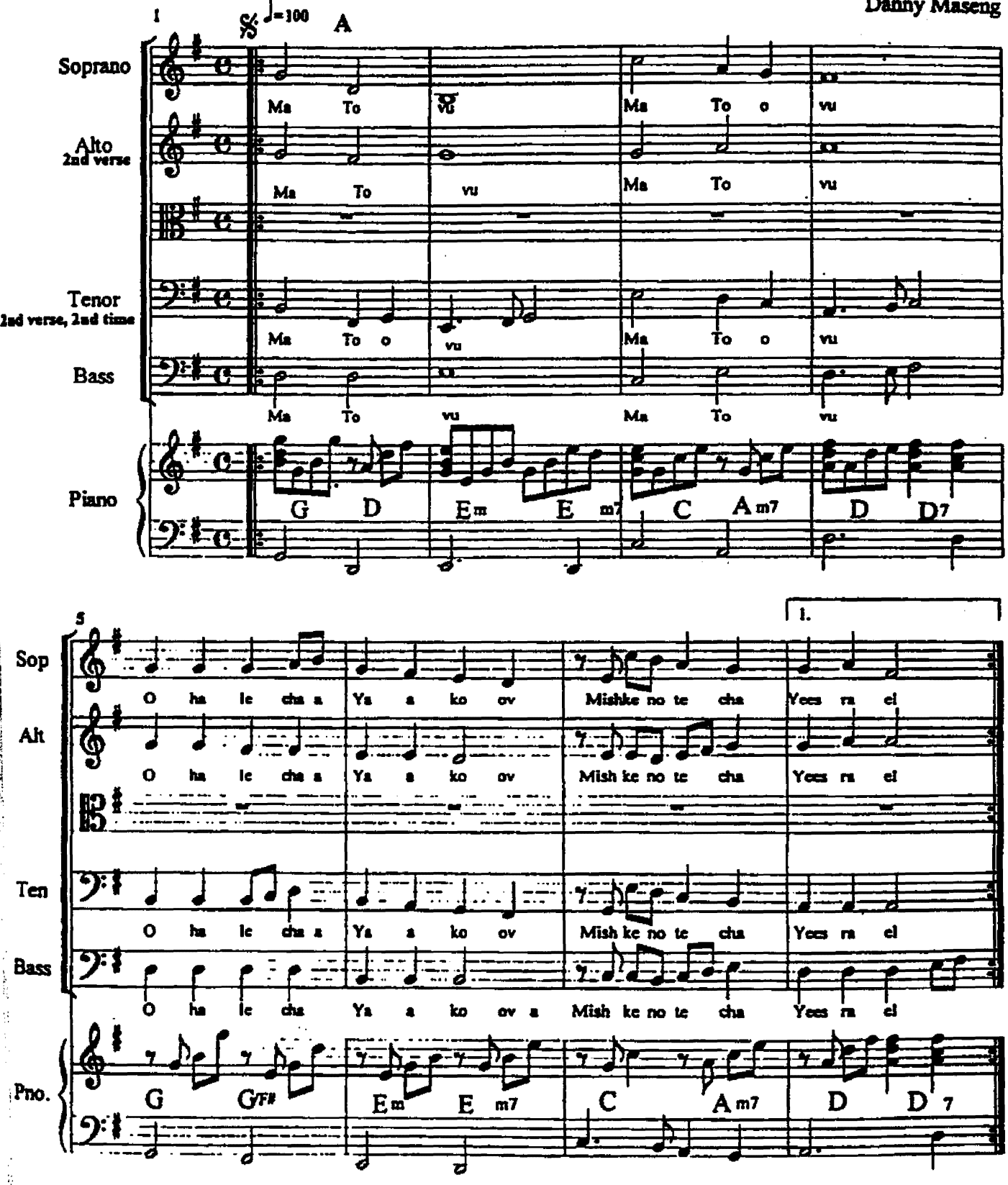
Musical Ex. 11

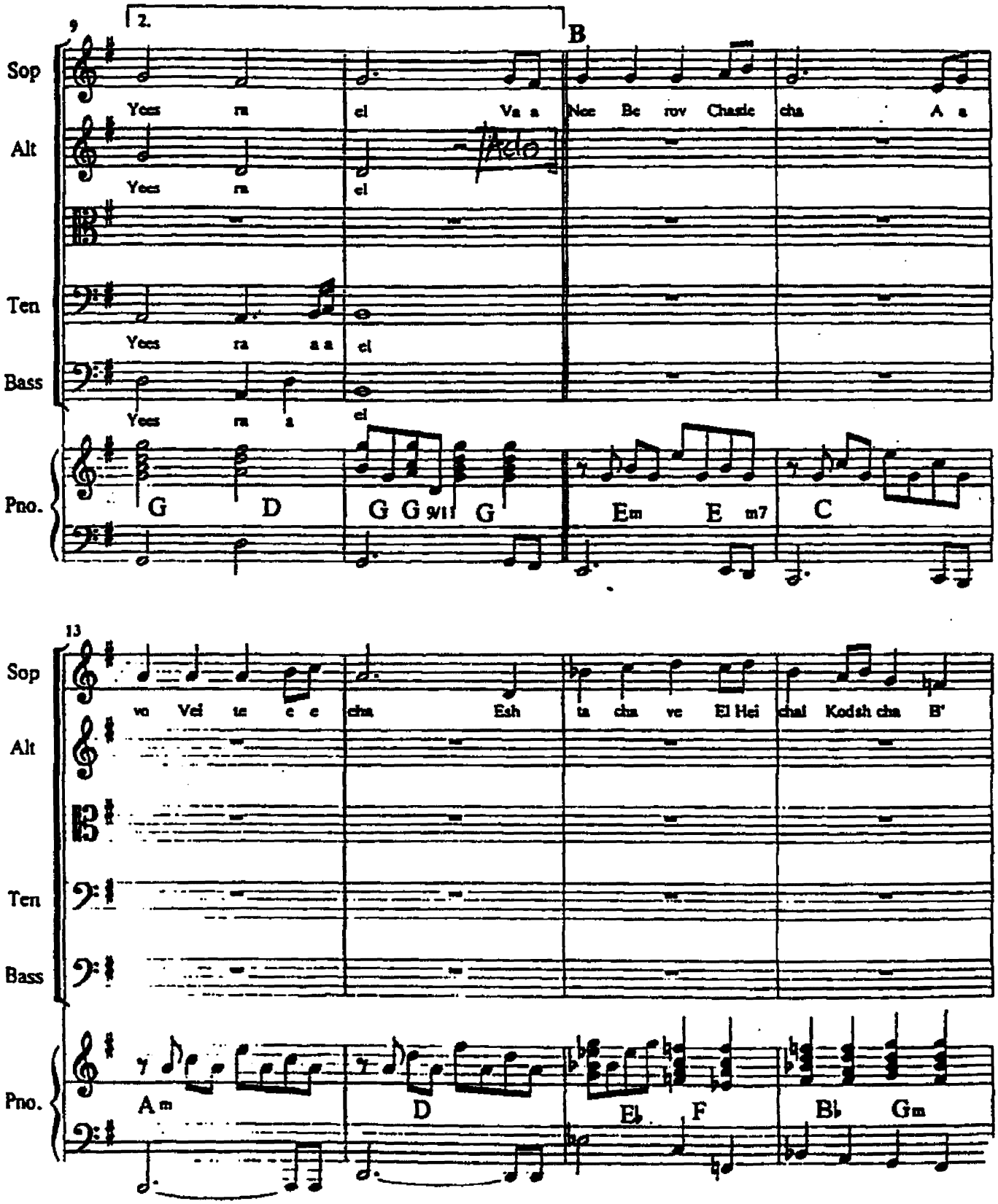
From Soul On Fire

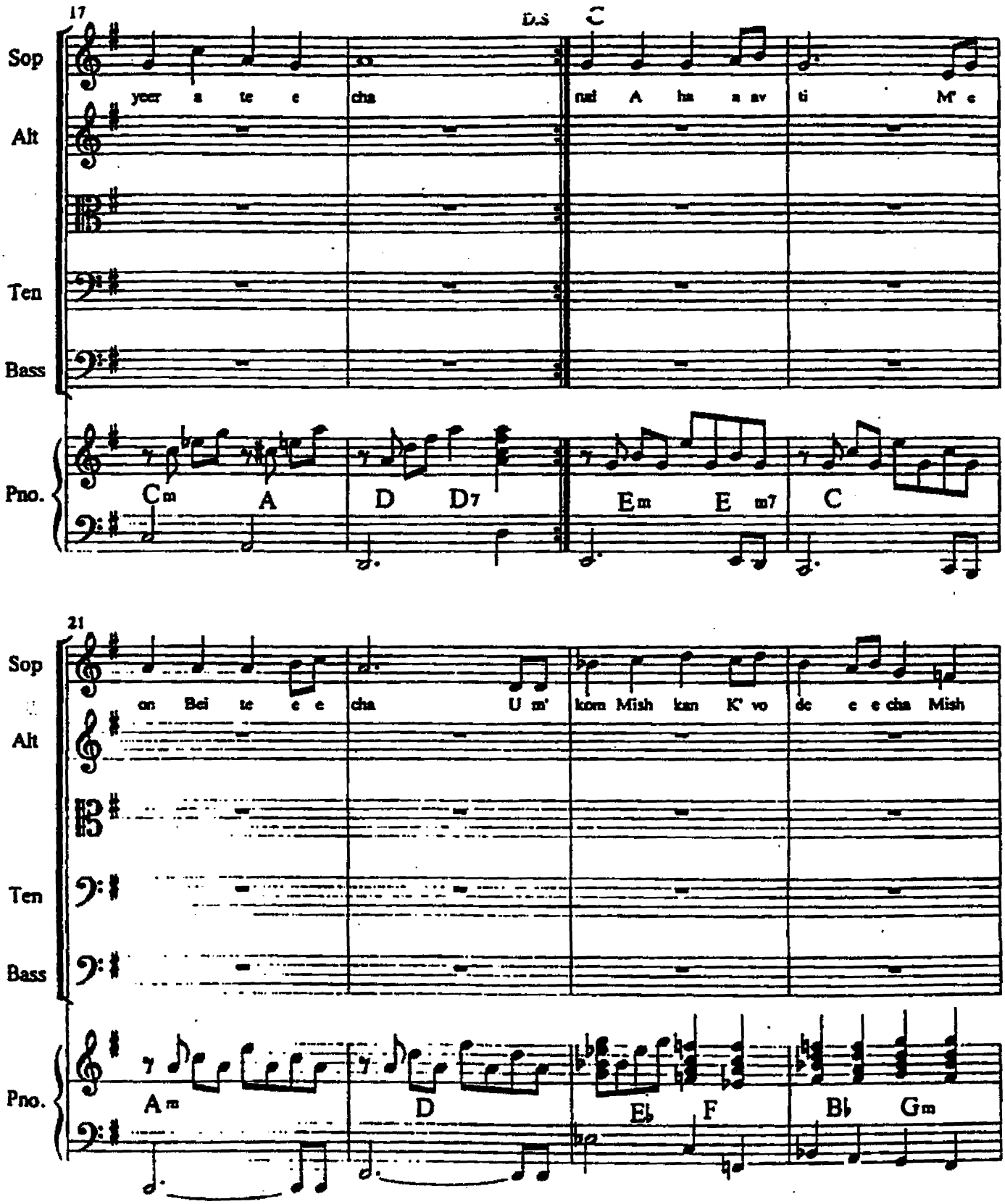
Ma Tovu

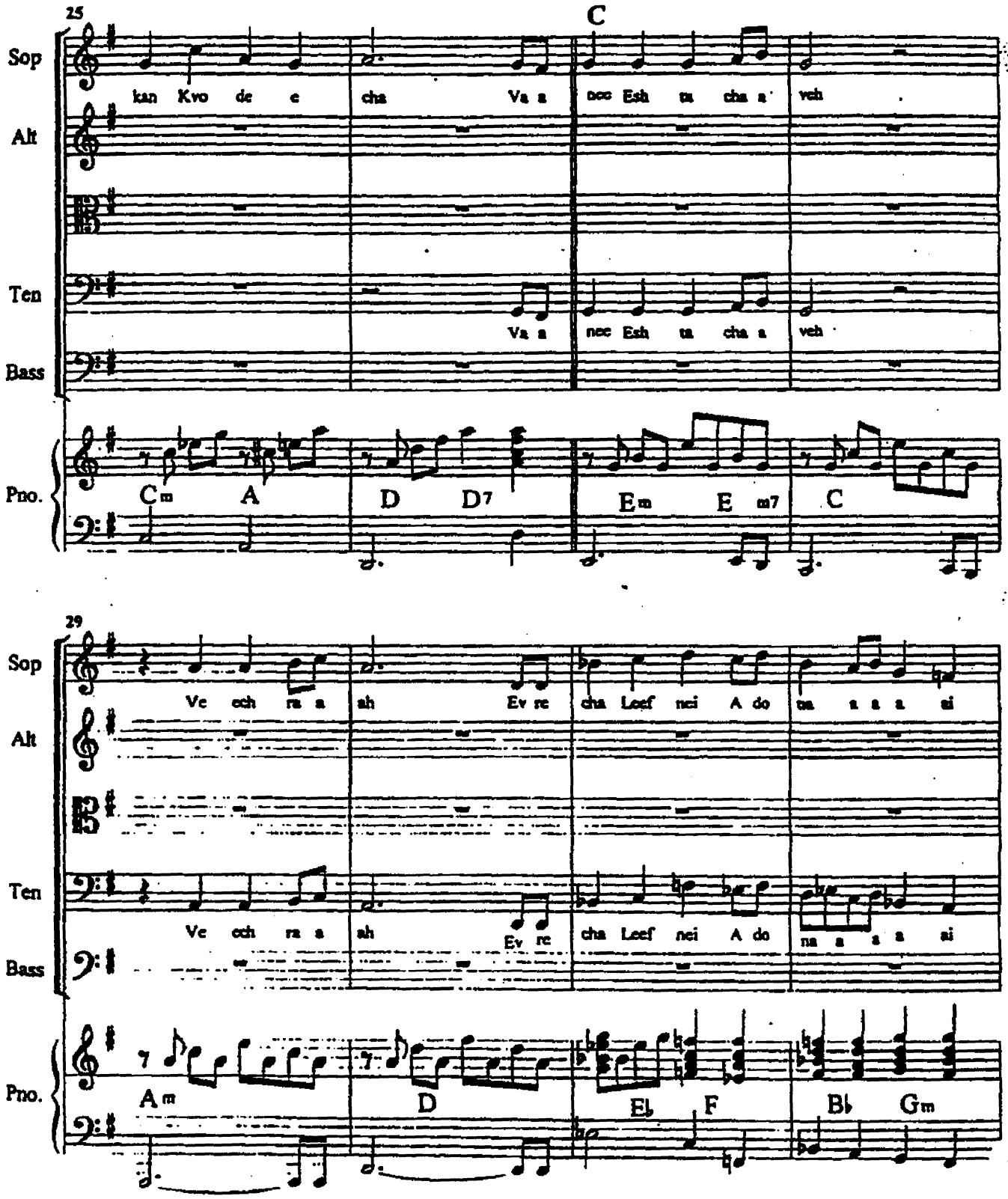
From the morning prayers

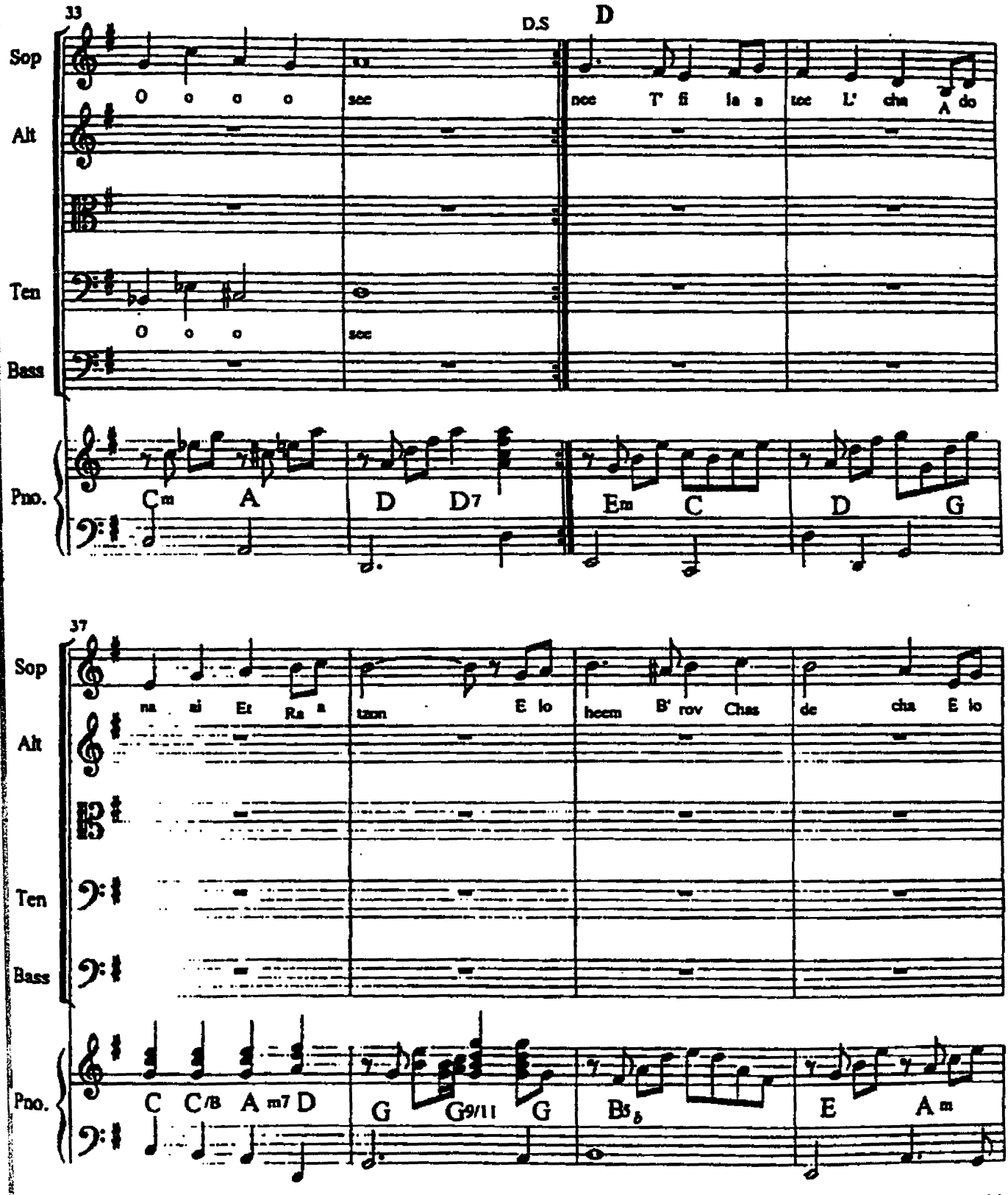
Composer
Danny Maseng

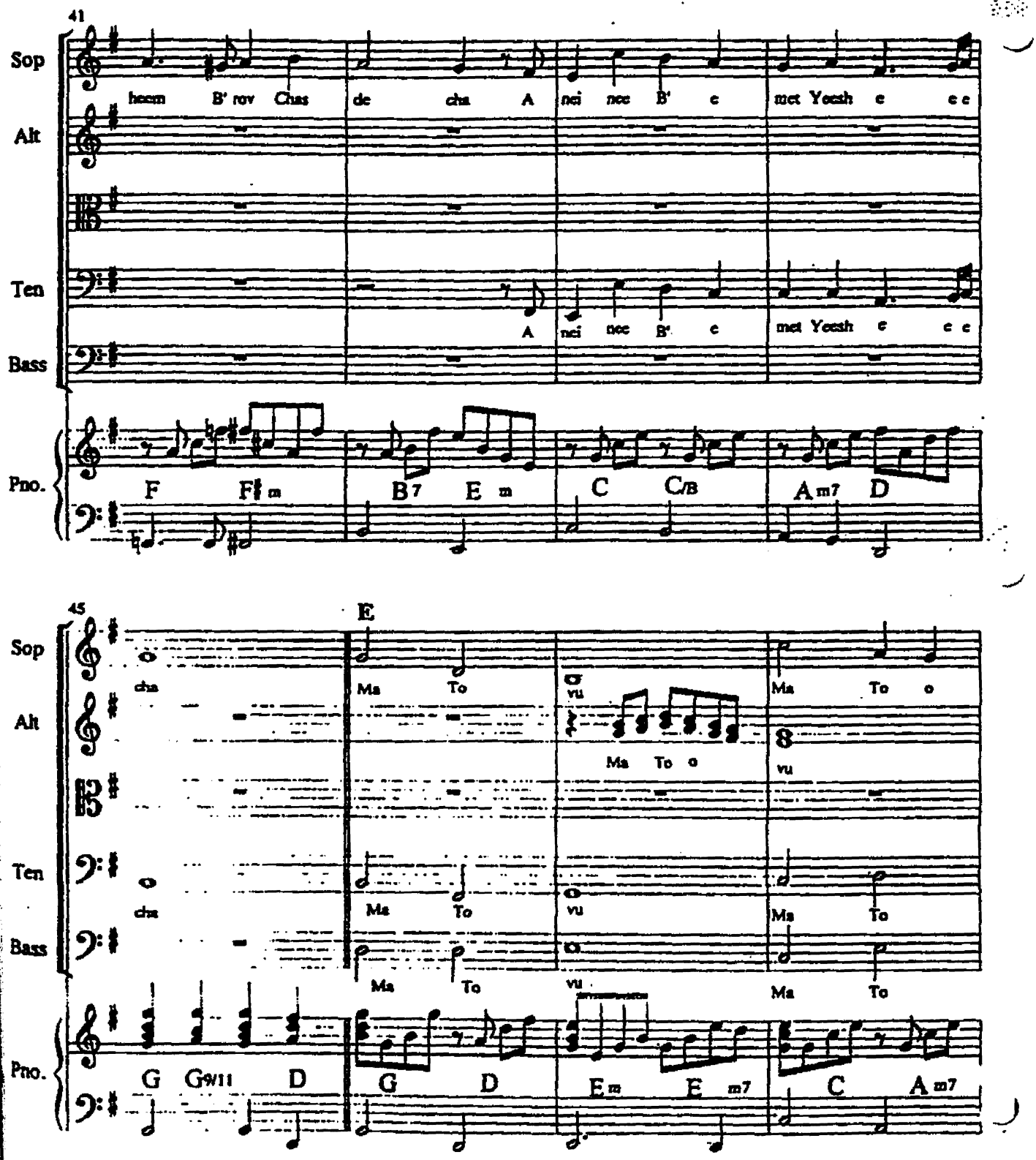


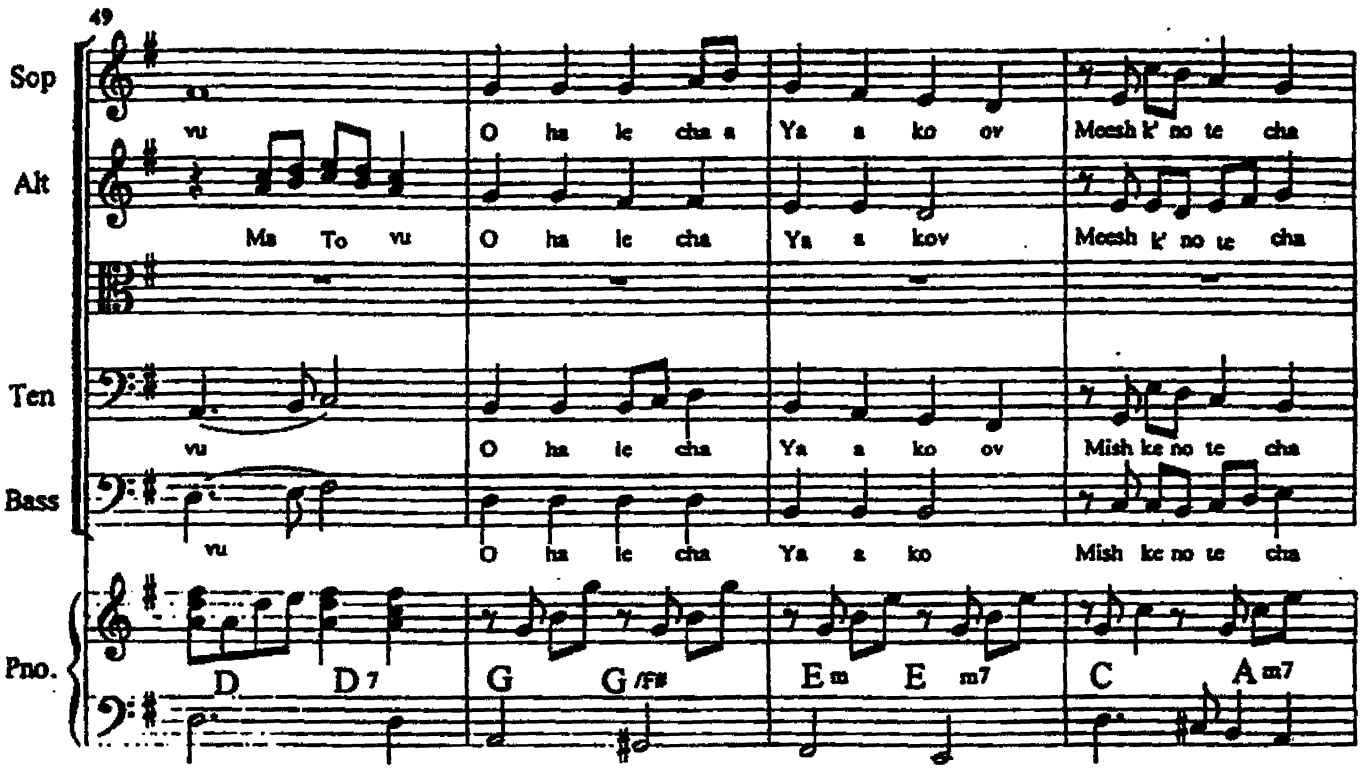


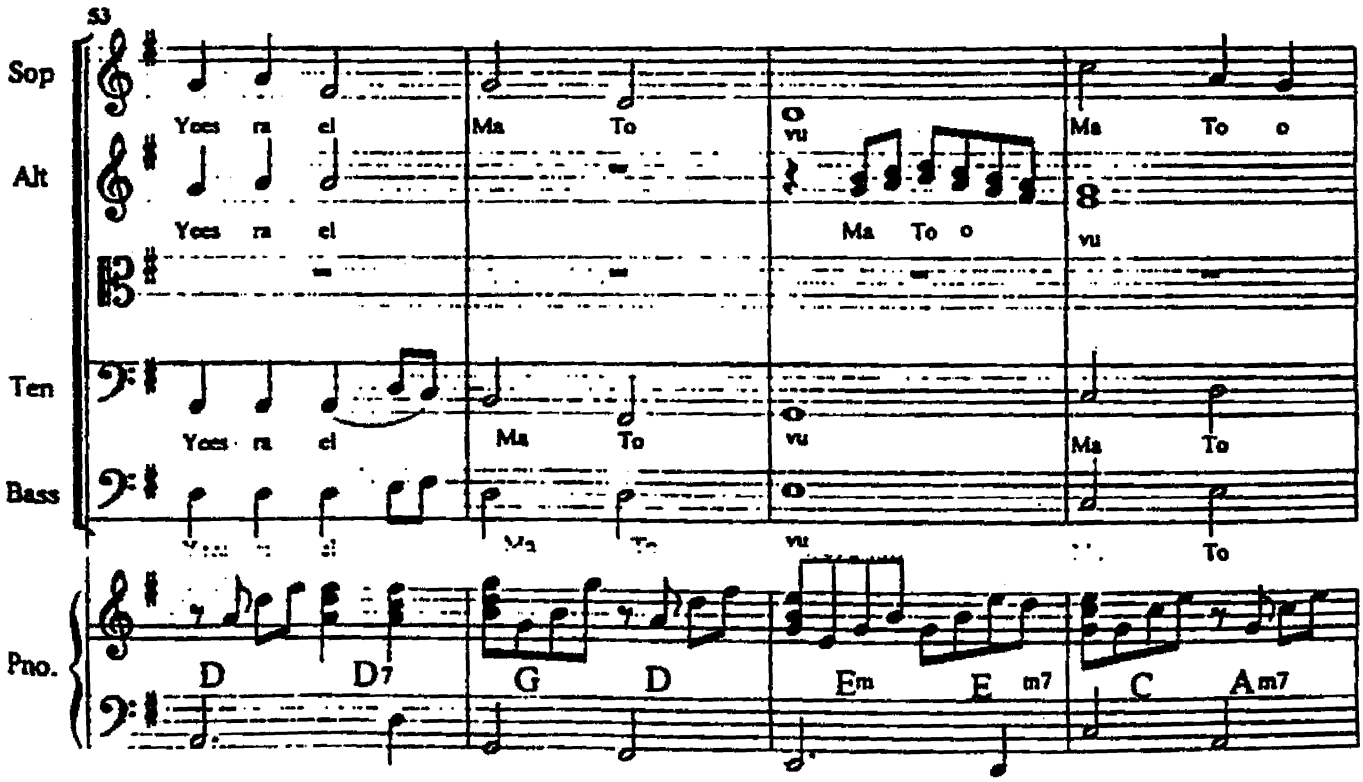


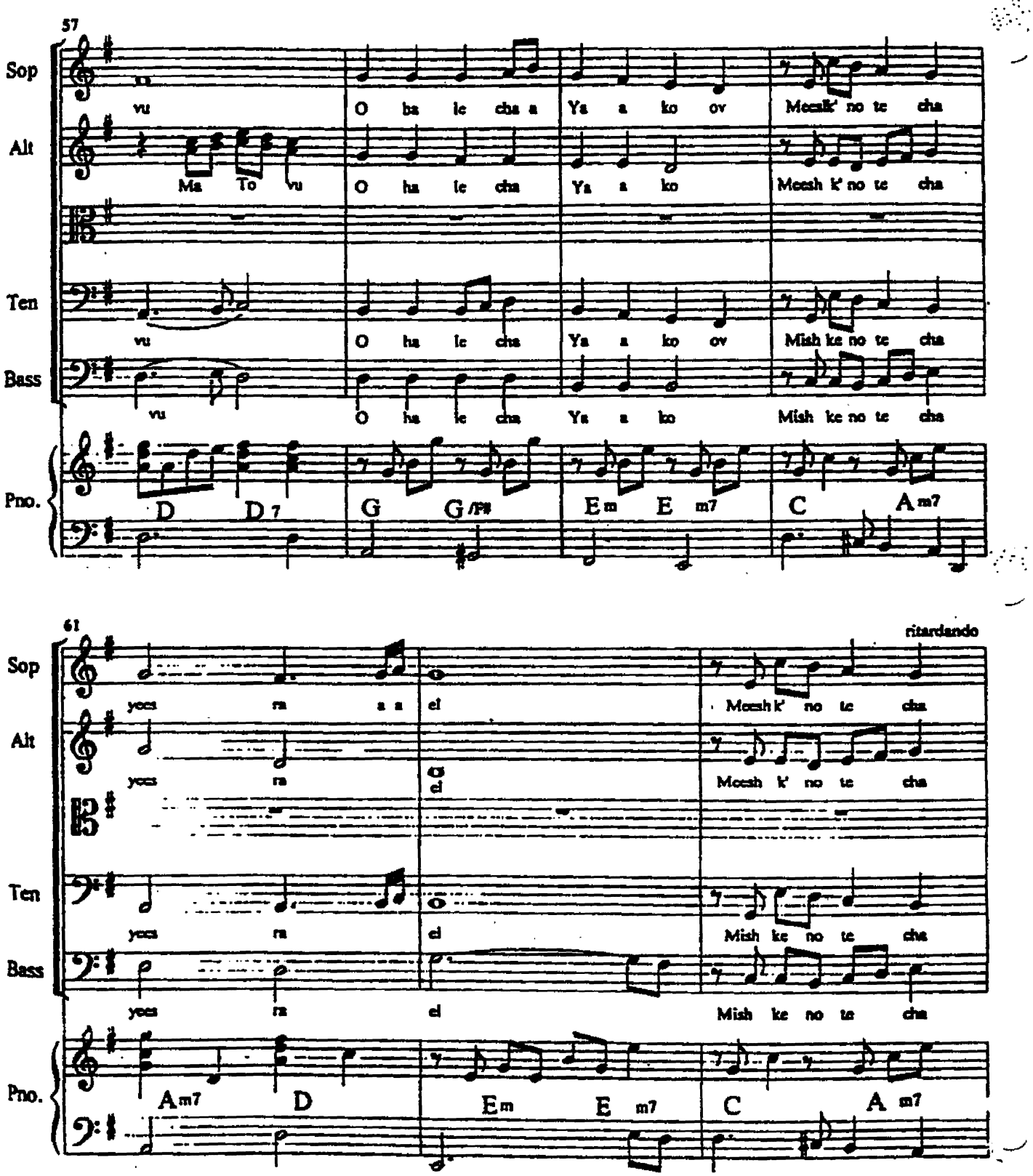


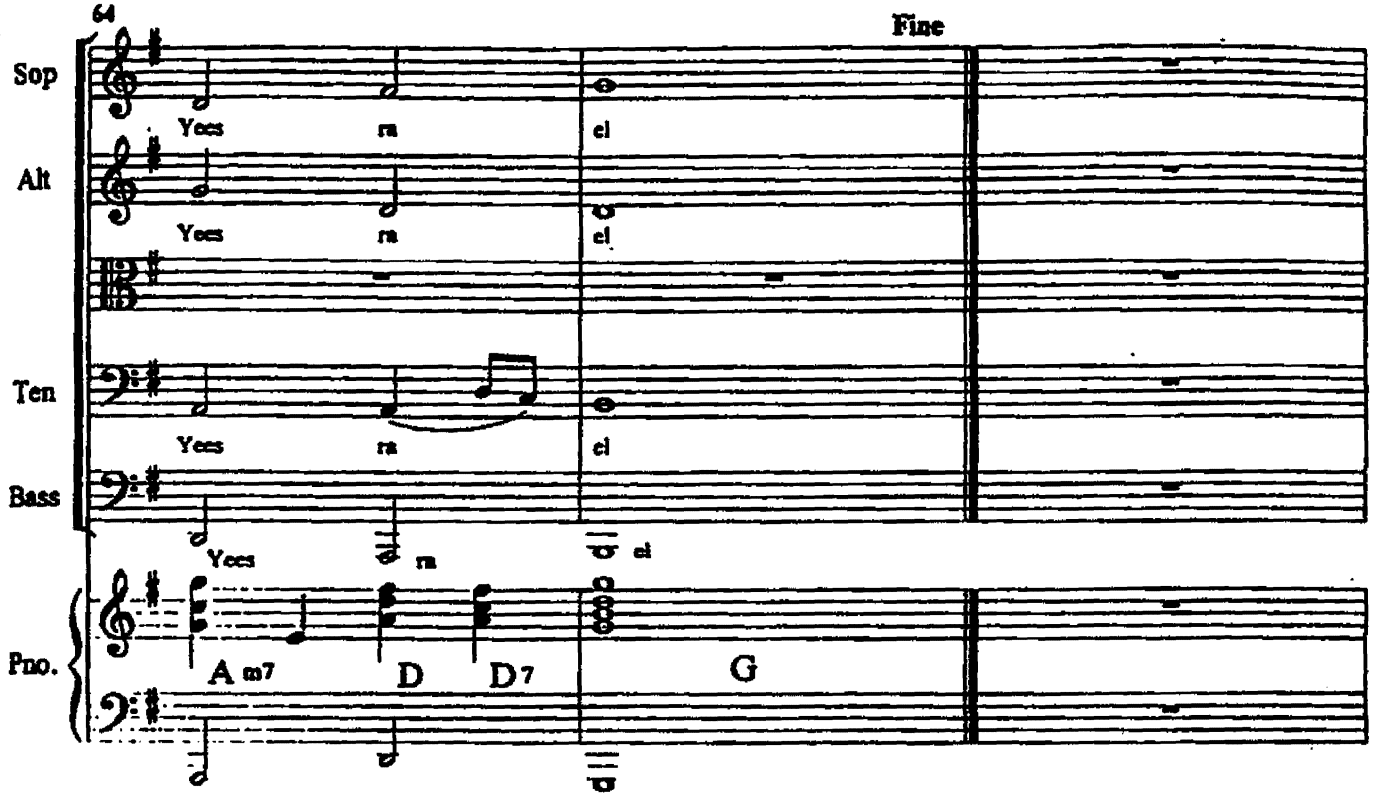








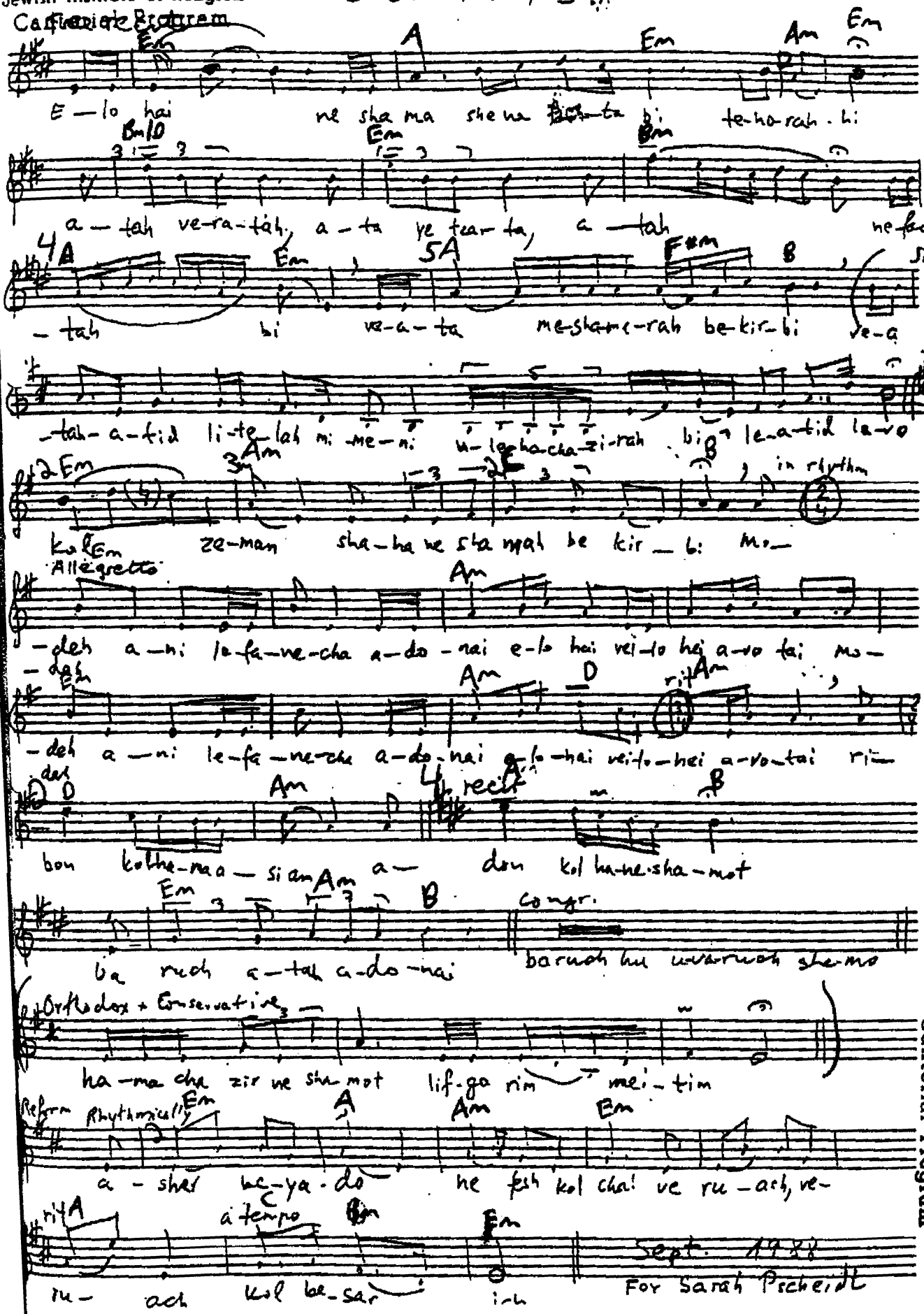




Hebrew Union College
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cantorial Program

Musical Ex. 12

Eliyahu Schleifer



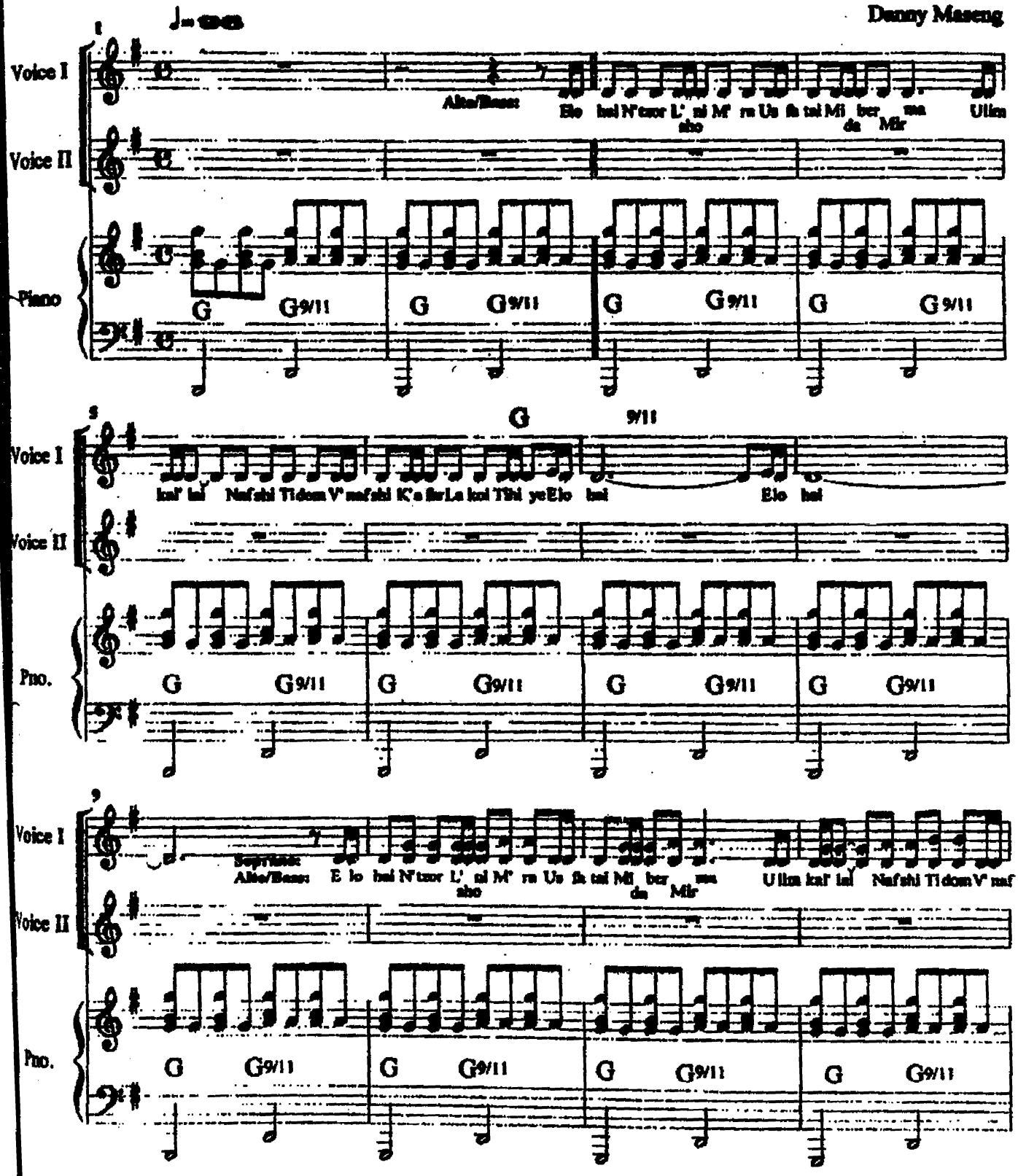
Hebrew Union College
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cantorial Program

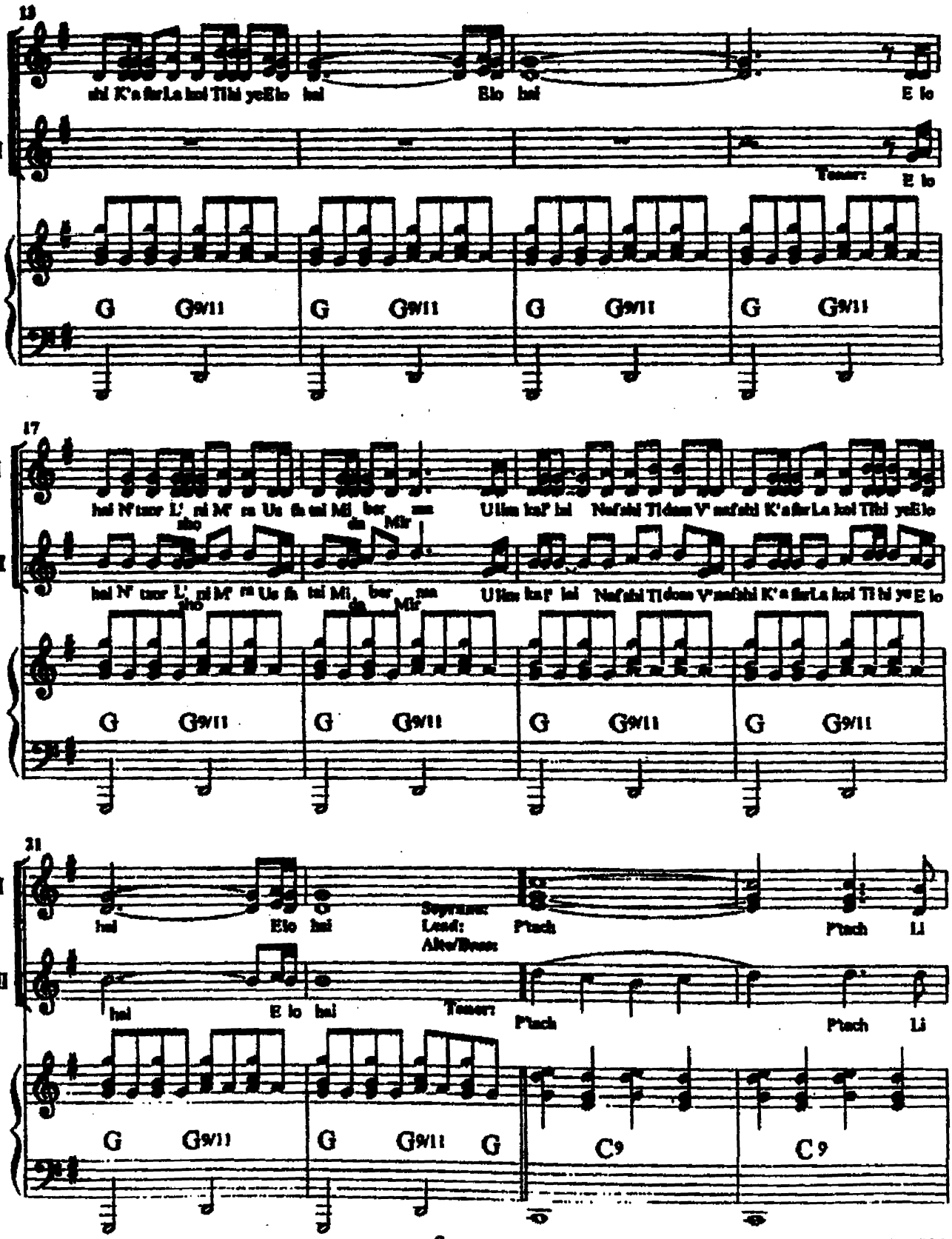
usical Ex. 13
From Soul On Fire

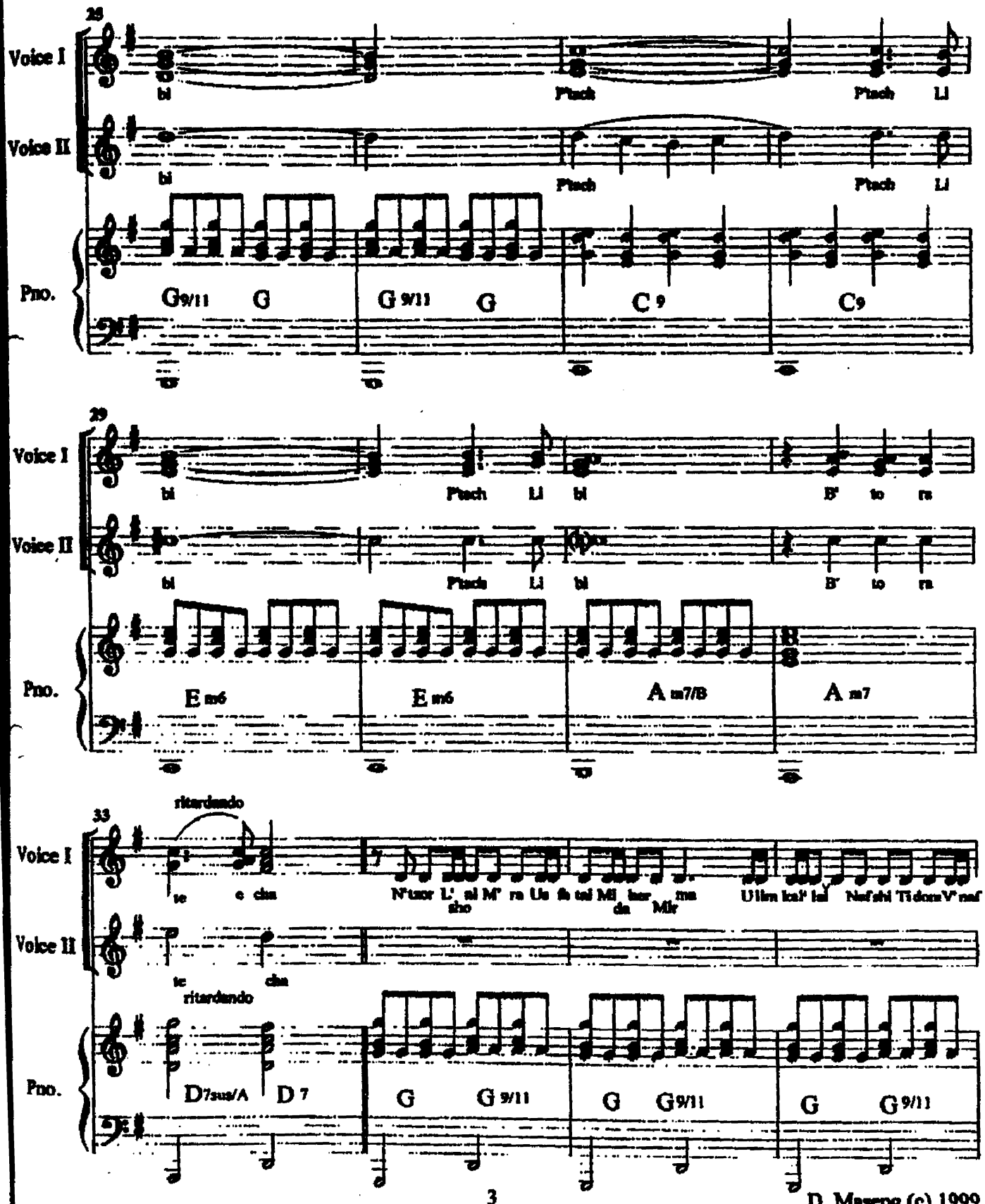
Elohai N'tzor

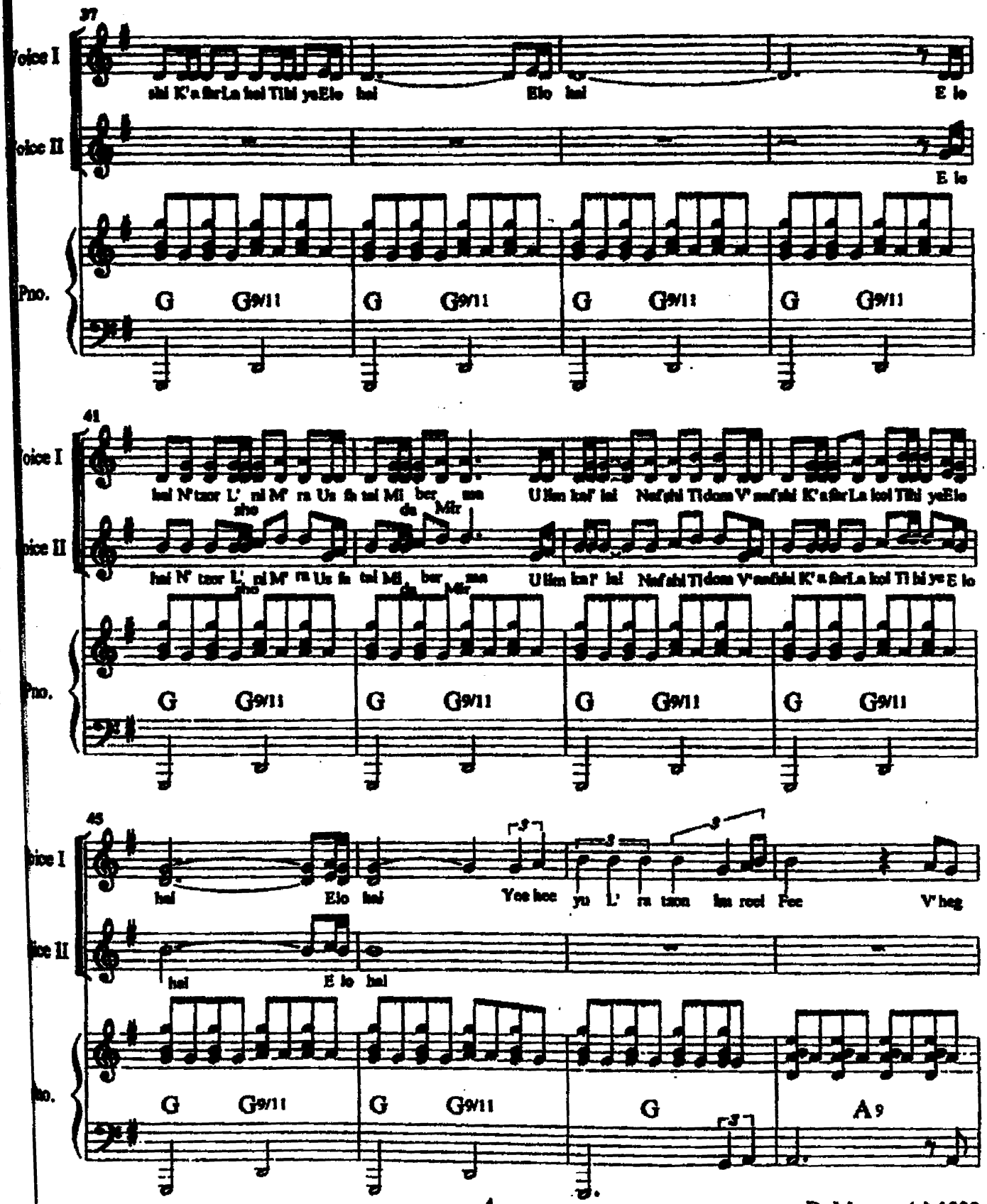
From the "Amida" prayer

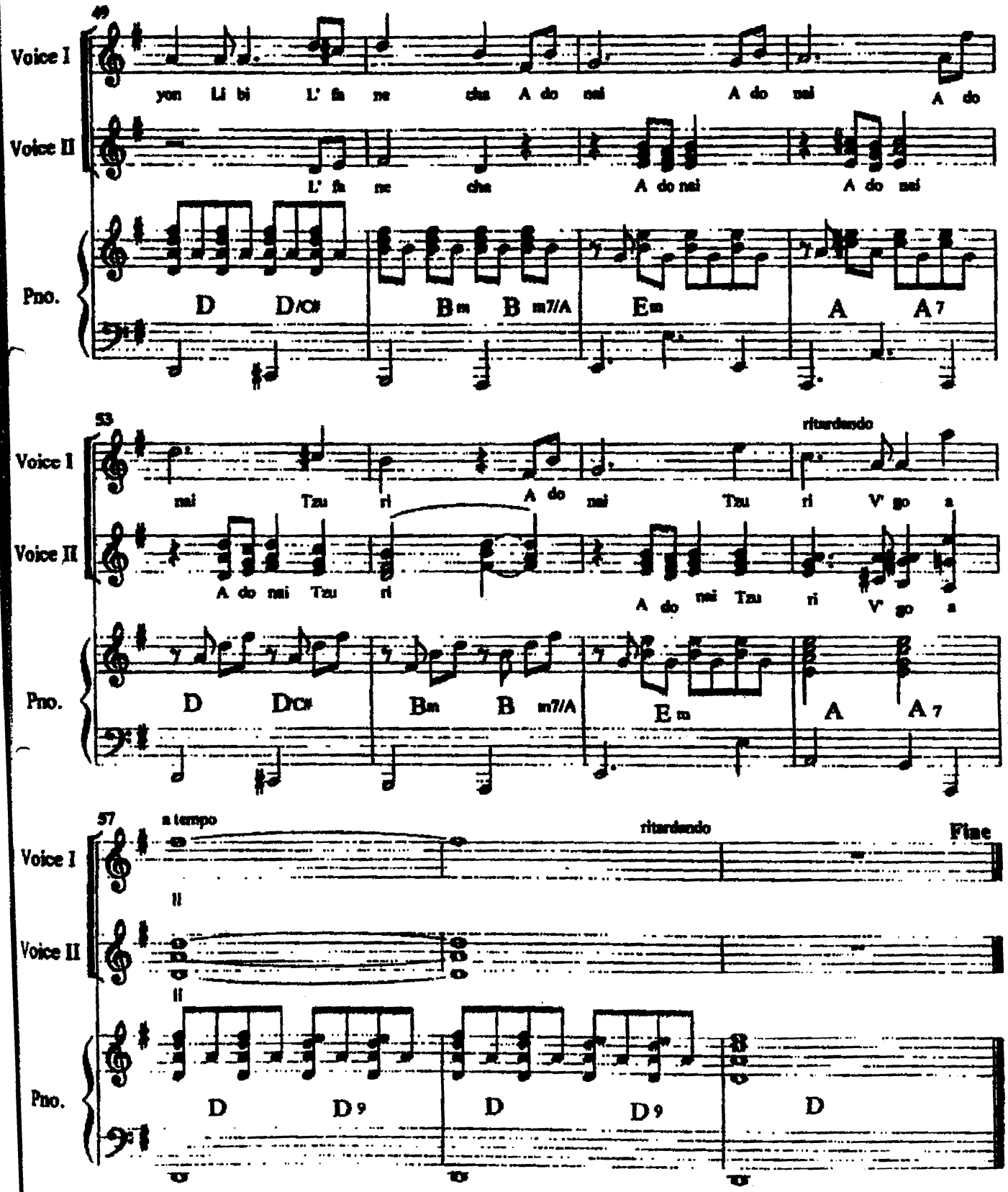
Danny Maseng

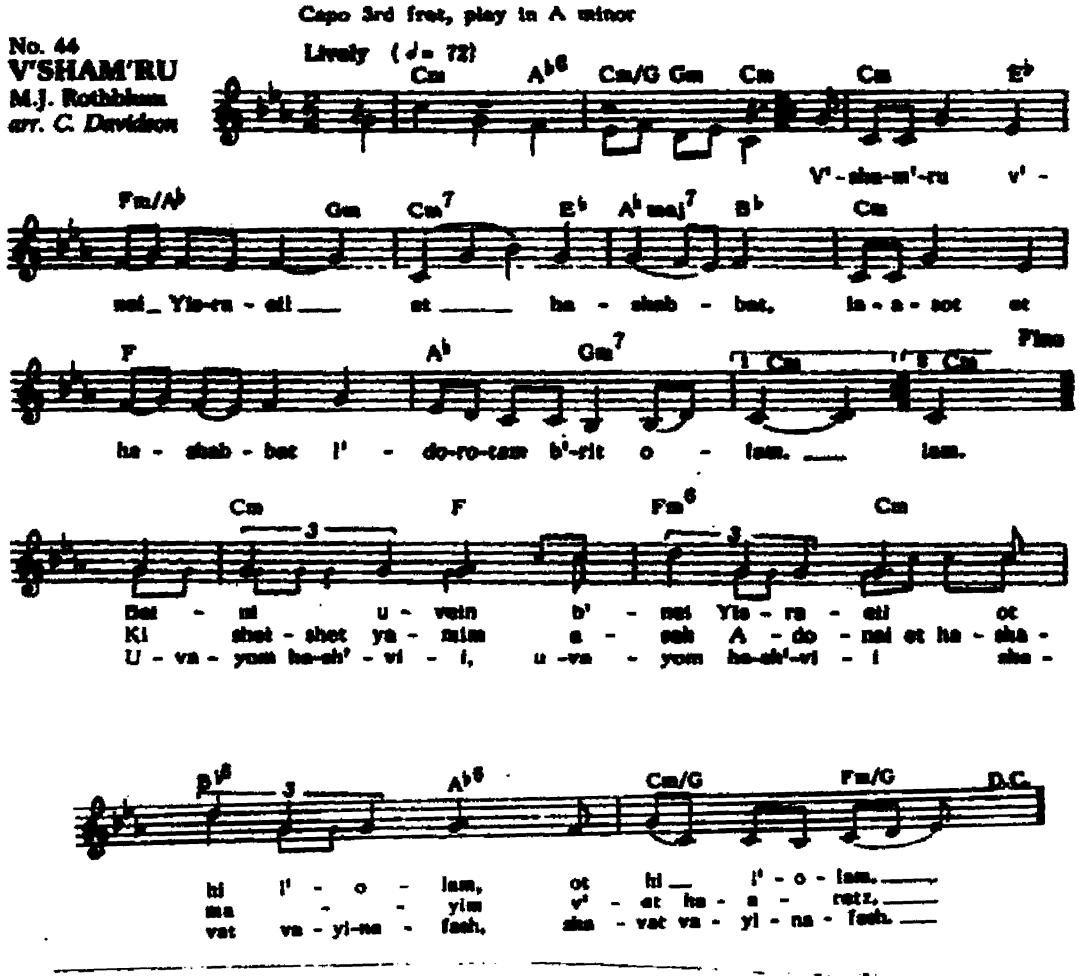




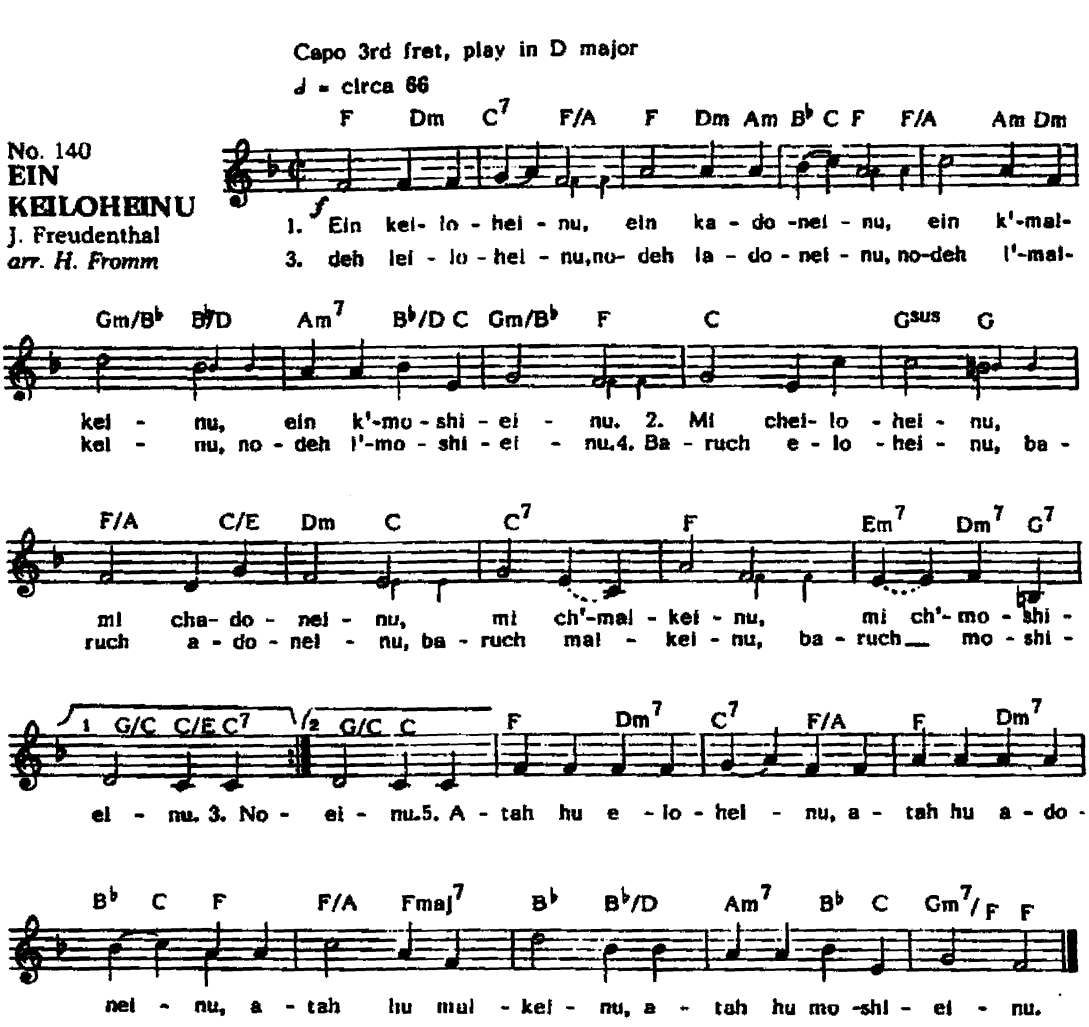







Capo 3rd fret, play in A minor
No. 44
V'SHAM'RU
M.J. Rothblum
arr. C. Davidson
Lively (♩= 72)
Cm
A♭6
Cm/G
Gm
Cm
Cm
E♭
V'-sha-m'-ru v'-
Fm/A♭
Gm
Cm7
E♭
A♭maj7
B♭
Cm
nei_ Yis-ra-eil ___ et ___ ha-shab-bat, la-a-sot et
F
A♭
Gm7
1 Cm
2 Cm
Fine
ha-shab-bat l'-do-ro-tam b'-rit o-lam. ___ lam.
Cm
F
Fm6
Cm
Bei-ni u-vein b'-nei Yis-ra-eil ot
Ki shot-shot ya-mim a-seh A-do-nai et ha-sha-
U-va-yom ha-sh'-vi-i, u-va-yom ha-sh'-vi-i sha-
B♭6
A♭6
Cm/G
Fm/G
D.C.
bi l'-o-lam, ot hi ___ l'-o-lam. ___
ma - - yim v'-at ha-a-retz, ___
vat va-yi-na-fash, sha-vat va-yi-na-fash. ___

Musical Ex. 15



אֵין כֵּאלֹהֵינוּ, אֵין כַּאדוֹנֵינוּ,
אֵין כְּמַלְכֵּנוּ, אֵין כְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.
מִי כֵאלֹהֵינוּ? מִי כַאדוֹנֵינוּ?
מִי כְמַלְכֵּנוּ? מִי כְמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ?
נוֹדֶה לֵאלֹהֵינוּ, נוֹדֶה לַאדוֹנֵינוּ,
נוֹדֶה לְמַלְכֵּנוּ, נוֹדֶה לְמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.
בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בָּרוּךְ אֲדוֹנֵינוּ,
בָּרוּךְ מַלְכֵּנוּ, בָּרוּךְ מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

אַתָּה הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
אַתָּה הוּא אֲדוֹנֵינוּ,
אַתָּה הוּא מַלְכֵּנוּ,
אַתָּה הוּא מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

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