Yiddish Art Song: A Comparative History
By
Tracey Scher

Included in this study are seven chapters. The contribution of this thesis was to ›vide a well researched piece of academic writing so as to build the overall body of iting with regard to Yiddish Art Song. The goal of this thesis was to gain a better rsonal understanding of the history and value of Yiddish Art Song. This study is meant be a study guide for teachers and students interested in the history of the Yiddish Art ng. I hope that by studying this thesis, musicians and teachers will gain a better derstanding of the importance of this genre of music and continue to foster the growth Yiddish Art Song.

This thesis is divided into seven sections. The first section is an introduction to ; body of the thesis, stating why I chose this topic, what the study's goals are, and a ief glimpse into the history of the Yiddish Art Song. The second chapter discusses the eaning of Art Song. The third chapter discusses Yiddish Art Song in Russia, from its ception to the end of its primacy. The fourth chapter discusses Yiddish Art Song in nerica from its beginnings to the present day and includes three prominent Yiddish Art ng composers, Solomon Golub, Lazar Weiner and Helen Greenberg. The fifth chapter, ; conclusion, is a summary of the phases in which Yiddish Art Song has traveled. The cth chapter is an analysis section. This section discusses various styles of Yiddish Art ng and the influences of Western contemporary techniques. The seventh section has a mplete listing of the bibliographical sources that were used.

There were various materials used in the research of this paper. They consist of e following: 1) Books, 2) interviews, 3) articles found in journals, newspapers, and cord inserts and 4) archival studies.

YIDDISH ART SONG:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

The singing of Art Song has always been a passion of mine. During undergraduate and graduate school, my focus was on German, French and Italian Art Song. Occasionally, I would be exposed to other languages: Czech, Russian, American and English. Everyone who studied classical music was exposed to these genres. However, I'd never set eyes on an Art Song written in Yiddish.

I was introduced to Yiddish Art Song after beginning my cantorial studies at Hebrew Union College, and quickly discovered that there were many similarities between Yiddish Art Song and other forms of Art Song I had studied. I became interested in studying its history and the similarities it shared with the others. A question important to me soon arose: Why does Yiddish Art Song not occupy a place in conservatory repertoire, along with the other languages? There are several possible answers to this question. Perhaps the music is not as accessible as other genres of music. There were no Yiddish Art Songs published before the twentieth century. Perhaps the reason relates to the fact that North American cultural study focuses on Western European societies. Yiddish Art Song originates in Eastern Europe.

As a singer it is my hope and duty to share the treasures of Yiddish Art Song that are available. My vocal repertoire has been expanded by this discovery and I hope that this thesis will encourage singers and teachers to also include this wealth of material in their repertoire.

Yiddish culture has continued to develop and flourish through Jewish literature, poetry and other art forms. The works of writers such as Sholom Aleichem, Mani Lieb

and I.L. Peretz demonstrate the achievements of literary and poetic works. Folk songs from the shtetls in Eastern Europe that were later brought to other parts of the world (primarily America and Israel), are the most well known musical forms. Equally as important and perhaps less well known are the Art Songs which began taking shape in Russia and continued their development in America and Israel.

With the emergence of the Enlightenment came a need for Jews in the Western world to assimilate into a new kind of society. The result was the Haskalah, known as the Jewish Enlightenment. The Haskalah in Germany and other Western societies placed its emphasis on learning the language and surrounding themselves with the culture of the dominant group. With the desire for assimilation came a gradual decline in the speaking of Yiddish, as it was not the dominant language of the culture and it was considered to be a lower-class language. In the Eastern European world, however, Jews who were confined to the Pale (the restricted area where Jews were permitted to live) had a different response. The Orthodox establishment in the Pale blamed assimilation for a decline in religious observance, and Jewish secular nationalists blamed assimilation for a lack of Jewish patriotism. Both groups wanted to preserve Jewish cultural traditions and religion. One method of doing so was through folk songs.

The folk songs were of many themes -- lullabies, wedding songs, poverty/struggle songs, protest songs, study songs, merriment songs, etc. The Eastern Europeans who did join the Haskalah realized that assimilation would entirely wipe out who they were as Jews, so they sought to preserve the ghetto traditions and at the same time elevate them to a more accepted universal form. They went into the Pale, collecting and transcribing folk songs. Some of these people were conservatory trained and were later to form the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music. They realized the value and importance of

raising these songs to meet the standards of the modern artistic world. So they set about arranging the folk songs into Art Songs and later creating new Art Songs. Later, many of these people emigrated to America and Israel and continued their work. As well, they inspired others living in these countries to continue this development.

Some questions become apparent as Yiddish art song develops. What makes Yiddish Art Song different from other genres of Art Song? What exactly makes Yiddish Art Song a distinctive genre? Why would musicians on American soil, where English is primary tongue, want to continue writing Yiddish music? Or, similarly, why would musicians in Israel, where all attempts were made to make Hebrew *the* language, continue to write in Yiddish? How can we, as listeners, identify those characteristics that composers used in the hope of giving their compositions a 'Jewish' sound? Many of these questions will be addressed later in this study.

The Yiddish culture and language has never had a land to plant its feet on. It has depended on its owners to carry it with them wherever they traveled. In the past sixty years it has become a dying language with only a handful of people and organizations trying to keep it alive. Yet, despite these obstacles, Yiddish Art Song has managed to continue developing. There are composers today who are still writing and musicians who continue to research and perform past and present works.

The content herein will focus on key elements in the shaping of Yiddish Art Song and its continual growth. The content will include political and social situations; the relationship of the music to its poetry; and thematic ideas and the analysis of particular examples of music. These examples of music will show elements associated with Judaism and the influences of other European art song, particularly late-Romantic lieder. Included are representative composers of each era to show the continued development

and changes within the music. In essence, I will present an historical context for the development of Yiddish Art Song in Russia and America, and by doing so, define it as an art form.

In first chapter, I will discuss the meaning of "Art Song" and its historical beginnings. I will discuss devices used by composers in their attempt to make Yiddish Art Song sound Jewish. In chapter 2, I will discuss the birth of Yiddish Art Song in Russia and its developments. In chapter 3, I will first discuss the migration of the Eastern European peoples and their culture to America, and will follow with the development of Yiddish Art Song in North America through the present day. In the final chapter, I will include analyses of Yiddish Art Song and identify elements which characterize each particular song.

THE MEANING AND DEVELOPMENT OF ART SONG

There are many different scholarly opinions regarding the meaning of the Art Song. I will discuss different views of both written and spoken sources that are relevant to the study of this thesis.

The New Grove Dictionary of Music defines Art Song as a song of serious artistic purpose written by a trained composer, as opposed to the folksong.[1] James Hall, in his book Art Song, says that the basic aim of an Art Song is not mere formal beauty, but rather characteristic beauty. Song is a dual act, and at best there is a fusion of text and tone. Melody and the span of its phrases, harmony and the color of its chords, form and the shape of its being-all result from the text, which prior to the song stood alone, but now in song finds fuller meaning.[2] Laya Harbater notes another definition of Art Song in her dissertation. She notes that the Concise Dictionary of Music defines Art Song as a song in which there is artistic unity between the vocal part, the words and the accompaniment. The art song is the work of a single composer, (often set to words by someone else). It differs from folk song which consists of a simple melody and words whose origin in unknown.[3]

The basic form of an Art Song consists of one of three categories:

1) **Strophic** – follows the common pattern of a folk song, in which identical music is repeated for succeeding stanzas. Usually the poetry that is used maintains a single mood throughout, with a bit of variation. The music follows this pattern, with

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[1] Laya Harbater, Yiddish Art Song: A Comparative Study and Analysis of Selected Works of 3 Composers representing Russia, America and Israel, (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1983),p.10
[2] James Husst Hall, The Art Song (Norman:University of Oklahoma Press, 1953),p.3-4
[3] Laya Harbater, Yiddish Art Song,p.10

some sort of variation, perhaps within the use of accents or lines, so as to avoid monotony within the stanzas.

2) **Through composed** – music which does not repeat. Here, the composer intends to capture the meaning of each word or phrase of the poem or prose text. With this kind of composition there is a lack of continuity, unlike the strophic song.
3) **Modified strophic** – lies between strophic and through composed. There is a repetition of the strophic style, but at some point during the song, usually in the climactic section, the pattern of repetition will be broken in order to introduce different music that more fully mirrors the sentiments of the poet's words or phrases.[4]

Though Art Song is like many musical forms, its development is more closely tied to history and culture than most other musical forms. In the late 19th century, nationalism was predominant in Western and Eastern Europe. There were political and military triumphs. In Germany for example, Germans were intoxicated by their country's advances in technological production. Patriotism was in full force. This rapid ascention of power alienated many, and began to create great social and economic upheaval. There were many changes occurring in peoples' social status. With this upheaval came a passionate nationalistic revolutionary period. This trend led to changes in the way the arts were treated. There was a feeling that the arts among many other venues were not Germanic enough. There was a hope that this German oneness could be found by going into the peasant world, where simplicity and nature were inherent in the peasants' lives.

The upheaval that arose with Germany's ascention of power directly affected the country's artists. Artists who had a natural inclination to remove themselves from the

greater society felt even more estranged from the current political and social situation and looked inward for happiness. They realized that their goal of happiness was not attainable and the yearning became more and more painful. It is this "self-consciousness" that becomes the core of the Romanticist's longing. The German folksong of the peasants was the most expressive of the longing of the German soul. German composers set the folk poetry and song to the high artistic level in which they had been trained.[5]

Folk poetry had been used among composers since the birth of the Art Song. Classical poetry or poetry written by friends of the composers were used later, as the Art Song form developed through the early 19th century. Important to note, however, is that classic poets often imitated the folk style, since it was so popular at the time. The setting of folk poetry to music was not predominantly practiced until the latter part of the Romantic period, when nationalistic feelings were prevalent and composers specifically sought out the poetry of the folk societies.

Similar situations as those in Germany were happening to the Jews in Eastern Europe. Most of them were confined to a restricted area of living and felt estranged from the rest of society. Folk songs were the medium of expressing their longings and dissatisfactions. Jews who were not living in this area were immersed in Nationalistic ideals. They realized that it was these very folk songs that would preserve the Jewish traditions and culture. Many of these Jews were students at the St. Petersburg Music Conservatory. These classically trained Jewish composers began the trend of elevating the folk songs into a higher artistic level. Both the Yiddish and non-Yiddish Art Song

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[4] James Husst Hall, The Art Song, pp.5-7
[5] Edward F. Kravitt, The Lied (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1996), p.106, 38-39

composers of this time either arranged the folk songs into Art Songs, or wrote original pieces of music based on folk melodies or poems.

There are musical questions to consider. What are the qualities needed to transform a folk song into an art song? Abraham Z. Idelsohn, in his book, Jewish Music and its Historical Development, notes the following regarding the process of arranging a folk song into an art song: "Artistically successful arrangement of folk-song depends not merely upon faithful adherence to the melody – vitally important as is this care of the tune's genuineness. The musician must have absorbed the spirit of the tune...so that instead of caricaturing the melody...he gives it fuller expression though instrumental accompaniment. ....he must employ only such modulation, progressions and harmonies as spring forth from the character of the song."[6]

I asked two prominent Yiddish academics their opinions concerning the transformation of the folk song into the Art Song. Robert Freedman, curator of the Jewish Sound Archive at the University of Pennsylvania responded, "My own take is if a performer, via voice, diction, interpretation or by dint of training or talent were able to give the song an emotional intensity at a level not usually achieved, regardless of the complexity or simplicity of the music or text, it would then become an art song; so that any genre of music with text could be included."

Joyce Rosenzweig, Artist-in-Residence at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, responded, "A folk song does not need an accompaniment. It is simple in style. It comes from the people. An art song has a more formalized accompaniment. It may or may not include folk elements. The poet is usually a known figure, rather than being anonymous, as in the folk song. There are also gray areas,

where the distinction between art song and folk song is not always clear. For example, the atmosphere that is created when the singer and the accompaniment both interpret the text is higher than that of the folk song; the combination of sophisticated singer and sophisticated accompaniment produces a more elevated piece of music. The above examples are gray because the examples can be achieved when performing a folk song." When Joyce accompanies a singer performing a folk song, she wants the folk song to come alive on the concert stage. She wants the listeners to be moved. So, she plays them with an elevated accompaniment and she encourages the singer to sing with full emotion. When this is successfully achieved, the result is a folk song that could easily be defined as an art song.

I believe that the scope of the meaning of the term Art Song is so broad that it is difficult to define clearly. Part of the problem is that the definition depends on whether the Art Music is being looked at theoretically as an observable piece of manuscript, or whether it is looked at with the entire performance in mind. However, it is evident that in any attempt to define it, it must be compared to the folk or popular song. The difference between the two is not merely whether or not there is a known poet, or whether or not the melody is simple. One can embellish the accompaniment in a folk song to contain rich harmonies. One can then use artistic devices to change the emotion and colors of each stanza of the vocal line to reach a much higher level of artistry than that of a folk song. When the musicians are able to elevate the folk song to this higher level, it may be considered an Art Song.

In order to begin the study and origins of Yiddish Art Song, I will first turn the focus to the origins of Jewish Music. Laya Harbater notes that, "Jewish Vocal Music of

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[6] Abraham Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Music in Its Historical Development (New York:Dover Publications, In

Europe is composed of modes and motives of the **biblical cantillations**, the **Synagogue prayer modes** and the **folk song**."[7]

Biblical cantillations, dating as far back as the 1st century organized single words and phrases into *teamim*, or biblical accents. The *teamim*, which are chanted according to particular modes, are incorporated into the reading of the books of the Bible. These *teamim* reflect the vocal inflections, the grammar and the meaning of the text of the Hebrew language. The modes of these cantillations varied, according to the holiday observed and the various books in the Bible. However, most of the modes are based on a tetrachordal system and focused on the intervals of a 2nd, 3rd and 4th.[8]

The **Synagogue prayer modes** are melodic structures of prayers whereby the modes are combinations of melodic patterns within a given scale called *nusach*. There are many kinds of nusach, and each version has a different name according to the particular modes within the prayer that is being chanted. For example, during the Shabbat evening service, a nusach often used for many of the prayers called *Adonai Malach*, is in a major sounding key. The rendition of this nusach is left to the discretion of the cantor, although he or she must remain within the confines of the particular nusach being chanted. When the composer of Art Song uses the synagogue modes or biblical cantillations in the music, it is often to incorporate Jewish liturgical sounds into the body of the music.

The **Folk songs** were songs sung by the folk people. The songs expressed the characteristics of the lives of those folk people. While Jews were living in Western Europe among the gentiles, they sang the gentiles' secular folk songs. When the ghetto

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1992), p.461-62
[7] L.Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p.16
[8] L.Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p.16-17

walls went up, there was no more mingling with the gentiles and therefore, no need for their songs. The Jews' way of life changed drastically, and with this change came the emergence of their own unique Jewish secular folk songs. Later on, the Jews were permitted to live again among the gentiles, and their songs ceased to continue. However, in Eastern Europe most Jews continued to live in ghetto surroundings. The folk song continued to flourish and in some places today, still does.

These three elements of Jewish Music – the biblical cantillations, the Synagogue prayer modes and the folk song, were the basis on which Yiddish Art Song was created. The next section will discuss the birth of the Yiddish Art Song in Russia and the conditions under which it developed.

YIDDISH ART SONG IN RUSSIA

How did Yiddish Art Song come to be? There were social and political situations in Russia in the nineteenth century that forced most of the Jews to live in restricted areas called the Pale of Settlement. Only a few Jews were allowed to live outside of this area. Some of these Jews studied at a music conservatory in St. Petersburg with non-Jewish teachers who were also well known composers. The Jewish students were influenced by these composers and by composers from Western Europe, so that the music that these students learned and composed was not of Jewish origin. One of the teachers was Rimsky-Korsokov, one of the great Russian composers who was a Russian nationalist. He was actively composing music that had a distinctly Russian sound. He suggested to the Jewish students to begin to compose music that sounded "Jewish". This began the following trend: The students would go to the Pale of Settlement and collect folk songs from the "countryfolk". Using the skills that they had acquired at the Conservatory, they arranged the folk songs to include an accompaniment as well as the melody. As the students' work developed, they began to compose their own music based on the folk song melodies and later, freely composed their own music. Eventually, they formed their own society of Jewish music, so that Jewish music began to hold a rightful place among other world music. I will now provide a detailed account of this development of Yiddish Art Song in Russia.

In pre-Napoleanic times, Jews were not given any rights as citizens of the country that they were inhabiting. A Jew had been seen first and foremost as Jew. During the Napoleanic era, nationalism became prominent in Western Europe. All people were given equal rights as citizens of the country in which they lived. A Jew living in France

was to be considered a citizen of France first and a Jew second. This movement set a course for the rise of the Haskalah in Central Europe. Jews felt if they were given the right to be citizens of the country they were living in, they should also be given the right to be fully engaged in cultural and intellectual auto-emancipation. As a result, the Jewish identity diminished and political involvement became its substitute. This allowed for opportunities for the Jews within the "Christian society" – higher education, political ambitions and the like. The idea of the Haskalah did not reach the Eastern European communities until the late 1800's, well over fifty years later than the Western communities. Klara Moricz, who wrote a dissertation on Jewish nationalism, posits: "In Russia, Jews were not able to take strong political stances as they did in Central Europe because of the oppressive Tzarist rule. So, they turned to culture. They felt the need to justify their ethnic existence within this immersion. Coupled with that, was the abundance of authentic Judaism which existed in Russia, whereby Jews were free to practice their religion"[9] (since everyone was a minority, unlike Central Europe). Therefore, the communities of Jewish traditions remained strong. Many Jews did not feel the need to become emancipated like their Western European neighbors. The Russian response to the Haskalah was very different from the Western European response. This response led to much Jewish cultural activity in Russia, since most people did not feel the need to hide their identity. Examples of this, as pointed out by Irene Heskes, are the various types of musicians who were active and influential in Russia. Examples of these types of musicians are: klezmorim(folk instruments played by Jewish musicians), badkhonim(folk troubadors) and cantorial artists who often sang vaudville and folk music

[9] Klara Moricz, Jewish Nationalism in Twentieth Century Art Music (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1999)p.29

in concert alongside liturgical works. Jewish folk songs, as pointed out earlier, were also influencial in Russia during this time.[10]

From the late 18th century until the Revolution of 1917, Jews were, for the most part, restricted to living in the Pale. They lived in poverty, depending on each other for survival. They lived amidst anti-Semitism, war and the constant threat of pogroms. Despite this, they were able to practice Judaism. They found joy within the confines of their families and neighbors. They depended on religion for survival of the mind and of the soul. In the 1860's, laws were passed that gave greater leniency to the exemption of Jews from living in the Pale. These laws were a change from earlier times when restrictions were more severe. After these laws were passed, universities and gymnasias opened their doors to Jews. Many Jews flocked to them in hopes of a freer existence. By the mid 1880's, St. Petersburg, the city to which many of the educated Jews fled, became a haven for the Haskalah. They did not pursue emancipation to the same extent as their fellow Central European Jews. They did, however, participate on a smaller scale in social and political activities. In 1881, following the death of Alexander II, things changed. Alexander III who came into power hated Jews. This began the decline of the rights of the Jews. St. Petersburg was the only city in Russia, despite the new harsh rules handed down by Alexander III, in which Jews continued to flourish. Gymnasias and universities continued to allow Jews to attend.[11]

How did this affect Russian Jewish musicians? Like other European communities living under nationalistic ideals, they looked to their roots for self-identification. Albert Weisser notes that, in 1898, the Jewish National Movement began. He attributes its

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[10] Irene Heskes, Passport to Jewish Music:Its History, Traditions and Culture (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994)p.192

[11] Yelena Gurin, La Voix Hebraique de St. Petersburg (Thesis, Hebrew union College, 1998) p. 9

beginnings to an article that was published by two historians, Saul Ginsburg (1866-1940) and Pesach Marek (1862-1920). These historians publicly requested contributions of folksongs from the various communities in Russia. They did this in an effort to search for Jewish self-identification. The response was tremendous, and piles of music began to pour in from all over the countryside. In some cases, notated music was sent. Usually, however, only the words were contributed. Ginsburg and Marek handed over the collected materials to a friend of theirs, Yoel Engel (1868-1927).[12]

Engel was an assimilated Jew who worked as a music critic in Moscow. With this high profile position, he was highly influential in Moscow's music circles. When confronted with the issues of Jewish Nationalism and the responses from Ginsburg and Marek, he decided to go to the countryside of the Pale, and collect these tunes himself. Others soon followed suit. "In 1895...I.L.Peretz was collecting folksongs.....It was about this time(1898) that Sholom Aleichem, (a famous Yiddish writer), ...discovered a folk singer named Mark Warshawski.... and was persuading him to publish some of his songs."[13] Thus began the move to collect and preserve folk songs. From the examples documented, themes such as unrequited or requited love, lullabies, weddings, army life, nature themes and the like, went beyond the universal scope of folk music. These Jewish folk songs included subjects such as intimate relationships with the mystical, or the repression of the Jews over the course of history, or the piety of religious learning. Some of these themes, such as religious piety or repression, were most likely due to the current political situation, which left Jews in poverty and subject to harsh laws.

Engel became engrossed in examining the folk material he was collecting. He spent all of his free time in the countryside. With this immersion into folk society he

[12] Albert Weisser, The Modern Renaissance of Jewish Music (New York:Da Capo Press, 1983)p.26

decided that true Jewish music had to be rooted in folk music. After collecting the songs, he arranged and edited them, and presented them at lectures. Albert Weisser notes that at Engel's first lecture and recital of the folk music he had researched, he provided a singer and accompanist and the event was very successful.[14] Engel now had more reason to continue his endeavors. One of his lectures was at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where a number of Jewish students were attending. After witnessing the lecture, these students were very enthusiastic about collecting and arranging the Jewish folk songs as Engel had done.

At this time, these Jewish students were studying under the tutelage of Russian composers, such as Rimsky-Korsokov, Glinka, Balakirev, Mussorsky and Borodin. In their composition classes, these students were imitating their teachers and European composers. One day a Jewish student named Ephraim Skliar (1871-?), wrote a song for his teacher Rimsky-Korsokov who taught a class in composition. Albert Weisser, who had a conversation with one of the students in that class, notes, "...the Russian master devoted an entire session of analysis....Then turning to his Jewish students said, 'Why do you imitate European and Russian composers? The Jews possess tremendous folk treasures. I myself have heard your religious songs, and they have made a deep impression upon me. Think about it. Yes, Jewish music awaits her Jewish Glinka'" [15]. (Glinka's focus was on the arranging and understanding of folk songs).

This statement, coupled with the impact of Engel's lecture recital, had a profound effect on Jewish students. They embraced the idea of writing Jewish music and later moved to form their own Jewish music school, devoted to preserving and promoting

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[13] ibid., p.28
[14] A. Weisser, The Modern Renaissance, p.31
[15] ibid., p.43-44

Jewish music. The possibility of starting a Jewish organization was novel, as laws regarding Jewish organizations in Russia were very restrictive.

A law was passed in 1906 which granted freedom of Jewish assembly and meeting.[16] Until this law was passed, very few lectures and programs were given. This new law resulted in the rise of various cultural and political societies. In 1908, some of the students of the Conservatory went to the Governor of St. Petersburg to fight for the legalization of their society, The Society for Jewish Music. The Govenor, having only heard Jewish folk songs, allowed for the legalization of the society on the grounds that they call it: The Society for Jewish Folk Music. The society included composers such as Engel, Solomon Rosovsky (1878-1962), Skliar, Mikhail Gnessin (1883-1957), Pesach Lvov (1881-1913), Alexander Zhitormirsky (1881-1937), Lazare Saminsky (1882-1959), Lev Tseitlin (1884-1930) and Joseph Achron (1886-1943). Jacob Weinberg (1879-1956) and Alexander Krein (1883-1951) founded a separate Moscow branch with Engel in 1912.[17]

What was the society's aims? Klara Moricz in her dissertation writes: "The Society for Jewish Folk Music was an association of professional musicians and music lovers who sought to purvey Jewish music, secular and sacred, to Jewish and non-Jewish concert audiences." It sought "the collection, preservation and cultivation of Jewish cultural artifacts, which meant primarily Jewish folk music."[18] More specifically, as Albert Weisser points out, the society also had these aims: a) to help print musical compositions and papers on research of Jewish Music; b) to organize musical meetings, concerts, operatic performances, lectures; c) to organize a choir and orchestra of its own;

[16] Y. Gurin, La Voix Hebraique de St. Petersburg, p.22
[17] A. Weisser, The Modern Renaissance, p.44,48
[18] K.Moricz, Jewish Nationalism, p.27.

d) to establish a library of Jewish music; e) to issue a periodical dedicated to Jewish music; f) to establish concerts and give prizes for musical compositions of a Jewish character.[19] Worth noting was the following, taken from a statement made by the society: "The work of the Society is to be spread all over Russia."[20] One can see from this list that the Society was concerned with promoting its composers and sharing in the development of Jewish music. The society wanted this music to be recognized among other worldwide musical expressions. Weisser also makes note of the two committees who ran the Society. The Musical and Arts committee was responsible for arranging concerts and activities based on the music that the committee members examined and passed along for publication. The Administrative Committee was responsible for gathering monies for the Society. This committee collected funds from the recitals, publications, lectures and wealthy families.[21] Some of these concerts, performed by musicians who had been coached by the arrangers themselves, occurred in and out of the Pale and abroad. There were many concerts given, averaging more than one every week.

The earlier performances consisted mostly of 1) arrangements of folk songs by the young composers and 2) "art music" composed by the Russian "giants" such as Mussorsky, Rimsky-Korsokov and Balakirev. This suggests more of a "teaching" concert, as the new members were demonstrating what they were learning to do; to arrange folk music. One example of these types of concerts listed by Klara Moricz in her dissertation was Z. Kisselgof's volume Lieder-Zamelbuch far der Yidische shul un familie, published in 1913. This volume was meant to be performed in schools or homes. It consisted of arranged folk songs and "art" songs, written by well known Russian and

[19] A. Weisser, The Modern Renaissance, p. 46
[20] ibid, p.46
[21] ibid, p. 46

non-Russian composers such as Mendellsohn, Beethoven and Mozart, all with Hebrew and Yiddish translations.[22]

Although the Jewish students, like the historians Ginsburg and Marek, were interested in the folk songs as roots of self-identification, they wanted to elevate the songs to a higher level. The students applied what they had learned from Conservatory training to refashion the song in their own way. They did this in order to achieve their own individual styles. How does one refashion a song and keep the sense of the original folk tune? Abraham Idelsohn suggests that, "The artist is not free for a moment to forget the source of the theme....So imbued must he be with the spirit of the song from which his theme sprang, that,...in its new setting there flow the expression of the sentiments and emotions of the people who conceived it."[23]

The folk poetry that the composers of the society used as the basis of their work included wedding tunes, lullabies, childrens' songs, worker/poverty songs, revolutionary songs, humorous/satiric songs, Zionist songs, z'mirot (songs sung at Shabbat meal time), Chassidic songs and love songs. The music that was performed at the society's lectures was arranged folk songs collected by the composers or borrowed from a transcription of the famous folklorist Z. Kisselgof. In the beginning, publications by these composers included either folk songs or popular Jewish songs. After 1914, art songs began to appear that made no note on the music of being an arrangement of a folk song (in most cases if a song is an arrangement of a folk song, it is noted on the title page). Sometimes Kisselgof's name is used as a transcriber, suggesting that the piece began as a folk song. Klara Moricz notes that only a few genuine art songs appear, such as Milner's "In

[22] K. Moricz, Jewish Nationalism, p. 50
[23] A. Idelsohn, Jewish Music, p.462

Kheyder."[24] Though many of the songs were folk song arrangements whose author was unknown, some songs were settings of poetry written by known poets.

A problem occurs with the arranging of folk songs. Albert Weisser suggests that it is impossible to see the transformation of the original folk melody into its artistic settings because there was no documentation of the folk song's origin. No records were kept as to who sang the songs, their original date of conception, the original key, etc. [25] We can only see what the arranger's end result was. Sometimes the harmonizations of the melodies became artistic methods of displaying the composer/arranger's compositional skills. In these instances, the characteristics of the folk melodies may be completely disregarded by the composer. In an attempt to create a purely Jewish sound, the composer/arranger may sacrifice the fundamental nature of the original song. For example, the composer may replace some of the original music notes with augmented seconds, a strong characteristic of Jewish music.

Although the majority of the Society's work was taking place in St. Petersburg, there was a group of musicians in Moscow who were doing their own work in this field. Headed by Engel, this group began as a branch of the St. Petersburg Society. Later, because of differences of opinions among some of the students from St. Petersburg, the Moscow group started its own separate organization. These differences were rooted in disparities of musical ideologies. The Moscow contingent believed that true Jewish music was rooted in Jewish folk music as well as in religious music. Saminsky, who headed the St. Petersburg contingent, said that because folk music was a development of the Diaspora, and therefore subject to other ethnic influences, it could not be considered an original source of Jewish music. For them, only religious music dating back to

[24] K. Moricz, Jewish Nationalism, p.44

Temple times could be considered true Jewish music. To prove his point, Saminsky traveled to Georgia, Caucasus where descendants of the ten tribes of Israel lived. There, he found no use of oriental melodies, (the name given to the sound of the Jewish folksong in the Pale, which often included the use of augmented seconds in the scale). He could then prove his point that oriental music was not authentic. He began to change the way he composed music to restore the ancient "sound" of the Hebrews. This sound included biblical cantillations and synagogue modes. This change in music composition was only one of many examples of how Jewish music transformed and changed during the period of the Folk Song Society. It is important to note that despite these differences of opinion, the break was friendly, as there was a tremendous amount of communication between the two organizations.

The St. Petersburg composers created music in an assortment of ways. As mentioned earlier, there was a gradual transformation of stages of composition. These composers began with the study and harmonization of folk songs and continued with the restructuring of folk music to suit their own personal desire. They then began to develop individual styles of composition, not necessarily related to folk music. After 1914, more art songs of questionable originality appeared whereby the songs did not include the word "arrangement" on the top of the music, but did include the words: "transcribed by Kisselgof". The question was this: If the song was not an arrangement and thereby an original composition, why did it say it was from a transcription? Perhaps the song was neither an original composition nor an arrangement of a folk song, but lay somewhere between the two.

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[25] A. Weisser, The Modern Renaissance, p. 52

There was a desire to make the song, however it was created, sound Jewish. The mode *Ahavah Raba*, or *fragish*, consisting of a scale with an augmented second, was primarily used as a marker for the Jewish (oriental) sound. Abraham Zvi Idelsohn notes that this mode was not used until the thirteenth century in oriental areas such as Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, and was later carried into other areas.[26] It was also common to build a folksong on a scale which included the use of a minor third and a major or minor seventh. This marker also came to be a distinguishing feature of Jewish music and was primarily used in the early compositions of St. Petersburg. Some non-Jewish composers used the *ahavah raba* mode as well in their settings of Jewish songs. Klara Moricz notes that Rimsky-Korsokov (a fan of this mode), upon hearing his student Skliar present an original composition in the *ahavah raba* mode declared it to be an authentic Jewish song. [27] Moricz posits that there were also non-Jewish composers who saw Jews as a biblical people. These composers include Glinka, Serov and Mussorsky. This biblical image, rather than having oriental characteristics, displayed an ancient and noble character which used plagal, churchlike harmonies to represent the Jews as biblical figures.[28] In addition to the synagogue modes (i.e. *ahavah raba*) and the folk song melodies, biblical motives were used in compositions, such as motives from the book Song of Songs. An illustration of the use of biblical cantillations can be found in Example 1 in the Music Analysis section of this paper.

It was the responsibility of the composer to both update the original piece of music to meet the standards of the modern music world, and to maintain the authenticity of the original composition using whatever means the composer deemed fit. Composers

[26] A, Idelsohn, Jewish Music, p. 87
[27] K.Moricz, Jewish Nationalism, p. 52
[28] ibid, p. 68-71

worked on an individual basis and their works exhibited characteristics that displayed the composers' artistic influences. I have chosen to write about the following composers: Michael Gnessin, Lazar Saminsky, Alexander Krein and Moses Milner. These men serve as examples of how individual artistic influences changed Jewish folk music and created the Yiddish art song that we recognize today.

Michael Gnessin (1883-1957) was influenced as a young boy by the famous cantor, Eliezar Gerovitch. As Yelena Gurin notes in her thesis, it was through Gerovitch that Gnessin "came into contact with the tradition of Biblical and Ashkenazi song."[29] In his early years at the St. Petersburg Conservatory he was influenced by late Romantic composers who used rich and complex harmonies in their music. After Gnessin returned from a visit to Palestine in 1914 where he studied Jewish culture, he focused on a more simple sound rather than on the late-Romantic harmonies. He used Jewish themes and biblical cantillation (chant-like recitation) as an artistic device in some of his works. An illustration of Gnessin's music can be found in Example 2 in the analysis section of this paper. He later became thoroughly entrenched in Jewish nationalism. It was during this period that he composed two operas: The Maccabeans and the Youth of Abraham, both based on Jewish themes. The writing of these operas fulfilled his newfound Jewish patriotism. The majority of Gnessin's output includes works for voice and accompaniment. However, he did write some instrumental works. Examples of Gnessin's earlier works, influenced by romanticism, are: Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex" (Op.19) and "Dances of a Mourning from Adonis"(op. 20). Examples of Gnessin's later works infused with Jewish elements are: "Hebrew Songs for voice and piano" (op. 37), which includes five songs, each written by different authors, "The story of the Red-

headed Mottele"(Op. 44), three "Hebrew Songs" to texts of Russian poets (Op. 32) and his "Variations on a Jewish Folk Theme" for string quartet (Op.24).[30] In sum, Gnessin was influenced by distinctly Jewish music, late-romanticism, nationalism (folk songs) and later, Jewish innovations.

Lazar Saminsky (1882-1959), like other composers, began by simply arranging folk songs. Later on, as mentioned earlier, Saminsky traveled to other areas such as Yemen, the Middle East and Southern Russia in an attempt to prove his claim that authentic Jewish music was based on ancient Hebrew melodies, and not folk music. Once he did this, he used the materials that he found in this music, such as Torah and *megillot* cantillation and various synagogue prayers. As Klara Moricz notes, he eliminated the use of the augmented seconds, which prior to 1914, he used with regularity. Instead, he restored the aolian, mixolydian and dorian modes of the ancient Hebrews in his music.[31] An illustration of Saminsky's music can be found in Example 3 in the Music Analysis section of this paper. Saminsky's works include equal amounts of instrumental and vocal pieces. As well, he has written a number of ballets and full orchestral pieces. In sum, Saminsky was most influenced by ancient biblical elements.

Albert Weisser notes: "Of all the composers associated with the Society for Jewish Folk Music in Moscow, it was probably Alexander Krein (1883-1951) who showed the most vigorous and individual musical personality".[32] Krein was influenced by Western European composers. In his Jewish endeavors, he created his own themes rather than imitating any of the styles of his colleagues. He often combined elements of the folk song and biblical chant in the same song incorporating his own unique individuality. An

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[29] Y. Gurin, La Voix Hebraique, p. 41
[30] A. Weisser, The Modern Renaissance,p.128
[31] K. Moricz, Jewish Nationalism, p. 88-90

illustration of Krein's music can be found in Example 4 in the music analysis of this paper. Krein's output includes works for voice and accompaniment, instrument and piano, ballets, operas, theatre music, and orchestra. We can see from the above example that Krein's strength was in his own individuality.

Moses Milner was born into the sounds of the Eastern European folk masses. Because of these circumstances, he never had to work to capture the essence of the folk sound, as so many composers had to do. Albert Weisser notes that Milner's favorite composer was Chopin.[33] Milner was influenced, therefore, by both Jewish music and late-Romantic composers. Milner combined various musical elements such as the Jewish synagogue modes with Western compositional techniques in his music. Laya Harbater writes this about Milner: "His overall concept is modal, though his treatments are frequently tonal. This strong sense of modality reflects a combination of Impressionistic influence as well as a return to authentic Jewish sources."[34] Milner's composition *In Cheder* (in the classroom) is perhaps the most important example of Jewish folk material in the music world. The song, which portrays a conversation between an old teacher and his student in a typical Pale classroom, uses a singsong motif to portray the students learning their lessons, combined with accompanied recitative (speech like patterns) that has all of the inflections of Yiddish speech.[35] An illustration of this song can be found in Example 5 in the Analysis section. Milner's output includes works for voice and instrument, orchestra, solo piano, opera, theatre, and choral compositions. To sum up, Milner's contributions were the use of folk elements coupled with Western contemporary musical techniques.

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[32] A. Weisser, The Modern Renaissance, p. 115
[33] A. Weisser, The Modern Renaissance, p. 94
[34] L. Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p. 104-105

The Society, which included highly trained musicians, had an array of influences. The composers, despite feeling a Jewish pride, were influenced by their non-Jewish teachers and the sounds of the modern music world. The influences of these Russian teachers and the Western twentieth century techniques were instilled in them long before they discovered the treasures that lay within their own Jewish tradition. It is important to note with the birth and development of the Society of Jewish Folk Music, Jewish folk music was recognized and took its own rightful place amongst other worldwide musical expressions.

The Society for Jewish Music Folk Music disbanded in 1918. With the 1917 Russian Revolution and the First World War, musicians escaped as quickly as possible. The Jewish composers from the Society who remained in Russia were Gnessin, Milner, Krein and Lyubov Streicher,(the only female member of the society). The rest of the composers either emigrated to Palestine or America. These Jewish musical pioneers took with them everything that they had learned, transporting the wealth of their developments to new soil. The cultivation of this phenomenon in America will be the focus of the next section.

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[35] A. Weisser,Modern Renaissance, p. 97

YIDDISH ART SONG IN AMERICA

As Eastern European Jews migrated to America, their customs, music and language came with them. They were not willing to let go of any of this, nor did they have to. Most Eastern European Jews clumped together, remaining in communities similar to those they had left behind. Most moved to the lower East side of New York City. These Jews felt no need to become "Americanized". The music that the Eastern European Jews brought with them included folk songs, art music, theater music and choral music that had been vibrant in their communities in Europe. These forms of music remained vibrant until the 1920's. At this time, immigration laws tightened, so the influx of Europeans greatly diminished. It was also at this time that the original Eastern European immigrants became more financially successful. They moved to outlying communities where they could have bigger and better homes (this meant that large suburban synagogues were constantly being built to accommodate the worship of these communities). Thus, the tight communities that had existed in New York dispersed and later disappeared. By the time this happened, Palestine was about to become a Jewish state, and Hebrew was on its way to becoming the preferred second language of American Jews. By the 1950's, Yiddish folk song and theatre had become almost extinct. There did remain, however, enduring activities within the Yiddish culture. There were composers and organizations dedicated to the development of Yiddish music despite much opposition from other Jews, who only saw Yiddish as a dying language. As we will see, over the years, activities and developments within Jewish music were cultivated and remain an ongoing process today.

Jews came from Europe to America beginning in 1654. Most of these Jews were German. They brought with them liturgical music, but little or no secular Jewish music. While liturgical music was kept within the confines of the religious institution, secular music was meant to be heard in and outside of the home. These Germans carried with them the desire and ability to acculturate themselves with the American society. They had, after all, come from a country where assimilating oneself meant a better life, politically and socially. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to leave all forms of Jewish culture (i.e., Jewish secular music) behind them.

When the first waves of Eastern Europeans arrived in the 1880's with their strong Jewish traditions and customs, the German Jews harbored resentment towards them. They felt that these new immigrants were unable to adjust themselves to become "Americanized" and that their lack of grace and nobility was an embarrassment to the rest of American society. However resentful the German Jews were, they felt a need to lend a helping hand to their fellow brethren. The Eastern Europeans, upon arrival, depended entirely on themselves and on their German benefactors for survival. While the Germans were more involved with social standings, the Eastern Europeans were ready and present to be involved politically, and were quickly given a reputation of being good politicians. This reputation was furthered by the fact that these Jews were diligent and practical, and their religious and family ties were cohesive. Where did these strong family and religious bonds come from? One can assume that the answer lies within the lifestyle that the Eastern European Jews conducted while living in the Pale. Although they were restricted to living in the Pale, and therefore unable to make better lives for themselves, they were living amongst other Jews and were free to practice their Jewish traditions without feeling the pressure to assimilate themselves.

The social unrest in Russia of the late 1800's was the stimulus that began the second migration to America. As Milton Doroshkin notes, "In the four years (1903-1907) over four hundred thousand Jews left Russia for the United States."[36] Although life in America did not seem, economically, to live up to peoples' hopes, there were some very important opportunities that awaited these Jews: freedom of religion, freedom to use and develop their mother tongue Yiddish, and freedom to express their heritage. Included in these mass migrations were some of the composers from the Society of Jewish Folk Music. Though some composers opted to stay in Russia because of their commitment to Jewish nationalism, most left for America or Israel. Many other Jewish intellectuals migrated as well. Milton Doroshkin notes that well educated BUND members (members of the Russian socialist party), emancipated Russians, men educated in the European yeshivas, poets and writers and the like all helped to direct and inspire the new immigrant society.[37] These people helped to create a cultural backbone that resisted a move in America towards assimilation.

Although these early Eastern Europeans were divided into their own separate groups in Europe, they became a much richer mixture after arriving in America. On the one hand, they came from individual shtetls, each with its own culture, dialect and geographical location. When they arrived on the banks of New York City, they sought out their own in order to keep the communal lifestyle with which they were accustomed. This meant that there were pockets of very different Eastern European traditions within New York City. Eventually these pockets of close-knit communities homogenized, developed a more "American" Yiddish, and depended on each other during these times of economic hardship in New York. The culture eventually became a huge Yiddish melting

[36] Milton Doroshkin, Yiddish in America, (New Jersey: Associated University Press, Inc, 1969) p.65

pot. This melting pot was the basis of the Yiddish cultural phenomenon that was to follow.

The cultural phenomenon that occurred consisted of the development of the influences that the Eastern Europeans brought with them within the realm of music. As mentioned earlier, examples are *klezmorim, badkhonim* and cantorial artists. Soon after their arrival they began to build upon that which they had brought. An example of this development is Yiddish minstrelsy, ballads written about various life events which were sung by traveling musicians. Often times these songs included the handling and commentary of current political and social events. The Eastern European Jews felt a freedom of expression in America that they had not felt in the Pale. They used this freedom of expression in their minstrelsy, which eventually developed into the Yiddish theatre. With the eventual success of minstrelsy and Yiddish theatre in America, Yiddish sheet music began to be published. The opening of Yiddish song publishing houses would soon follow.

Yiddish had become the prominent language amongst world Jews. By 1900, over sixty percent of Jews spoke Yiddish. The rise of this language became evident in the abundance of Yiddish press, schools, theatres, organizations, etc., which began in Eastern Europe and then, with the mass migration, continued in America. Worth noting is the Yiddish press. It had enormous impact on the Yiddish cultural world. It provided publications which dealt with worldly news and political and social problems. It included educational inserts as well. The press served as a cultural tool for the development of the community in a time when the immigrants' lives needed improvement.

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[37] M.Doroshkin, Yiddish in America, p.75

These immigrants came to America in a time of massive industrialization. They were faced with grueling working opportunities, such as the sweatshop factories. The Jews who worked in these factories, of which there were many, worked under horrible conditions. These Jews eventually spoke out against their situation and formed Jewish labor movements. The Yiddish press provided a source of relief for these people.

The labor movements contained many poets who discarded the old Eastern European folk ideas, such as nationalism, in favor of new socialist ideas stemming from the labor movements. They were known as sweatshop poets. Later on, when the struggle of the Eastern European immigrants subsided, transitional poets helped link the sweatshop poets to more modern 20th century Yiddish writers. They combined old topics such as socialism with newer topics such as the new American lifestyle. Abraham Reisin (1876-1953) is an example of this kind of poet. He combined the old topics of Eastern Europe with new American hopes. In his poem "Dorot fun der Tzukunft", (Future Generations), he reminds the future generations not to scorn the older generations for their songs of grief.

A group of young Yiddish poets called Di Yunge began the modern period. Their contributions began in the winter of 1907-8. They also wanted to preserve Yiddish poetry. Most of our bodies of Yiddish poetry today and largely due to the efforts of this group. Laya Harbater notes that Di Yunge wrote poetry differently from their predecessors, who only focused on class struggle. Di Yunge, instead, focused on the new way of American living, a more universal theme.[38] Di Yunge poets wanted the freedom to develop their literary skills. They did not want to be burdened with the traditional obligations of the Eastern European mentality. However, these young poets were

immigrants from Eastern Europe and could never fully escape the "old world" mentality as much as they tried. Therefore, their earlier works, filled with optimism and vitality gave way in their later works, to longing and remembrance of their days in the shtetls of the Pale. Poets whose works exemplify these ideas are: Mani Leib (1883-1953) and Zisha Landau (1889-1937).

Another group of poets, Inzinkh (Introspectives) formed in the 1920's. The group of poets who formed Inzinkh, unlike the immigrant workers who formed Di Yunge, were intellectuals. They disagreed with Di Yunge's efforts to discard older, more traditional themes in favor of new ones. Inzinkh poets openly accepted whatever themes the particular poet wanted to use. There were no restrictions. They experimented with free verse and modernism. Inzinkh's goal was to write poetry that was completely personal. So, unlike Di Yunge, who were concerned with the content of the poetry, Inzinkh poets wanted to evoke personal images for the reader. Examples are Nahum Minkoff (1893-1953) and Jacob Glatstein (1896-1971).

World War II brought this cycle to full circle. American Jewish poets went back to the God they could communicate with -- the old Jewish God of Eastern Europe that existed within the confines of the *shtetl*. American Jewish poets' understanding of God began from a perspective wrought in the tightly-knit society of the *shtetl*. After the mass migration to America, Eastern European Jews had become part of a huge melting pot, and poetic themes of universalism became a new focus.

The poetry of Di Yunge, Inzinkh, the sweatshop poets and transitional poets were all part of modern Yiddish poetry which began in 1900 and continues to the present day. This was different from the folk poetry of the Eastern Europeans, who were influenced

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[38] L. Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p.113

by the Enlightenment and Badkhonim (poets who improvised witty rhyme based on biblical passages, to be performed at marriage ceremonies for merriment purposes) poets. All of these groups of poets were sources for Yiddish Art Song composers.

By the 1920's, the difficulties that the immigrants faced began to subside. As mentioned earlier, the political standings that the Eastern Europeans held helped them to work their way up the economic, political and social ladder. Their lives became stable. Many became white collar workers who now had the ability to work towards securing the future of their children. This phenomenon led the Eastern European immigrants to push their children towards higher education. However, with this change came a loss of Yiddish culture and language. The new generation was more interested in "Americanizing" themselves. By the time of W.W.II, the cultural lifestyles of the original immigrants had drastically changed.

If Yiddish culture was to decline by the 1920's, how did it manage to stay alive? More pointedly, what happened to the Yiddish repertoire of music during this decline of Yiddish culture? An emergence of secular choirs, consisting of people from the labor unions and different social organizations, was largely responsible for the re-emergence of Yiddish repertoire. An example of one of these choirs noted by Laya Harbater was Poalei Zion. Poalei Zion was modeled after similar groups in Warsaw and Vilna. This mixed choir was founded by Platon Brunoff (1859-1914). Other choirs were the Workmen's Circle chorus and the Ladies Garment Workers Union chorus, founded by Lazar Weiner (1897-1982).[39] At first these choirs sang classical works translated into Yiddish. Soon after, composers began to write music set to Yiddish poetry. Examples were songs written about the problems associated with trying to earn a living. (Remember

that some of these choir members were members of the labor unions). These songs were later brought to the theatres and other public programs. These choirs helped composers realize the wealth of Yiddish material available. The choir members showed an overwhelming interest in singing Yiddish repertoire and the numbers of participants in each choir grew rapidly. The choir members' interest in Yiddish repertoire became springboards for further compositions of Yiddish secular music. Many of the secular compositions written at this time were Yiddish Art Songs written for solo voice and instrument. As Laya Harbater notes, examples of these composers are Michael Gelbart, Leo Low, Shalom Secunda, Mayer Posner, Helen Greenberg, Solomon Golub and Lazar Weiner.[40] Weiner, who is known in the Jewish music world as the master of Yiddish Art Song, began to vigorously write Art Song during this period when the choruses were most active. Weiner, whom we will see later on, had a long and prestigious life in the world of Jewish music.

There were other venues involved in the preservation of Yiddish language and culture. After W.W.I, there was a development of formal Jewish religious schooling. Jewish music became an important tool for teaching about Judaism. As a result, music was compiled into books consisting of Hebrew, Ladino (the language of Sephardic Jews), Yiddish and English. This music was collected, arranged and composed by musicians concerned with preserving Jewish music for future generations. Some of these musicians only focused on Yiddish. This meant that the children were regularly exposed to Yiddish, even though Hebrew was becoming the prominent second language of Jews in America after English.

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[39] L. Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p.116
[40] L. Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p.117

There were other shapers of American Jewish music. According to Irene Heskes in an article in 1931, a group of Jewish musicians and scholars in New York formed an organization called the America-Palestine Institute of Musical Sciences. This organization was to support music research projects in both countries. It became known as the Mailamm Society. Among its founders were Achron, Saminsky, Rosowsky, Jacob Weinberg and Joseph Yasser. These composers had been active members of the Folk Song Society in Russia, and emigrated to the U.S. after the Revolution. They helped shape the activities of Mailamm, transferring their activities in Russia to America. (Achron moved to Los Angeles in 1934 and opened a West Coach branch.) During its eight years of activity, Mailamm established close ties with a group in Palestine called the World Center for Jewish Music in Palestine. This Palestinian Center had close association with cultural groups from Germany. Thus for a time, there was a three way connection between Germany, America and Palestine. Mailamm gave many lectures and performances. These performances displayed Jewish Music, and members gave reports on their research work. Within the activities of this society, Yiddish Art music continued to be a living, working art form.

In 1939, the Mailamm Society became the Jewish Music Forum, whose goal was to broaden the range of American cultural activities (including musical activities), and public services. This forum provided intellectual nourishment and community support for Jews during the war years, when the threat of so many peoples' lives was at stake. It provided Jews with a reminder of their own validity as a people, and a focus for their grief, their intelligence and their passion. The forum grew to several hundred members who were scattered throughout the country. The forum produced a wealth of published materials in all areas of musical interest. Composers discussed and performed their own

music and the music of other Jewish composers. In an interview with Mascha Benya-Matz renowned Yiddish Art Song singer, she noted that she performed much of these composers' music. Benya-Matz premiered many Yiddish Art Songs as part of the Jewish Music Forum in concerts at dinners, on radio, in concert halls and at fundraisers. She often combined Yiddish Art Songs with folk songs in her concert programs.[41] Many members who joined the forum, such as cantors, choristers and educators were also active with liturgical music. Over the years, these members spurred the advancement of musical developments. They composed music, established archival collections at various Jewish institutions throughout America, became faculty members at schools such as Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Theological Seminary, prepared textbook resources, and became connected to non-Jewish institutions so that these institutions would have the opportunity to be introduced to Jewish music.[42] In 1962 the Jewish Music Forum disbanded. It was succeeded by a number of Jewish Music organizations: the Jewish Liturgical Music Society, the American Conference of Cantors, the American Society for Jewish Music, the National Jewish Music Council and the Cantors Assembly. The Mailamm Society and the Jewish Music Forum spanned over thirty years, and enabled the development of valuable Jewish organizations. These organizations resulted in lasting contributions to American Jewish cultural life. The organizations also provided a forum for composers of Yiddish Art Song to create and discuss their works.

The popularity of Yiddish concerts began to dwindle between the 1960's and 1970's. The second generation of American born Jews who were in their teens and twenties were not as interested in Yiddish culture as their parents and grandparents had

[41] Interview with Mascha Benya-Matz, September, 2002
[42] Irene Heskes, "Shapers of American Jewish Music:Mailamm and the Jewish Music Forum". American Music, Vol.15, No.3, 1931-1962,p.305-320

been. Hebrew was being spoken in the religious school. It was quickly replacing the Yiddish as the second language among American Jews after English.

In the past fifteen years there has been a resurgence of Yiddish culture. Jews are looking to restore the Yiddish language. More Jews are comfortable being Jewish in America. They don't feel the need to become thoroughly assimilated into American culture. Perhaps with this rebirth of Jewish identity, Jews are looking back to their roots. They are finding Yiddish culture at the heart of it. Yiddish music, as a result, is finding its way back onto the concert stage. English musical productions are being performed in Yiddish. Concerts of Yiddish "popular" tunes, including theatre, folk songs and Art Songs are being performed more often. It is my hope that this resurgence will continue, and that this music will continue to flourish.

I will now shift the focus to three composers whose contributions to the world of Yiddish Art Song have been invaluable. Each of them, Solomon Golub, Lazar Weiner and Helen Greenberg, represents different time periods within the history of Yiddish Art Song in America.

SOLOMON GOLUB

Solomon Golub was born in 1877 in Dubeln, near Riga, and died in 1952 in New York. Golub was one of the first Jewish composers who devoted his time to writing Yiddish art music. He was born into a musical family. His father was a cantor and his mother a lover of German lieder. At a young age, Golub sang in Cantor Rosowsky's (a well known cantor) synagogue choir, and studied music and voice at the synagogue. He came to America in 1906, where he continued his studies. When Golub arrived in America he heard the sounds of Yiddish vaudeville and theater, and was disappointed in the music. He thought of it as low class music. With his knowledge of Hebrew liturgical music and German romantic lieder, he set about looking for Jewish poems to set to music. He wanted to dedicate himself to composing Jewish songs on a higher level than that which he heard. He created an artistic repertoire of music woven with liturgical sounds. (We will see an example of this later). He used a variety of sources for his poetry. Golub used the poetry of people such as Abraham Reisen, Mani Leib, Zishe Weinper, Aliza Greenblatt, A. Almi and B.J. Bialosotsky. He also wrote and used some of his own lyrics.[43]

Golub was not only a composer but a singer as well. He often sang his songs at concerts in various places throughout America. His songs were most popular with audiences during the 1930's and 40's. He was known for being able to convince audiences to sing along with him, and was beloved for this attribute. One fan of Golub notes that: "To Golub's concert the audience comes not only to hear his songs, but also to

[43] Chana Mlotek, "Solomon Golub" in the "Pearls of Yiddish Poetry", Yiddish Forward, March 2, 1991

sing along with him. Faces light up, eyes brighten when Golub begins to sing, and everyone sings along."[44]

A number of Golub's compositions were particularly popular. They were, "Tanchum",(Tanchum is the name of a man, text by the composer), "Der bekher",("The Goblet", text by Simon Frug), "Kholemen khaloymes",("Dreaming dreams", text by Aliza Greenblatt), "Toybn",("Doves", text by Zisha Weinper), "Umru",("Unrest", text by B.J.Bialostotzky), "Baym taykh",("At the River", text by Mani Leib), "Leyg dein kop", ("Lay your head", text by H. Leivick), "Es bet di velt", ("The World pleads", text by A.Almi), and "Dos lid fun broyt",("The song of the bread", text by Mani Leib). In a conversation with Mascha Benya-Matz, renowned Yiddish Art Song singer, she referred to Golub's composition "Die Nacht", ("The Night"). This song describes nightfall descending over the landscape. Benya-Matz remembered that a holocaust survivor told her that this song was performed in a number of concentration camps and was widely popular.[45]

All of Golub's compositions tread the line between folk music and art song, in that his compositions are in fact simply constructed. However, the nature and quality of his music differentiate it from more basic folk melodies. The accompaniments are harmonically more complex than folk music; also, Golub's interpretation of his own compositions elevated their performance to a level that clearly reached art song proportions.

Golub has composed over three hundred and forty songs, fifty-two which have been published. His songs include a great variety of themes – yearning and dreaming, humanity and life, refugees and wanderers, nature, heroes of the town, holidays, the

[44] C. Mlotek, "Solomon Golub"

Jewish people, mothers and children, celebrations, the Sabbath, freedom and toil and child play. Golub has, through his music, described the lives of millions of people living in the Pale. These people who struggled with poverty and persecution, were spiritually free to lead a life that was as beautiful on the inside as it was sad on the outside.

The wide popular appeal which Golub's songs have had on audiences comes largely from the fact that he was a fine interpretive Lieder singer. The interpretation of Art Song requires first and foremost proper interpretation of the words. Vocal production comes second. He used these interpretive abilities when he created his own music. He understood the intricacies of art song. When Golub composed and sang his own art songs, he did so with such beauty and created such a mood, that audiences were spellbound with his interpretive abilities.

Golub felt very strongly about Jewish nationalism. Like many of the Russian Jewish composers, he felt that the roots of nationalism could be found through the folk song. In an article about Golub in the Reform Advocate, Maurice Rosenfeld notes that in the music of Golub, there is a distinct national style which reflects characteristics of the Jews as vividly as Tchaikovsky does the Russians or Grieg does the Scandinavians.[46] Golub combined the Jewish elements that were important to him. For example, he blended Jewish poetic themes and synagogue modes with the late Romantic lieder form in his compositions. (We will see an example of this later). It is a well known fact that Golub considered himself to be the "Yiddish" Schubert.

A popular belief during the early 1900's was that folk music was derived from the music of the Western world that we define as "classical". Golub asserts in an article, that the Jewish folk song did not, in fact, come from classical works. He supports this theory

[45] Interview with Mascha Benya-Matz, September, 2002

by comparing the age of the Jewish folk song (derivations as old as scriptures) to the age of our modern "classical" system. This "classical" music system is only as old as Palestrina (one of the first major "classical" composers), who composed in the 1500's. Earlier forms of the "classic" music system have been found but only in small skeletal forms.[47] He further notes that the content of the words of the folk song often came from the conversations that occurred in the synagogue, which was the general meeting place of the Jews in the small towns in Eastern Europe, dating back more than a thousand years.

Golub's songs are "simple" in style, both in melody and harmony. The accompaniment is closely related to the melody, in that it is based on simple chords which support the melody rather than functioning as an independent entity. This style of writing helps to intensify the mood suggested by the words. By having a simple accompaniment, the listener can focus on the melody and words, without being distracted by opposing chord structures or other complicated musical maneuverings. He intentionally wrote much of his music in a simple folk song style. However, the songs are not folk songs but Art Songs of a higher level. The melodies, though singable, have been carefully created to enhance the mood of the poetry. This does not necessarily happen in the folk song. Golub combined elements of Western techniques and Jewish motifs to create a more complex piece of music than the folk song. An illustration of Golub's music can be seen in Example 6 in the Analysis section.

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[46] Maurice Rosenfeld, "The Music of Solomon Golub". The Reform Advocate, Dec 8, 1917.

LAZAR WEINER

Lazar Weiner was born in Cherkass, near Kiev in 1897, the son of a poor shoemaker. As a young boy, Weiner sang constantly. His mother was a lover of Yiddish folk songs and Yiddish theatre, and it was this music that Weiner heard in his house. When he was just seven, he was accepted into the Brodsky Synagogue choir in Kiev, under the direction of Abraham Dzimitrovsky. Here he became familiar with the synagogue literature of composers such as Sulzer and Lewandowski. Also at this time, he was part of a smaller choir in the synagogue that sang in many operas. This opportunity opened Weiner's eyes to an entirely new kind of music: classical music. Weiner began to study piano at the age of twelve and later entered the Kiev Conservatory. While at the conservatory, Weiner wrote many piano compositions, all of them influenced by Russian composers. It was at this time that his talents in composition were first noticed.

When Weiner was seventeen, rumors began to circulate of upcoming pogroms following a blood libel case. Weiner's family left for the United States. When he first arrived in New York, Weiner took a job accompanying for a voice teacher. This position exposed him to a vast repertoire of vocal music to which he had never before been exposed. The students sang Italian, French, German and English Art Songs, as well as arias and operas. Playing and hearing this repertoire was to have an enormous impact on Weiner's compositions later in his career.

Weiner had another job at this time, working both as a librarian and a pianist of the Mendelssohn Symphony Orchestra. He befriended a violinist in the orchestra named

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[47] Solomon Golub, "The Jewish Folk Song: A Scrutiny". Reform Advocate, December 16, 1916

Nachman B. Minkoff. Minkoff was also a poet. He introduced Weiner to the world of Yiddish poetry and literature. Weiner sought out the popular Yiddish poetry movements of the time, such as *Di Inzinkh* and *Di Yunge* who were, as mentioned earlier, the path breaking twentieth century poets. Weiner, now having been exposed to Yiddish poetry and the world of lieder and opera, began to examine how one could incorporate the two into Yiddish art song. Weiner later met a group of Russian musicians who introduced him to the Yiddish Art Songs of the Jewish composers from the St. Petersburg school. When Weiner heard these art songs, he was inspired by the unique Jewish flavor of the music. He decided to follow the path of these Russian Jewish composers and write Yiddish Art Songs. Laya Harbater notes in her dissertation that at this time Weiner also heard for the first time the music of Faure, Duparc and Debussy. He began to integrate the poetry of Minkoff and his friends, the impressionistic music of Debussy, and the works of the Russian Jewish composers into his own work.[48]

Weiner sent his compositions to Engel who had moved to Berlin from Russia. Engel told him that although his work was good, it lacked Jewish character. At this time, Weiner met some of these Russian composers who had moved to the New York area, such as Lazar Saminsky and Joseph Achron. He realized, after taking a close look at their music, that they used their nationalistic ideals in their music; he could hear distinctly Jewish motives throughout the music that they had composed. Weiner decided to explore his own Jewish heritage in order to better grasp the meaning of the Jewish elements that the Russian Jewish composers used. Marsha Bryan Edelman notes in an article depicting Weiner's life that Weiner taught himself the prayer modes of the

[48] L. Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p.120

synagogue and biblical cantillation. In doing so, he became familiar with ancient Jewish sounds.[49]

In 1923, Weiner began to involve himself with choruses. In 1929, he was appointed conductor of the Workmen's Circle chorus, whose aim was to promote Yiddish repertoire. He remained with this chorus until 1966. The Workmen's Circle chorus was hugely successful. During Weiner's years with the group, the roster of choristers grew from forty to one hundred and thirty members. Other Jewish choruses were formed in the United States and Canada between the 1930's and the 1950's, many of them branches of the Workmen's Circle Chorus. Some examples are the Folk University Chorus, the Yiddish Culture Chorus and the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union Chorus. Weiner was appointed to advise them on the repertoire. The repertory of these choruses consisted of original works written by contemporary composers such as Weiner himself, and larger choral works from the "classic" repertoire, such as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, all translated into Yiddish.

In 1930, Weiner became the music director of Central Synagogue in New York. Marsha Edelman notes that: "...this position, which he held for many years, brought him back in touch with synagogue music literature, which he had not been in touch with since his childhood." [50] Weiner took this opportunity to introduce Jewish liturgical music of contemporary composers to the congregation. The liturgical music heard at this time was limited to the "giant" Jewish composers such as Sulzer or Lewandowski or to non-Jewish composers who had set Jewish liturgy. Weiner commissioned works by Jewish contemporary composers such as Joseph Achron, Ernest Bloch, Darius Milhaud, and Jacob Weinberg. Weiner also began to write his own liturgical compositions and

[49] Marsha Bryan Edelman, "In Memorium, Lazar Weiner". Musica Judaica, Vol. IV, 1981-1982, p.100

presented them at Central Synagogue. Examples of settings of Shabbat liturgy: Shir L'Shabat and Likras Shabos. Over the years, the music written by all of these composers and others has been used in many congregations in North America.[51]

As mentioned earlier, Weiner was an active member of Jewish Music societies such as the Mailamm Society, the Jewish Music Forum and the American Society for Jewish Music. He was on the faculty of Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Theological Seminary. Weiner also gave many lecture/recitals on the topic of Jewish music and Art Songs at such places as the Julliard School of Music and the 92nd Street YWHA in New York. He was honored by his endless efforts of contributing to the world of Jewish music by organizations such as the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the Cantors' Assembly and the National Jewish Welfare Board.

Weiner sought to establish American Jewish music as a legitimate genre. He felt that there was a particular trend in the composition of Yiddish Art Song that had to be broken. To Weiner, this trend concerned compositions based on stifling sentimentalities of the old world of the Eastern European Jews. Weiner felt that Yiddish Art Song needed new thematic and musical ideas. Laya Harbater notes that Weiner examined the contemporary techniques of the modern world and was receptive to current musical trends. He combined contemporary Western techniques with Jewish folk-like elements to create a more contemporary genre of Yiddish Art Song.[52] (We will see an example of this later). Weiner's early and middle works are either tonal or modal (centered around a specific key), and include Jewish sounding motives, such as the dance rhythms of the Chassidic *niggun* (tune) and various synagogue modes. In his later works, he often strays

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[50] ibid, pg. 102.
[51] M. Edelman, "Lazar Weiner", p.102-103
[52] L. Harbater, Yiddish Art Song, p.159

from the tonality in favor of using chromatic and dissonant sounding harmonies in order to create a specific atmosphere in an intense and dramatic way. Many of his songs combine both lyric and declamatory styles, according to the text of the song.

Laya Harbater notes that Weiner, having accompanied many singers, was well aware of the vocal capabilities of different voice types. We see this in his exemplified use of range, dynamics, vocal phrasing, accents and breath markings. In Weiner's later works, he makes many more demands on the singer as he moves away from the simpler folk idiom toward a more complex style.[53]

Weiner's accompaniments are a testimony to his own pianistic skills. He achieves a wonderful balance between voice and accompaniment whereby the accompaniment is its own entity, rarely interfering with the melody of the vocal line, but always relating to it and enhancing it.

Albert Weisser notes in a tribute article to Weiner that Weiner's settings to the texts are different from the other composers. He did not use overt methods in an effort to achieve the mood of the text. Rather, he played with the colors of the language and text in his music, in order to subtly achieve his own unique style. He was committed to the text first and foremost.[54]

Weiner was passionate about the Yiddish language. He was writing at a time when Hebrew was becoming more desirable than Yiddish. He was criticized in the Jewish music world for insisting on writing in Yiddish. Many of his works went unpublished, either because they did not appeal to a Jewish world that was calling for Hebrew repertoire or because he went compositionally beyond the boundaries of the ears of the musical audience. If they were going to listen to Yiddish, they wanted the old

Yiddish folk songs they were used to, or the Yiddish theater they had heard years before. Weiner was brave amidst the pessimism that surrounded him. Weiner's love of Yiddish culture enabled him to create a Yiddish life in music that poets sought to create in words. His melodies and accompaniments reflect his interpretation of the texts. Weiner, like Golub, had been disgruntled with the sounds of Yiddish vaudeville and theater. He sought to create an outlet where he could combine his musical knowledge with his passion for Yiddish. Weiner's exposure to the composers of the St. Petersburg school inspired him to create this repertoire of Yiddish music. He, like the Russian Jewish composers, incorporated the folk song melos into contemporary writing. His schooling and influences in America had an impact on his writing. These American influences taught Weiner to experiment with his own writing; to go beyond the boundaries of his Jewish contemporaries. His exposure to late-Romantic composers from his accompanying days also influenced his writing. It was therefore a combination of Weiner's use of contemporary trends and Jewish trends that provided him with the means to build upon the work of the composers of the St. Petersburg school.

Weiner composed a vast array of Jewish music. His output consists of vocal works including choral pieces (liturgical and secular), cantatas, song cycles, solo liturgical and secular songs, orchestral works, chamber music, theatre and piano music. Weiner also arranged and collected choral music. Among his more popular Yiddish Art Songs are: "A Nigun" ("A Melody", text by Magister), "Fun Vayte Teg" ("From Distant Days", text by H. Layvik), "Viglid" ("Cradle Song", text by E. Shumiatcher), "Yos'l Klezmer"("Yosl Musician", text by Naftali Gross), and "Yiddish" (text by I.J.Segal).

An example of Weiner's music can be seen in Example 7 in the Analysis section.

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[53] ibid., p.162

HELEN GREENBERG

Helen Greenberg was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1939. Greenberg completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and further study at Goucher College in 1961. She now resides in Toronto, Canada.

Greenberg's mother was a classical pianist and instilled in her a love of music. Greenberg began her musical life on the piano and switched her focus to voice study as a teenager. She sang in school concerts and at summer camps, reinforcing her love of singing. While at Goucher College Greenberg, who was studying pre-medicine, continued her musical involvement. Greenberg continued taking voice lessons as a young adult and was inspired by the works of Lazar Weiner as well as composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Mozart. After becoming a member of the Beth Tikvah choir in Toronto, she met Srul Gluk. Gluk, who was the choir director at Beth Tikvah, was a leading Canadian composer. Greenberg had already composed short choral pieces as a hobby. She began her studies in composition and worked with Gluk and another composer, Oskar Morawetz. Gluk helped motivate Greenberg to further continue her compositional studies. Greenberg joined a singing group called the Heritage Singers, who sang mostly Yiddish and Hebrew songs. The group needed songs to expand its repertoire and turned to Greenberg to write them. Coupled with the Jewish repertoire with which she had become acquainted while studying under the tutelage of Gluk, the Heritage Singers led Greenberg to become seriously involved in writing Jewish music.

Greenberg has written both secular and liturgical Jewish works, scored mainly for voice and piano, using Hebrew, English and Yiddish texts. These works include

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[54] Albert Weisser, "Lazar Weiner: A Tribute". Congress Bi-Weekly, 34:16, Nov.24, 1967,p. 43

Hebrew and Yiddish Art Song cycles, single songs (both liturgical and secular) and unaccompanied and accompanied choral pieces. Also included in Greenberg's repertory are works for solo wind instruments. Greenberg has been commissioned to write compositions on themes such as the Holocaust and biblical stories. In an interview that I conducted with Ms. Greenberg, she stated that she writes what she feels is needed. If someone needs a Yiddish song or a song about the Holocaust, she will write it for them. Greenberg looks for Yiddish poets who have written poetry reflecting various aspects of being female. Examples are the song cycle "Froyen Stimme"("Women's voices", set to poems by women), in which various women write poetry reflecting their feelings, and an art song, "Royt Knospn Oyfn Shney" ("Red Petals in the Snow", text by Dora Teitelbaum), in which the poet discusses her feelings about what she witnessed during the holocaust. Greenberg also noted that she uses only twentieth century poets.[55]

In another interview with Greenberg I posed a number of questions regarding her perspective on different aspects of Jewish music. Greenberg feels that of all of the instruments, the voice is the most expressive of all. She therefore writes more music for voice than for any other instrument. Greenberg discussed her feelings about her use of Jewish characteristics in Art song: "....it depends on the text. In "Froyen Stimme" and "Dos Goldene Fayfl" there isn't anything particularly "Jewish" about the melodies or harmonies, except sometimes I use the *aolian* mode. However, in "Chanukah" there's a bit of a cantorial chant feeling in places. If a text isn't particularly Jewish in content, I write the music as I would if it had the same meaning in any language.....I've set a lot of psalms and Hebrew texts, such as "Shalom Rav"(a liturgical text) and "Ana Dodi"(a wedding text from Song of Songs), and none of them sticks to *nusach* in any way. The

[55] Interview conducted with Helen Greenberg, July 2002

music has to reflect the mood and the meaning of the text. Unless it HAS to relate to *nusach*, I don't think it is necessary to do so." For Greenberg, the definition of Jewish music does not necessarily mean music that contains nusach or biblical cantillations. For Greenberg, composing Jewish music means setting Jewish texts, or using the Yiddish or Hebrew language.

Greenberg feels that the demand for Yiddish Art Song is very limited, both by singers and listeners. She thinks, however, that those few people who do sing or listen to Yiddish Art Song really appreciate its value. For her, this appreciation is why it is so important to continue to write Yiddish Art Song. Furthermore, she feels that although many of the Yiddish speakers have died, the Yiddish language continues to flourish. "There is a renaissance of the Yiddish language. An anecdote: A music editor and performer in San Antonio has put out many little volumes of art songs by American women, but they were always in English! Now, she has recently written to me that she wants to approach....the publisher of the volumes, to see whether they are willing to publish Yiddish Art Songs". Greenberg notes that there are people who are promoting Yiddish culture to see that it is not forgotten. As well, many universities and schools, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are now offering courses in the Yiddish language.

Greenberg feels that there is a direct correlation amongst all Art Song forms. About her own music: "My music is more akin to that of the late-Romantics, but with some dissonances and harmonies...I would say there is tremendous common ground between romantic lieder and Yiddish song in form, harmony, melody, etc."[56]

Greenberg's music is often similar to the music of Weiner harmonically and musically. Her music contains elements of contemporary techniques. Although

Greenberg's accompaniments are not simple, they remain closely tied to the melody. Often, when the accompaniment is being the played independently of the voice, and the voice part enters, the vocal line picks up and continues the melody that the accompaniment had. This happens the other way around as well. In this manner, the piano and accompaniment share the melody or motive that the composer has created. Greenberg's music is unique several ways: She writes music containing Jewish themes and she writes music of Jewish poets, but unlike the other Jewish Art Song composers, she does not feel the need to use Jewish-sounding elements to justify its Jewishness. Her music is complex harmonically but always keeps a tonal center. Therefore, although challenging to perform, it is both easy and pleasing to listen to. Though I am not familiar with all of her works, Greenberg insists that her songs are not Jewish sounding. That is, she uses no compositional techniques that employ Jewish sounding motives, such as augmented seconds or biblical cantillations.

Greenberg is not composing music as actively as she did a few years ago, but when she receives a request for a piece of Jewish music, she will write something. In her own words, "I am not as active anymore as a composer. However, if someone needs a composition, it is hard to refuse. Jewish music needs to stay alive!"

[56] Interview with Greenberg, September, 2002

CONCLUSION

In this study we have reviewed characteristics of Jewish life in the twentieth century in Russia and America as it relates to the development of Yiddish Art Song. We discussed the background, influences and works of a number of composers of Yiddish Art Song.

Composers of Yiddish Art music owe allegiance to the Society for Jewish Folk Music. This society promoted the return to authentic Jewish sources - the folk song. These composers found ways to fuse folk and liturgical elements with contemporary musical trends that were taught in the conservatory. This fusion resulted in an elevation of simple Yiddish music to a high art form, equal to that of any serious art music of any other language or culture.

The Russian Jewish composers remained faithful to the adherence of folk elements in their music. Although each of the Russian Jewish composers created music according to their own individual techniques, they all used folk-like elements in combination with the modern techniques they were learning from their contemporaries.

Golub, the first active Yiddish Art Song composer in America, was noted for his ability to compose and perform music that was highly popular among audiences. This was a groundbreaking phenomenon, as Jewish audiences were used to hearing Yiddish theatre and vaudeville as musical entertainment. Golub, who despised this "low class" music, managed to compose Art Song in a way that would still appeal to the masses. Golub, who considered himself the Jewish "Schubert" of Art Song, may have been correct in his assumption. He was after all, the first Yiddish Art Song composer in America to appeal to the greater Jewish audience.

Weiner, known as the "great Yiddish Art Song master", maintained the ideals of the Folk Song Society, while incorporating musical techniques that he learned in America. Weiner was highly influenced by Impressionistic composers and used their techniques in the music that he created. Weiner's dedication to the restoration of the Yiddish language may be his most important contribution.

Greenberg, highly influenced by Weiner and the late-Romantic lieder composers was the least concerned with infusing Jewish elements in her composition. Greenberg is dedicated first and foremost to setting music in a manner that will most effectively evoke the feelings of the poetry. Her music is successful at portraying the intensity of the poetry.

All of the Yiddish Art Song composers were influenced by composers of the Western world. They incorporate Western forms and compositional techniques, particularly those of the late-Romantic German lied in their music. In an effort to create a Jewish sound, the composers employed biblical references, synagogue modes and Jewish folk song elements.

Yiddish Art Song, like German lied, is rooted in the folk song. Composers of Art Song have always had passionate feelings about the folk song. The folk song is the root of nationalistic feelings. It is inherent for a composer when attempting to create an authentic ethnic sound to go back to the source of that authenticity; namely, the folk song. Traditionally over the years, composers have used the words of various authors and/or poets. Sometimes composers will fuse the two traditions into one piece of music. For example, Brahms often uses "classic" poets like Morike for his texts, and then fuses the text together with a folk-like melody. Weiner, as we saw earlier uses contemporary poetry while infusing many folk like elements into the music.

All of the techniques mentioned above are universal to many genres of Art Song. Yiddish Art Song, like other genres of Art Song, has successfully created its own unique sound. There are authentic Jewish elements that can be heard in most of the Yiddish Art Song repertoire, just as there are authentic German elements that can be heard in the German lied. Yiddish Art Song is rich and complex; certainly worthy of inclusion in the standard repertoire of the Art Song.

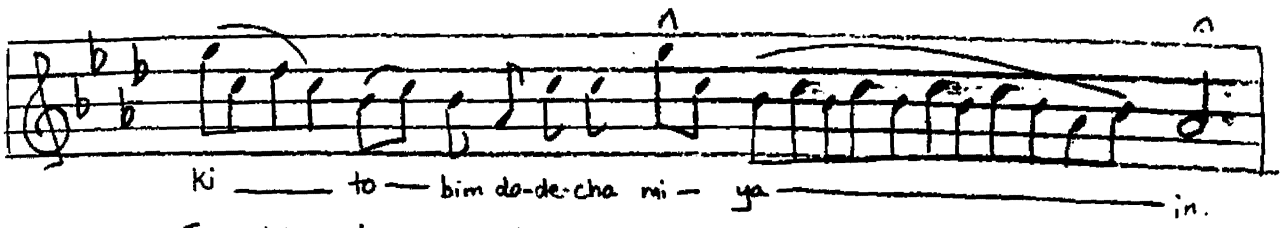
There were many other composers of Yiddish Art Song who came from Russia, North America, Israel and even South America. Today, there continue to be composers who are actively writing Yiddish Art Song. The future of Yiddish Art Song depends on its continued performance and study. There is a wealth of Yiddish poetry waiting to be set by inspired composers. Yiddish is a language which, despite the unending obstacles which threaten its existence, refuses to die. Thanks to the efforts put forth largely by the composers discussed in this study, Yiddish continues to live through the musical expression of the Art Song.

MUSIC ANALYSIS

Ex. 1

"Shir - Hashirim" (The Song of Songs)
from Sechs Lieder aus dem Russischen Orient

Lazar Saminsky



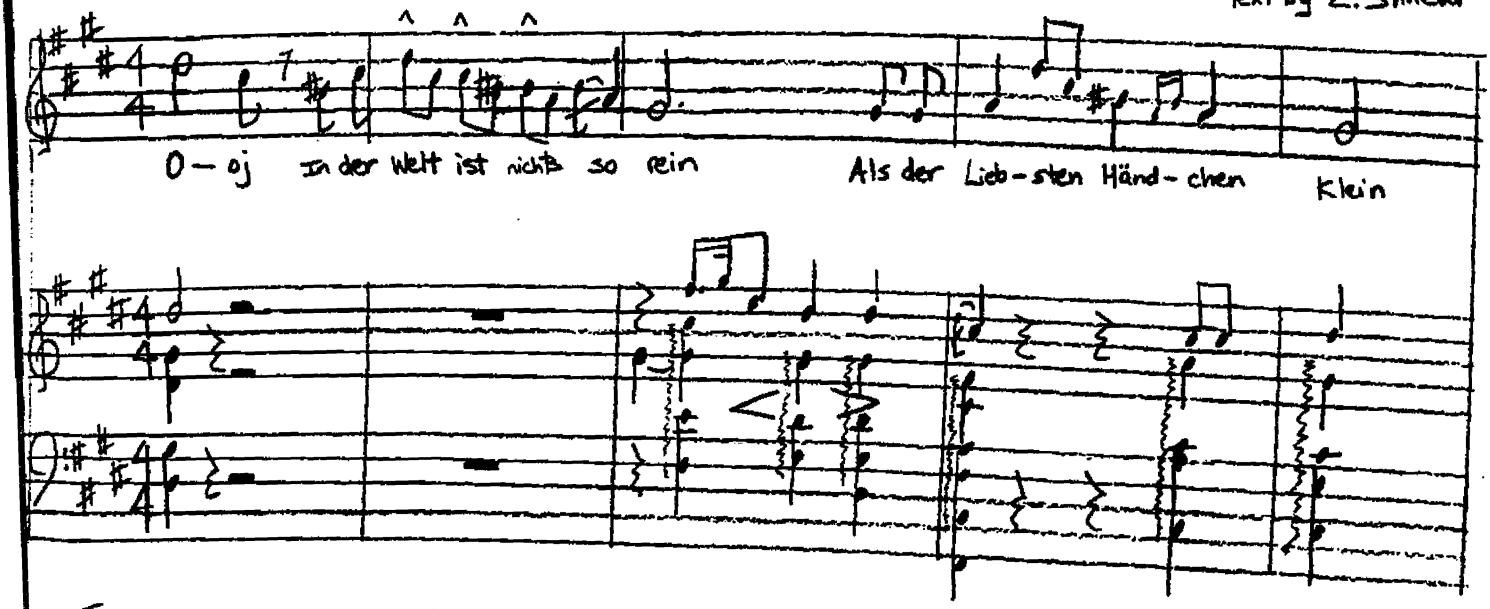
Translation: For his love is better than wine.

This text comes from Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs) and the notes of the melody are constructed around the biblical motives of the Shir Hashirim text. The biblical motive can be found in the notes which represent *mi ya'in*, highlighted above. This motive is taken directly from the trope that represents *mercha, tipcha, mercha, sof-pasuk:*

Ex. 2

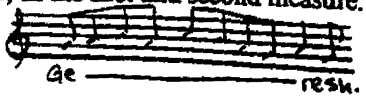
"In der Welt ist nichts so rein"
from Hebraische Lieder

Michael Gnessin.
text by Z. Shneur



Translation: In the world there is nothing so pure, as your dear little hands.

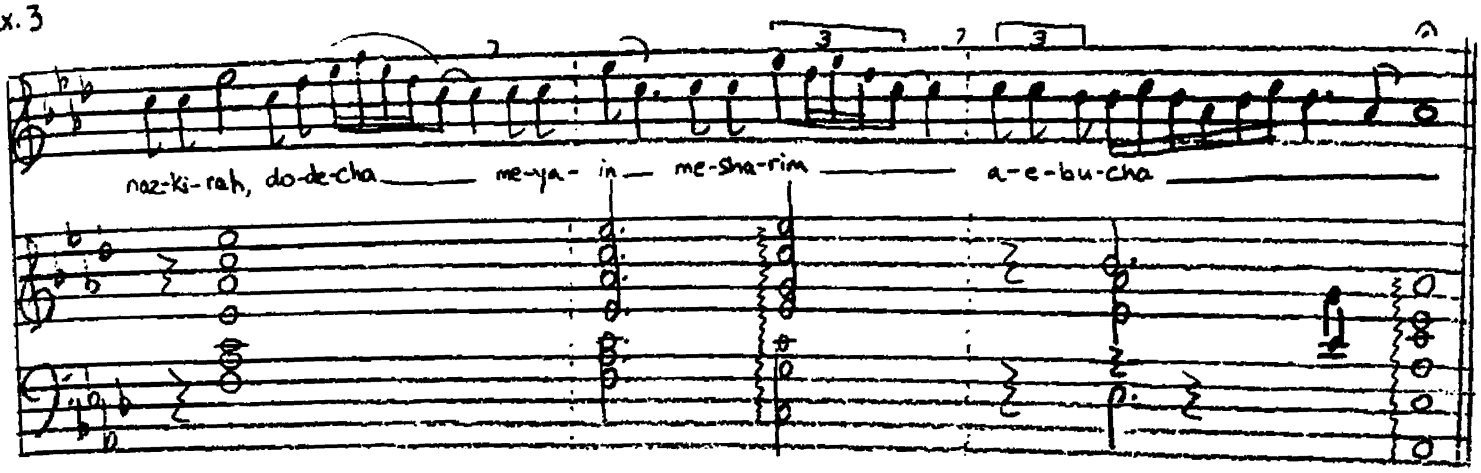
This piece exemplifies Gnessen's abilities as a Jewish composer. He combines one of the major characteristics of Yiddish folk song – the augmented second (m.2-B♯ to a), highlighted above, with the chant-like recitation of biblical cantillation, found in the notes which represent *In der Welt ist nichts so rein*, in the first and second measure. This rhythmic pattern can be found in the Haftarah trope, *geresh:*



"Shir - Ha shirim" (The Song of Songs)
from Sechs Lieder aus dem Russischen Orient

Lazar Saminsky

Ex. 3



Translation: We will remember thy love more than wine; the upright love thee.

In this song, Saminsky discards his use of the characteristic augmented second, in favour of biblical motives, which to him were the true source of authentic Judaism. These motives are highlighted and are taken from the trope, *mercha, tipcha, sof-pasuk* of the Song of Songs motif. These trope markings can be found in Example 1. Saminsky, like Gnessen, combines the chant-like recitation of biblical cantillation with a simple chordal accompaniment.

"Wo bist du?" (Where are you?)
from Drei Lieder des Ghetto

Alexander Krein
text: Bialik

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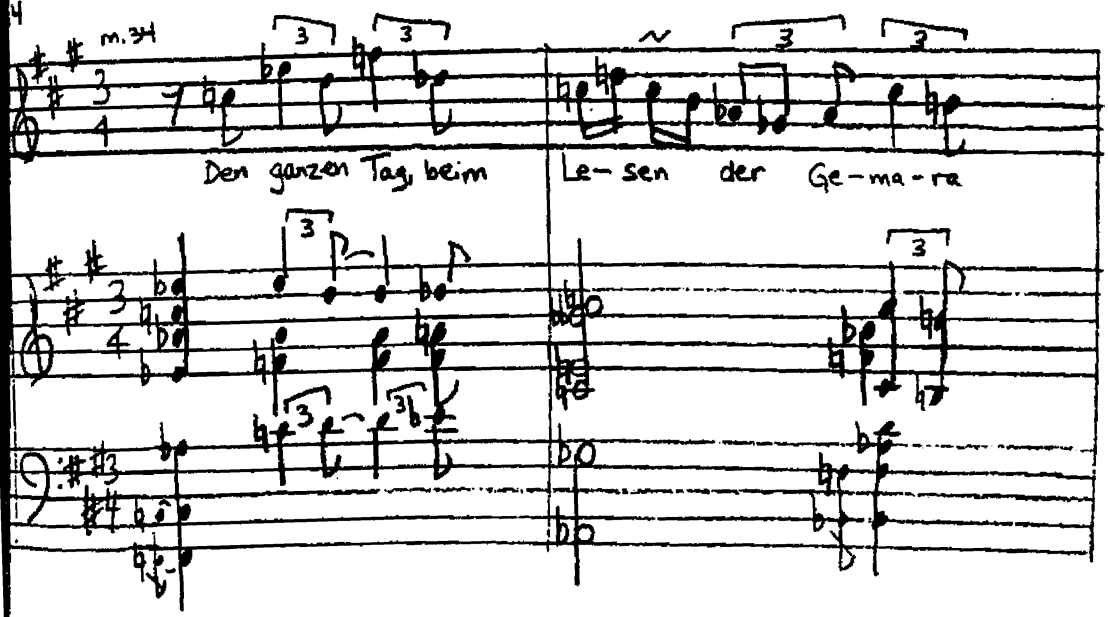


Translation: That all day, near the reading of the Gemarra...

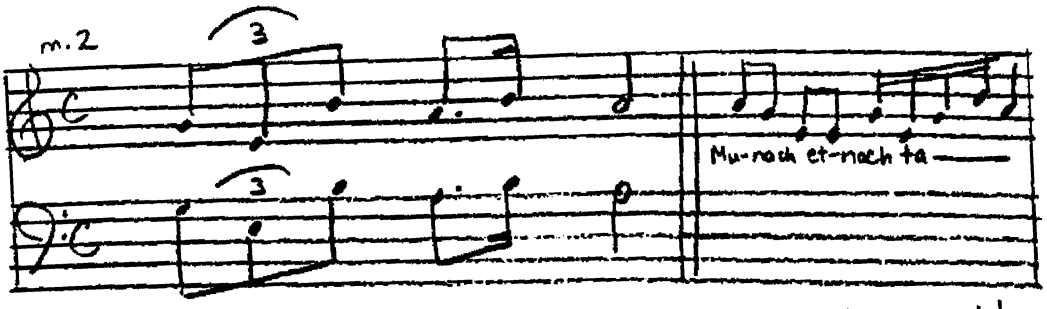
Krein's innovations are exemplified in these few measures of "Wo bist du?" (Where are you?) This example is clearly more complex in harmony than the previous examples. The melody and accompaniment are both dissonant and chromatic in form, typical of modern innovative trends. Krein was influenced by Western contemporary techniques. At the time this piece was written (1929), Western composers were beginning to experiment with atonality. Krein used these ideas in his compositions. In the above example, there is no sense of what key the piece is in. The key signature indicates that the key should be in A major or F# minor. However, with the number of flats and naturals markings used in the music, one can not possibly tell what, if any, key this is in.

Ex. 5

In Cheider (In the classroom)

Moses Milner

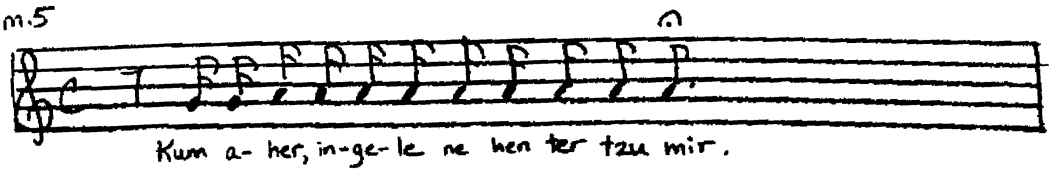
A)



In Cheider

Munach-etnachta motif of Haftarah

B)



Translation: "Come here boy, close to me"

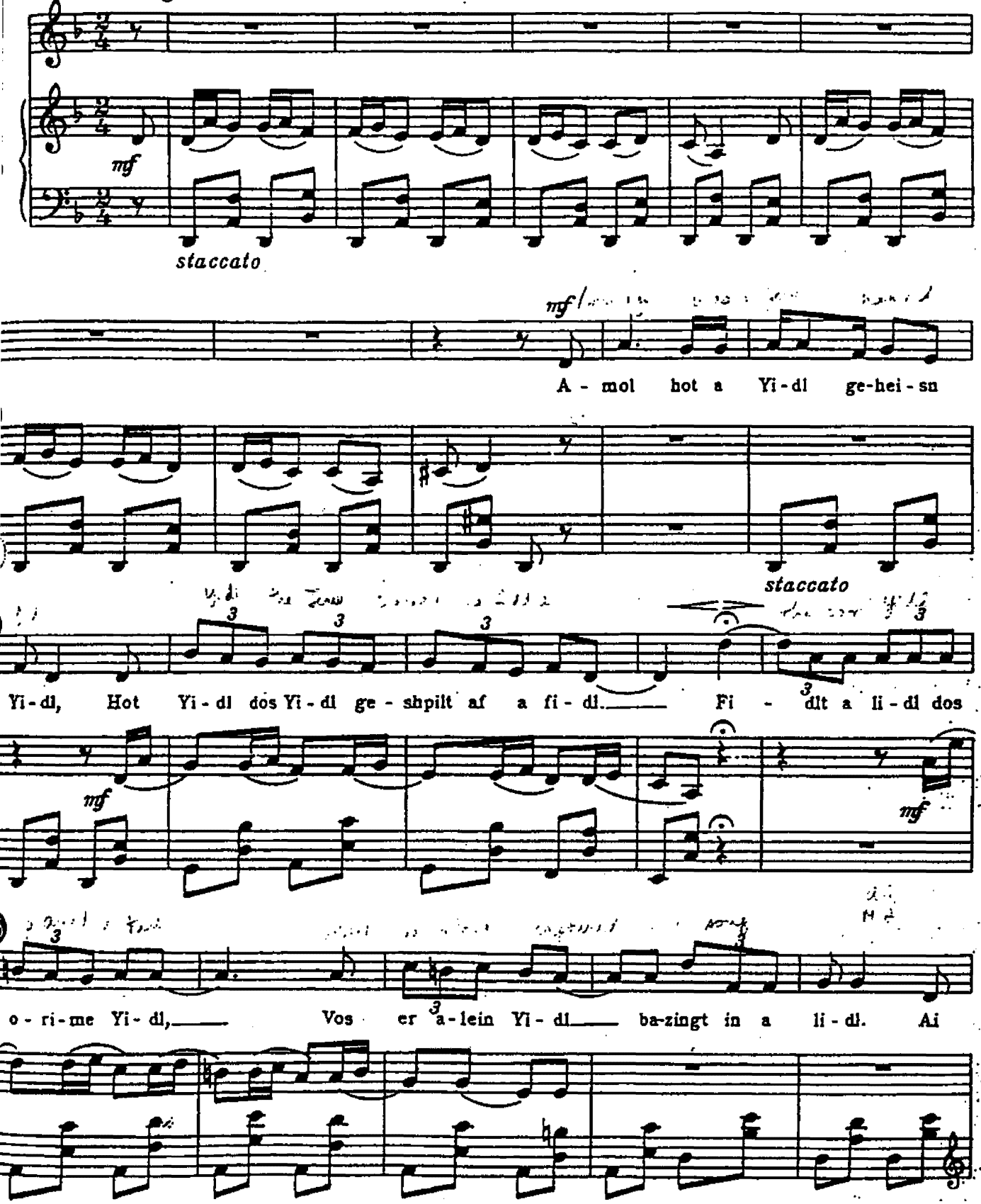
Milner, who was reared in the cheder, portrayed vividly the relationship between the teacher and the student in this Art Song. He wrote this piece in the form of an accompanied recitative. Milner uses many motives of the Ashkenzazic prophetic readings throughout this song. In example a) he uses the combination *munach etnachta* of the prophetic reading. This example occurs many times throughout the song. In example b) we can see Milner's use of of the recitative style. Here, the rebbe is encouraging the child to learn his *alef-bet* (alphabet), and the rebbe speaks in a davening-like manner.

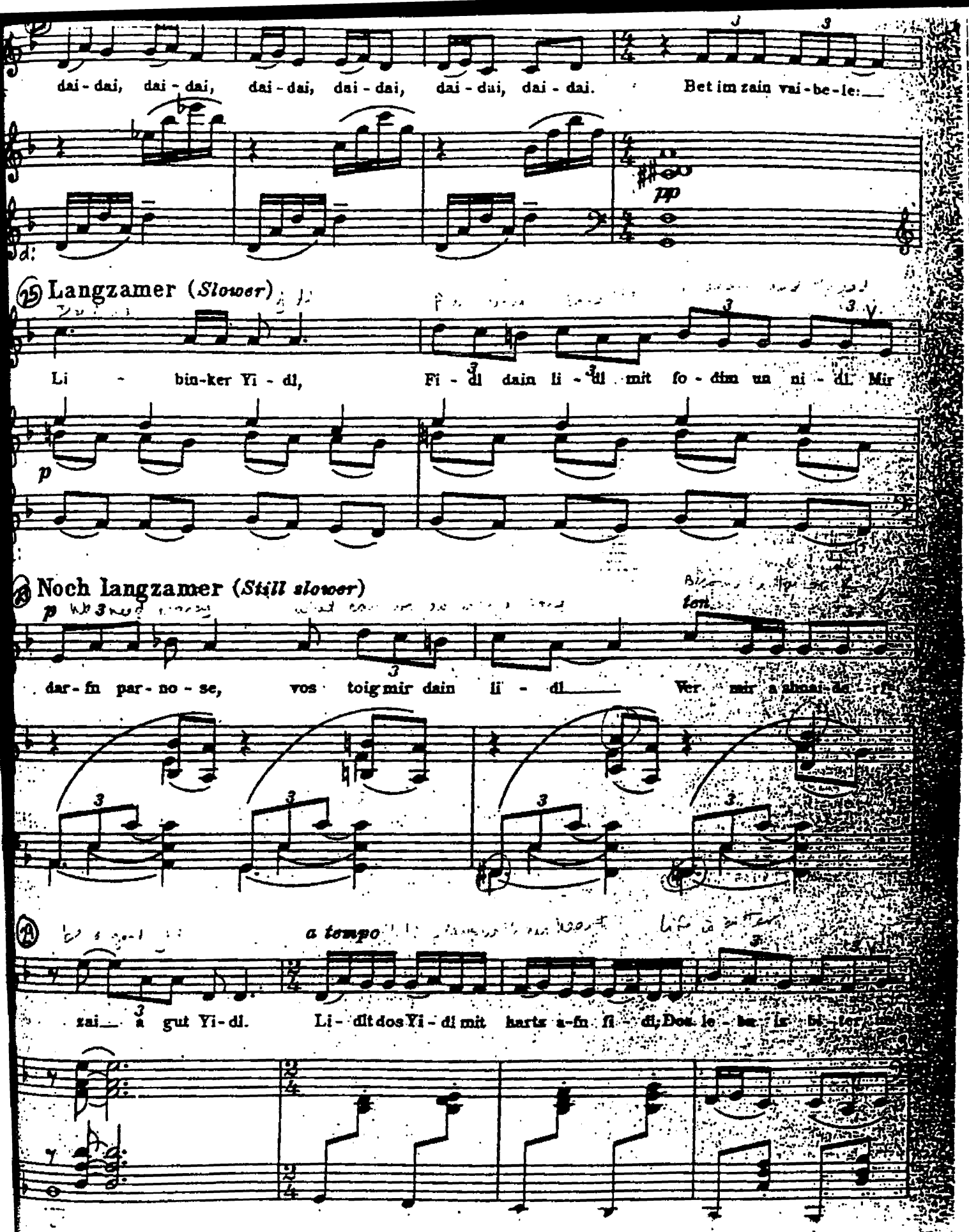
Ex. 6 Der Yid mitn Fidl

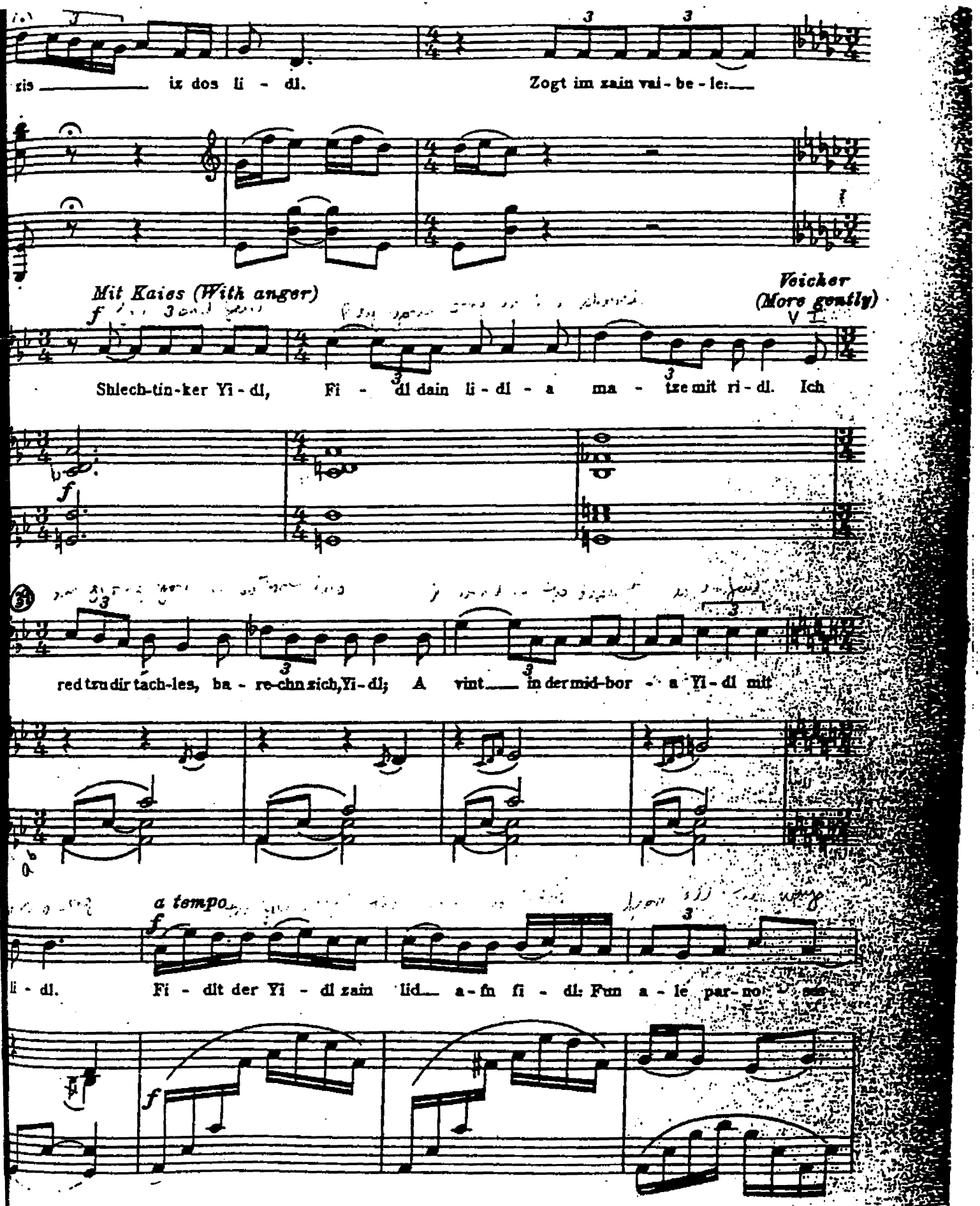
...ky

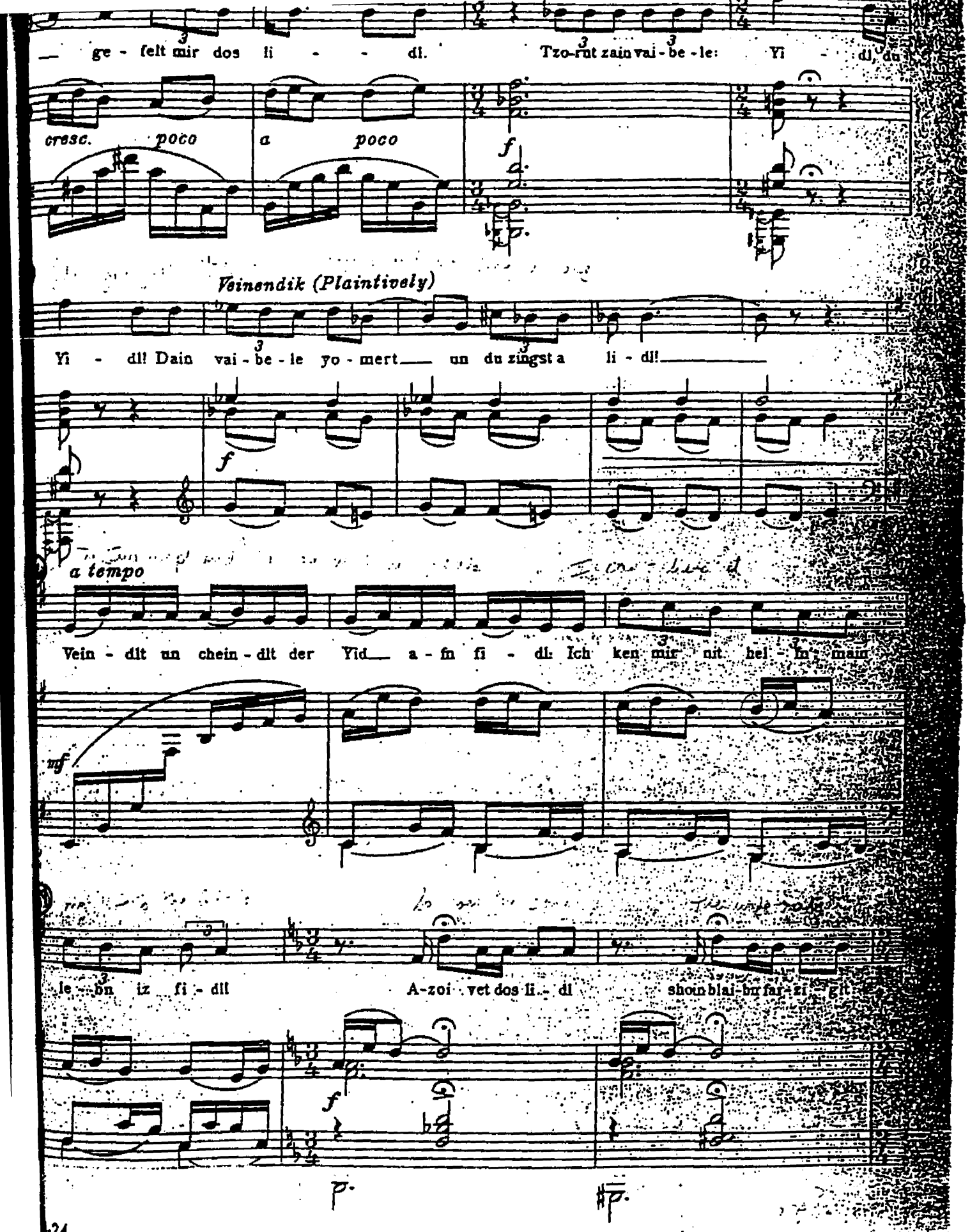
Lazar Weiner

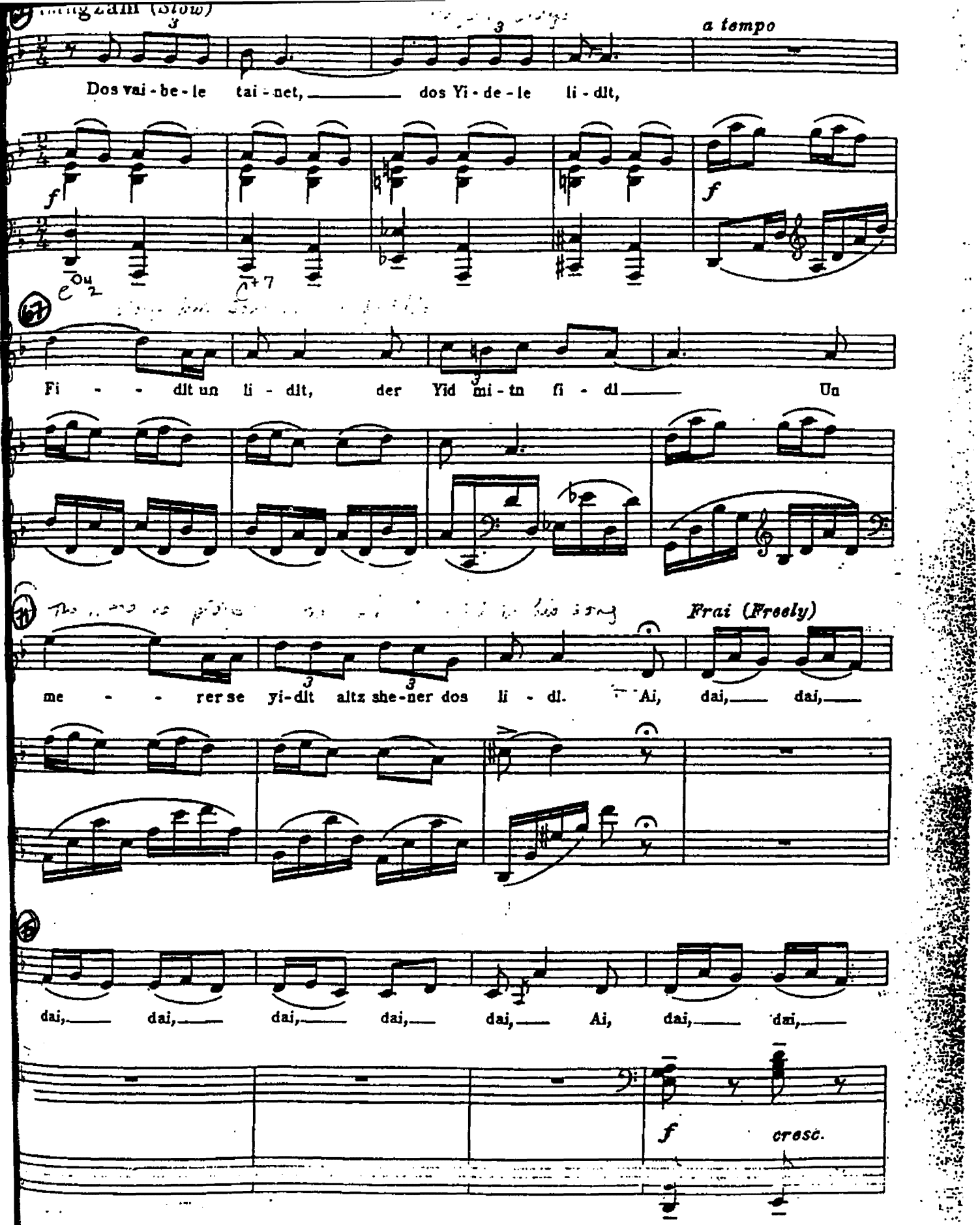
Baveglech (*Con moto*)

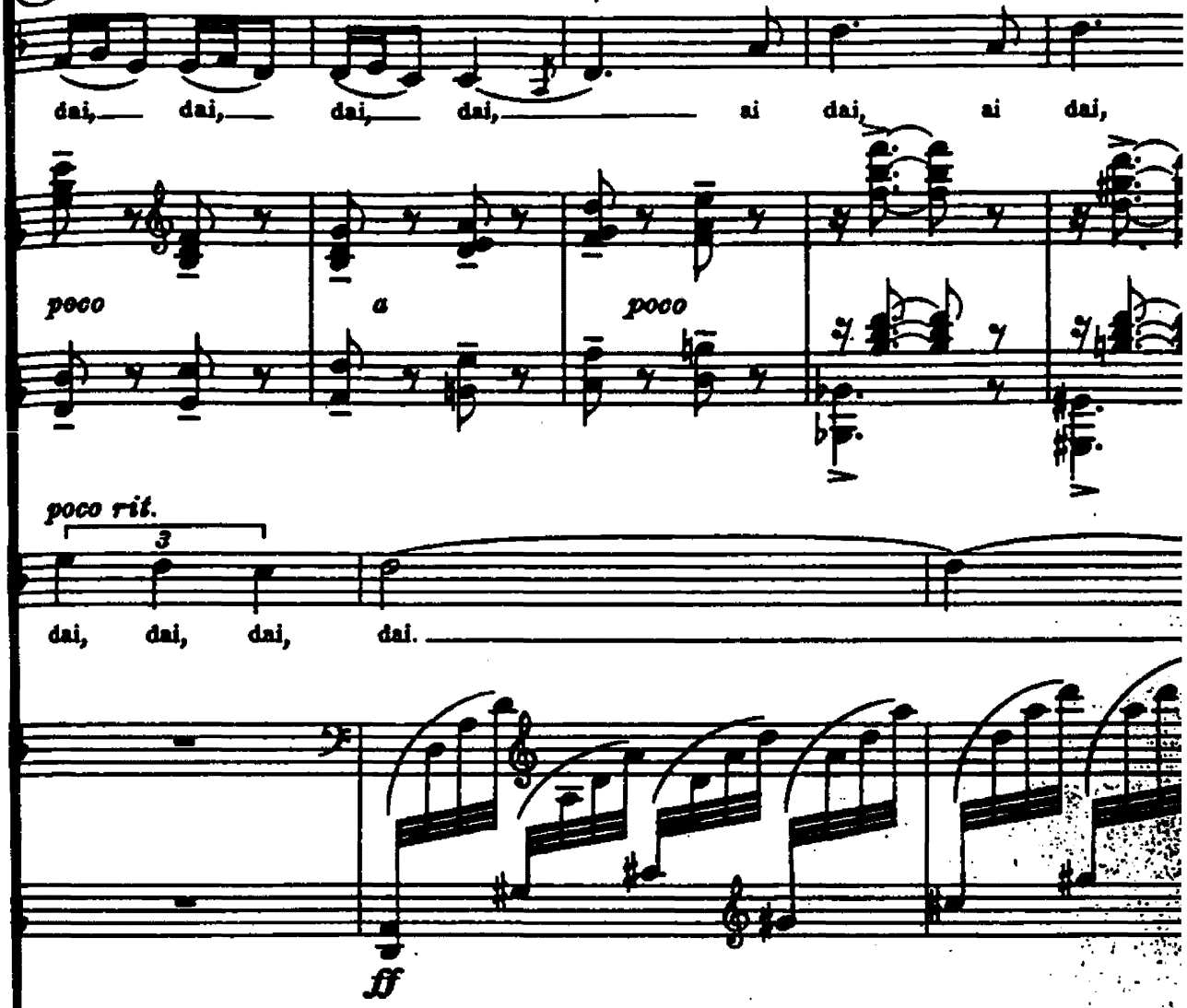



dai - dai, dai - dai, dai - dai, dai - dai, dai - dai, dai - dai. Bet im zain vai - be - le:
pp
25 Langzamer (Slower)
Li - bin-ker Yi - dl, Fi - dl dain li - dl mit fo - dim un ni - dl. Mir
p
26 Noch langzamer (Still slower)
p
ton
. dar - fn par - no - se, vos toig mir dain li - dl Ver mir a shnai - da - rl
A
a tempo
zai a gut Yi - dl. Li - dlt dos Yi - dl mit harts a - fn fi - di; Dos le - ba ir bi - ter


zis iz dos li - dl. Zogt im zain vai - be - le:
Mit Kaios (With anger)
Voicher (More gently)
Shlech-tin-ker Yi - dl, Fi - dl dain li - dl - a ma - tze mit ri - dl. Ich
red tzu dir tach-les, ba - re-chn zich, Yi - dl; A vint in der mid-bor - a Yi - dl mit
a tempo
li - dl. Fi - dit der Yi - dl zain lid a - fn fi - dl: Fun a - le par-no -


ge - felt mir dos li - - - dl. Tzo-rut zain vai - be - le: Yi - dl, du
cresc. poco a poco
Veinendik (Plaintively)
Yi - dl! Dain vai - be - le yo - mert un du zingst a li - dl!
a tempo
Vein - dlt un chein - dlt der Yid a - fn fi - dl: Ich ken mir nit hel - fn main
mf
le - bn iz fi - dl A-zoi vet dos li - dl shoin blai-bn far - zi - gt
f
p.


Mingzdlil (Slow)
a tempo
Dos vai-be-le tai-net, dos Yi-de-le li-dlt,
Fi - - dlt un li - dlt, der Yid mi-tn fi - dl Un
me - - rer se yi-dlt altz she-ner dos li - dl. Ai, dai, dai,
Frai (Freely)
dai, dai, dai, dai, dai, Ai, dai, dai,
f
cresc.



DER YID MITN FIDL

This song is in the form of a dialogue between a shiftless husband and a nagging wife. Yidl, the husband, has only one passion — to play the fiddle. This is his life-work, although it brings no material return. His wife alternately pleads and scolds — let him turn to something that will feed them, tailoring for instance. But Yidl, caught up in his musical rapture, fiddles on.

Der Yid mitn Fidl

Of Weiner's Art Songs that exhibit folk-like elements, Der Yid mitn Fidl is perhaps the most characteristic. As we will see in the following analysis, Weiner uses devices that are characteristic of the folk song and combines them with contemporary techniques characteristic of the Art Song.

Der Yid mitn Fidl has three characters: a narrator, a husband and a wife. The synopsis of the song can be found on the previous page.

The husband, Yidl, is represented by a carefree, folk-like Chassidic style niggun and metric accompaniment that jumps between piano and voice. The accompaniment fully imitates the fiddle in the introduction and the melody imitates the fiddle at the end of the piece (mm. 74-end – "ai, dai, dai"). When the narrator and Yidl speak we hear the constant fiddle playing underneath them in the accompaniment.

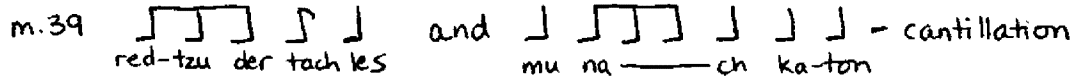
The wife is portrayed in a contrasting style through sudden key changes, meter changes and harmonic changes. The use of triplets and wide intervallic jumps represent speech-like patterns. Dissonant harmonies are used to represent the wife's explosive anger.

There are many Jewish elements employed in this song.

1) a fiddler playing dai, dai, dai on his fiddle (think of the picture of the fiddler on the roof in "Fiddler on the Roof"). The story is representative of Jewish life in the shtetls. Often times, the husband could not make enough money to support his family and the wife would plea with him to find a trade that would provide more for them. The Jews in the shtetls often made only enough money to keep them alive.

2)folk rhythms (♫♩) used – this is a typical rhythm of the Chassidic dance.

3) Mix of Chassidic elements (dai, dai, dai) with recitative and davening like qualities (triplets, which are a representative rhythm of folk song, probably borrowed from cantillation). The following serves as an example of these points:



4) Stress on the penultimate syllable – akin to the Yiddish language.

5) Minor keys (typical key used in Jewish music) and Magein Avot mode(a minor mode found in the Shabbat evening service) used throughout the song.

Other points:

1) elision of cadences used. For example, in 34, the piano is imitating fiddle and is cut short by the wife's entrance.

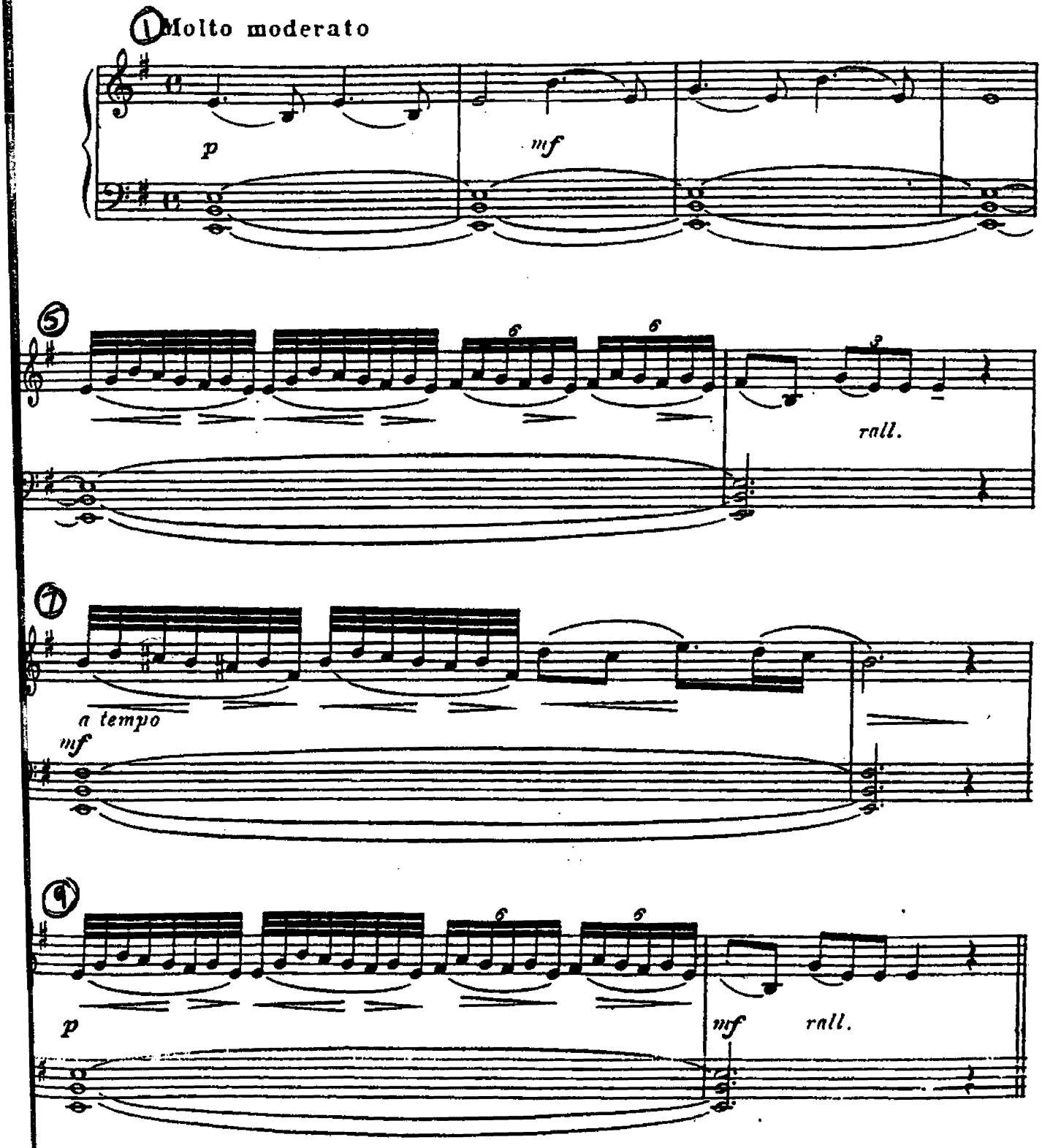
2) whenever the accompaniment plays the fiddle theme, the bass clef changes patterns rhythmically and melodically. For example, m.12-13; 32-34; 46-48; 57-59; 67-68.

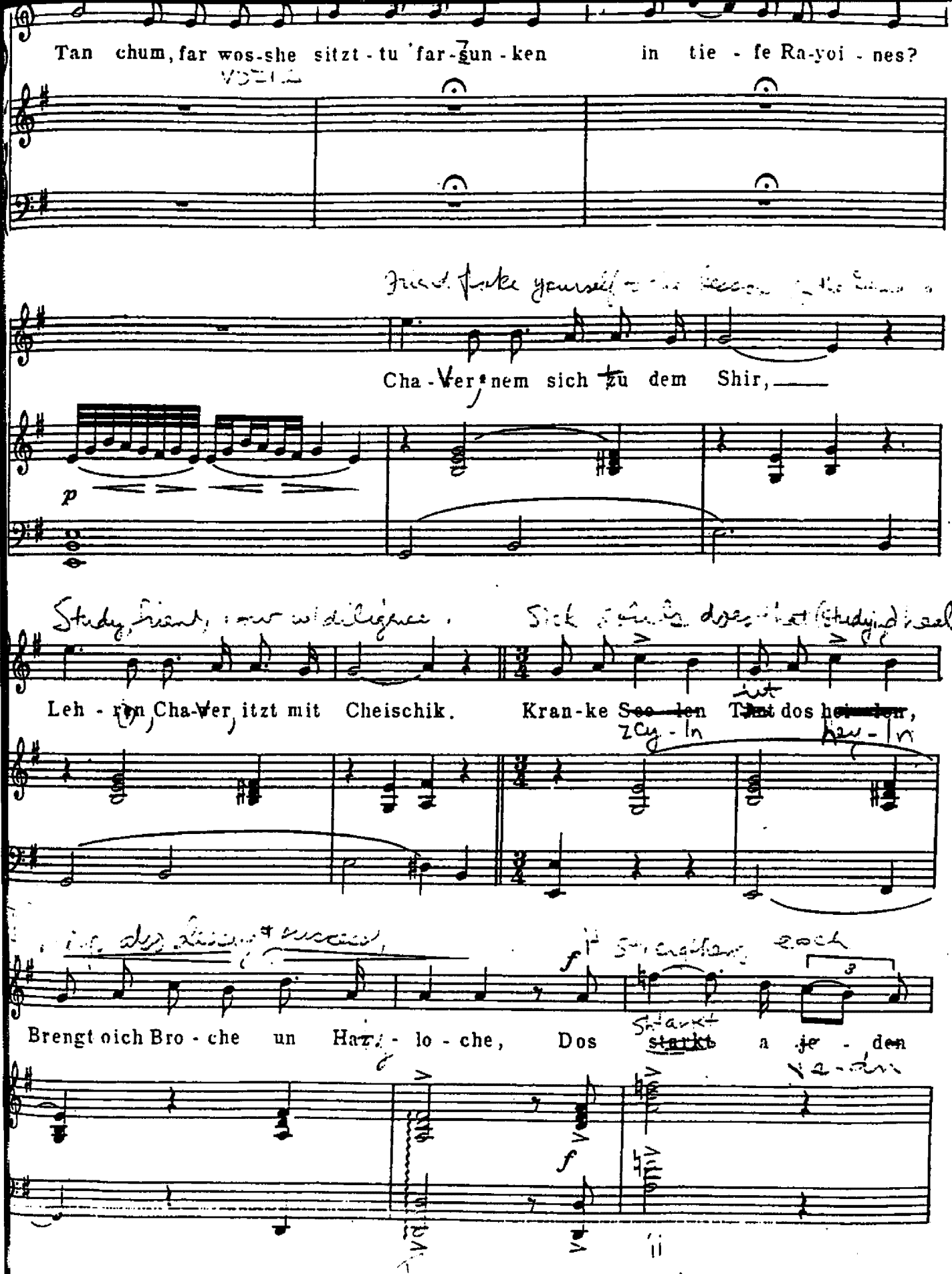
The simple folk-like elements of the husband's character combined with the complex harmonies of the wife produce a piece of music that is an Art Song with folk-like qualities. There are many Jewish elements and Western contemporary techniques that Weiner employs in this song. One can see that Weiner, who had immersed himself in diverse styles of music, was able to integrate these styles in his compositions.

	Intro	A	B	A^{I}	B^{I}	A^{II}	B^{II}	A^{III}	C	Finale
MM	.1 - 8.	.9 - 23.	.24 - 29.	.30 - 34.	.35 - 43.	.44 - 48.	.49 - 55.	.56 - 59.	.60 - 73.	.74 - end.
KEY	dm (Magein Avot)	dmin (9-14) a min (15-20) dmin (21-23)	a min (25-28) d min or B^{b} (29)	d min	a^{b} min	a min	E^{b} maj -> e min	e min	d min (60-65) a min (66-73)	d min
Character	N/A	narrator (m. 21-23; Yidl plays fiddle)	wife	Narrator (m. 30-31) Yidl (m.23-34)	wife	Narrator (m.44-45) Yidl (m.46-48)	wife	Narrator (m.56-57) Yidl (m.58-59)	Narrator	Fiddle
Musical characteristics	introduction to fiddle theme; sets up a strong d min key in Magein Avot	m.9-11 - narrator introduction to Yidl; m.12-13 - description of Yidl playing fiddle; piano (treble) imitates fiddle; introduction to triplet pattern in voice; m.15-20 - same theme as above in a min; m.21-23 - voice imitates fiddle (takes over piano imitation); dissonance in accompaniment is a foreshadow of upcoming tension.	m.24 - dissonant chord; meter change, which introduces wife; m.25-26 - plodding accompaniment represents pleading wife; m.27-28 - use of chromatics (down in bass, up in treble); m.29 - final plea represented by thick chord and high vocal note; m.25-29 - speech represented by triplets and large intervallic jumps; not much anxiety.	m.30-31 - voice imitates 2nd theme of fiddle playing as words describe Yidl playing with his heart; piano, bass and soprano move chromatically in opposite directions; piano staccato imitating playfulness of fiddle; m.32-33 - Yidl's response represented by triplets; piano imitating 1st fiddle theme; m.33 - the passion of the word "zis" "this...is my life" represented by chord and intervallic jump.	m.35 - recitative statement reintroducing wife; m.36-38 - dissonant chords & meter change represent wife's sudden outburst of anger; m.39-43 - more pleading represented by arpeggiated consonant chords and triplets in voice.	m.44-45 - vocal line as a repeat of m.30-31, in a different key; piano is not the sameas 30-31, as arpeggiation is used; m.46-48 - repeat of m.32-33 with variation; more anxious wider intervallic leaps.	m.49-51 - dissonant sounding chords represent anger; m.52-55 - voice pleads; more dissonant in this section, representing her anxiety as it builds; piano plods (rocks).	m.56-57 - vocal line repeats m.30-31 & 44-45 in yet another key; piano is again different, imitating the fiddle. Soprano & bass notes move chromatically downward.	m.60-61 - the dissonance heard in the combination of voice & piano in m.60 (a against Bb chord) is resolved in m.61 as if narrator were telling us that the story will never change; m.62-65 - piano & voice are representative of never-ending cries of the wife; m.66-73 - piano represents fiddling; voice of narrator is similar to the opening narration, m.9-19.	Fiddle imitated by voice. Exactly the same as introduction, except the voice has taken over the piano part.
TEXT TRANSLATION		Long ago a Jewish man named Yidl played the fiddle. The poor Yidl played a tune which he alone captured in a song. Ay day...	His wife asks him "Darling Yidl, play your song with a needle and thread. We need money, what can we do with a song? Become a tailor for me, be a good Yidl."	Yidl fiddles soulfully. "Life is bitter and song is sweet."	His wife says "You bad Jew! Play your song with a shovel! I am giving you the bottom line. A wind in the desert is a Jew with a song."	The Jew played the song on the fiddle. "From all the ways of making a living, I love music."	His wife exclaimed angrily: "Yidl, you Yidl! Your wife is crying and you sing a song!"	The Jew wept and charmed with his fiddle. "I can't help it, my life is the fiddle."	So goes the song: the wife nags, the Jew plays. The Jew with his fiddle plays the song. And the more he plays, the more beautiful his song becomes.	Ay day day....

Tanchum

Poem and Music by
Solomon Golub




Tan chum, far wos-she sitzt - tu far-sun - ken in tie - fe Ra-yoi - nes?
Cha - Ver, nem sich tu dem Shir,
p
Leh - ren Cha-Ver itzt mit Cheischik. Kran-ke
Brengt oich Bro - che un Ha - lo - che, Dos
f
f

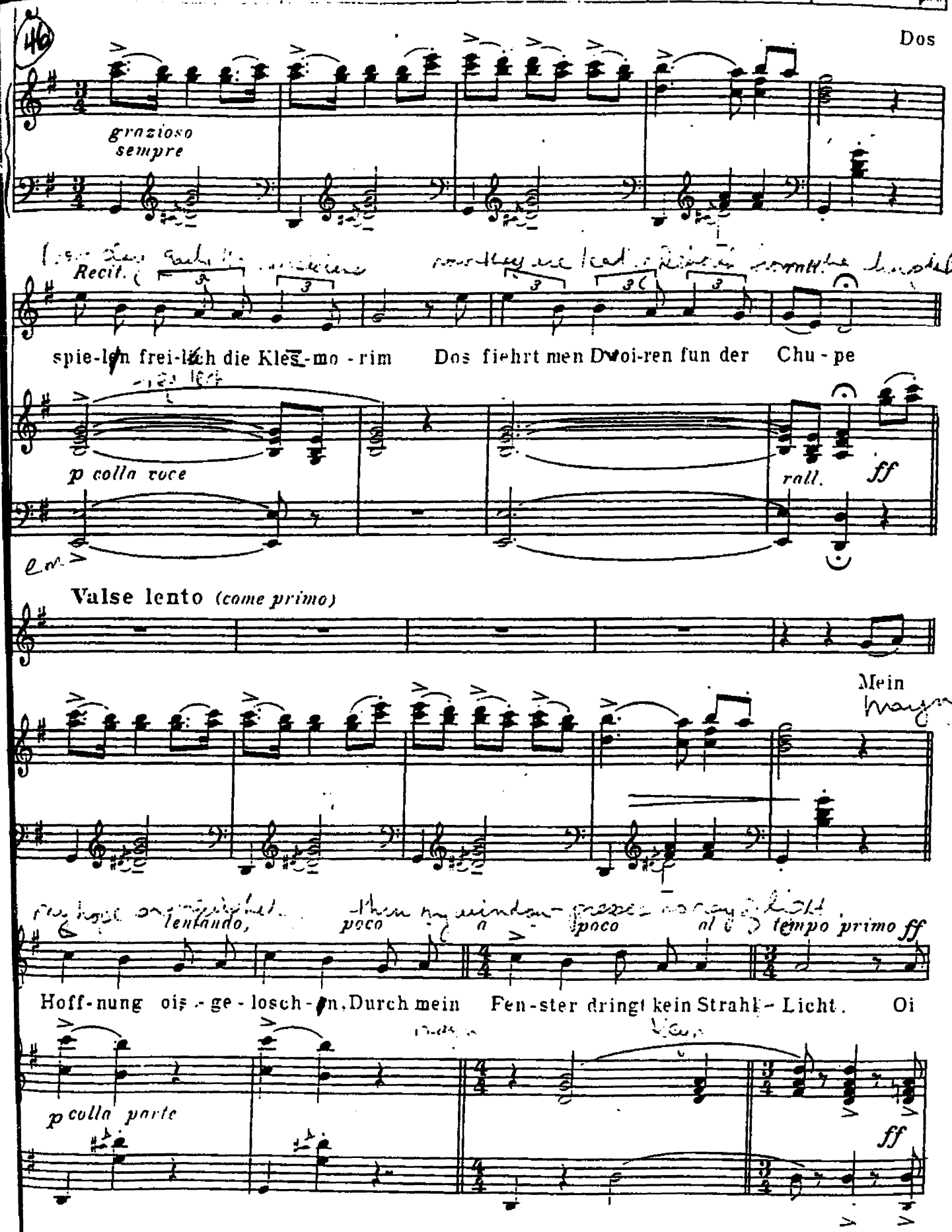
Allegretto

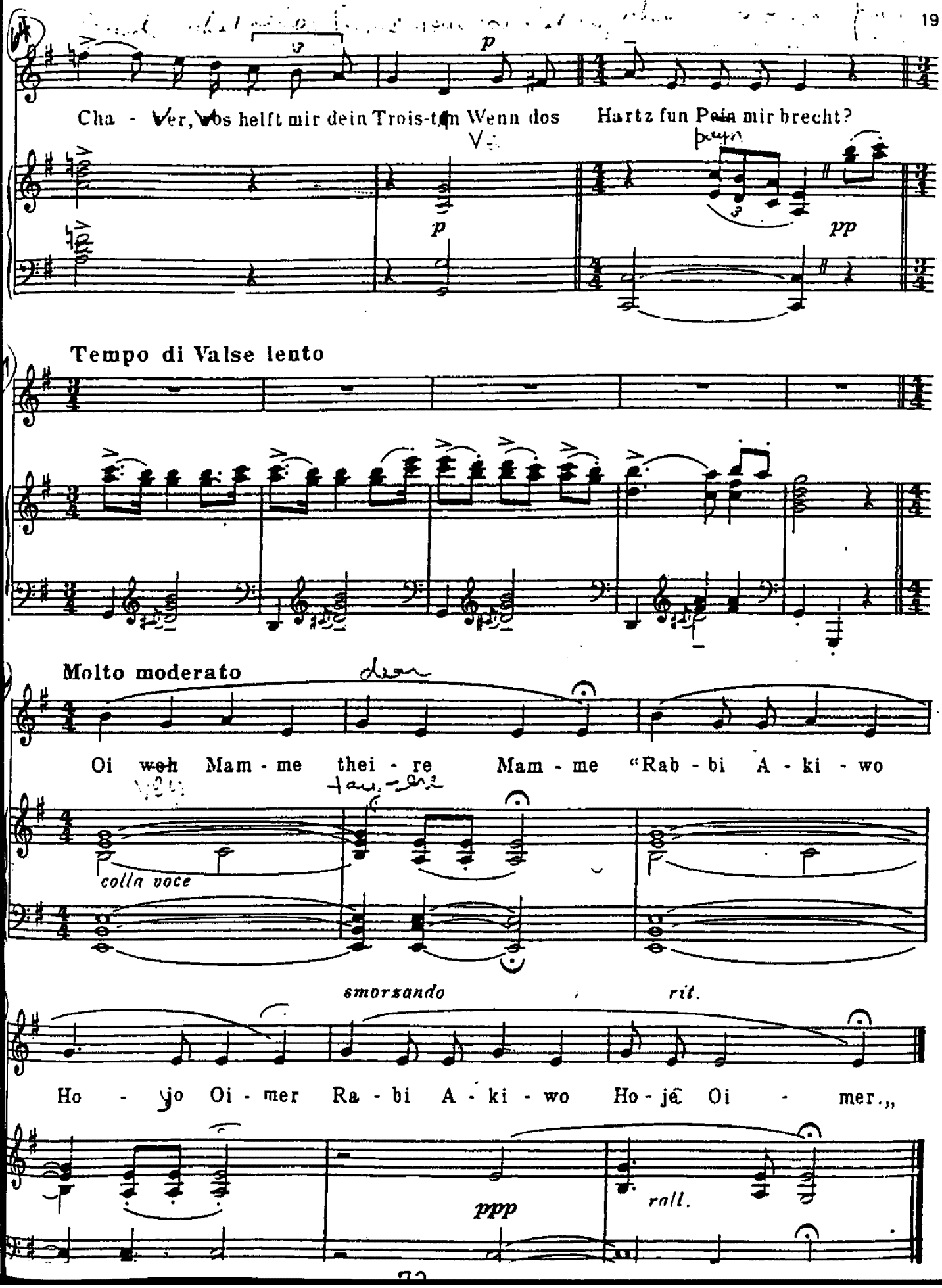
ei - nem Ver - es lehrt nor Toi - re.

mf dolcissimo

Hear-st-u, mein Cha-wer Te - ner vos drin-gen fun Gass do araysn?

pp


46
Dos
grazioso
sempre
Recit.
spie-len frei-lich die Kles-mo-rim Dos fiehrt men Dvoi-ren fun der Chu-pe
p colla voce
rall.
ff
Valse lento (come primo)
Mein
lentando,
poco
a
poco
al
tempo primo
ff
Hoff-nung ois-ge-losch-en. Durch mein Fen-ster dringt kein Strahl-Licht. Oi
p colla parte
ff


Cha - ver, vos helft mir dein Trois-tjm Wenn dos Hartz fun Pein mir brecht?
Tempo di Valse lento
Molto moderato
Oi weh Mam - me thei - re Mam - me "Rab - bi A - ki - wo
colla voce
smorzando
rit.
Ho - jo Oi - mer Ra - bi A - ki - wo Ho - jé Oi - mer.„
ppp
rall.

Tanchum

Tanchum is one of Golub's many Art Songs for which he wrote the text. Tanchum is the story of a man who is bereaved because his beloved D'vorah is about to marry another man. His friend tries to console him by pointing out the healing benefits of study, but to no avail. Tanchum is able to return to his studies, but is still clearly full of anguish.

Golub studied in a cheder (classroom) as a young boy and may have set the music according to his memories of his cheder days. Tanchum has many elements of the folk song employed, but also contains influences of Western classical music. This will further be explained in the following summary.

Before the dialogue between Tanchum and his friend is introduced, we are taken into the world of the cheder. The introduction is written in the Jewish study mode. The study mode is a construction of the Magein Avot built on triadic intervals. An illustration of this construction:

The study mode is the name of a mode used to represent the life of the Jewish scholars who spent their lives in the cheder studying Torah and Talmud. The introduction reveals the sounds of the davening and intense study of the cheder. The note values which range from whole notes to thirty-second notes, help to create the intensity of the atmosphere. The longer note values represent the voice of the *rebbe* or teacher and the short note values represent the chattering or davening of the students.

Tankhum's friend is represented by optimistic text, meant to inspire Tankhum to have faith in the study of religion. This text is set to a melody in the study mode. The text in sum, translates to, "Tanchum, learning Torah heals all troubled souls".

The piano interlude combines elements of the cheder atmosphere with a new theme, introduced by a transition into a major key – the upcoming wedding of Tankhum's beloved D'vorah.

Tanchum is represented by the same melody as the melody used for his friend. However, the text is full of sadness and anxiety. Tanchum is heartbroken that his beloved D'vorah is getting married to another man. To make matters worse, he can hear the sounds of the klezmer band playing the wedding music outside, as he tries to study in his classroom. These sounds are represented by a wedding theme heard in the accompaniment. So, even though Tanchum and his friend share the same melody, the intent and atmosphere are quite different. The wedding theme, interspersed with Tanchum's anxiety ridden dialogue, further intensifies his anguish. The wedding theme comes directly from the Western classical waltz. We are momentarily transformed from the Jewish sounding world into the world of Western classical music.

The theme of the text of Tankhum is that the protagonist bereaves over the "loss" of a loved one to another person. This theme is a universal theme used in many other genres of Art Song. The only difference is that in this "Jewish" text, the potential healing agent is the continuous study of Torah. In other genres, i.e., German lieder, the healing agent is often the focus of the beauty of nature. The outcome of the story however, is often the same. The protagonist's anxiety can not be overcome by any healing agent, and the music ends on a melancholy note.

The music of Tanchum employs a simple melody and accompaniment. This piece is much more folk-like than Weiner's complex Der Yid mitn Fidl. As mentioned earlier in the study, it is sometimes difficult to determine where the boundary is between folk song and art song. Golub's Tanchum is one of those pieces. It is a simple piece,

with a folk-like theme. The fact that Golub was the author of the text, that the accompaniment is not always a simple chordal structure, that the melody is not an easy sing song melody and that various thematic forms are employed, places this song in the category of Art Song.

	Intro	A	B	C	D
MM	.1 - 10.	.11 - 25.	.26 - 43.	.44 - 66.**	**.67 - end.
Key	e min (Magein Avot) studymode	emin (Magein Avot) studymode	e min - brief change to G maj (m.34-35)	e min (m.44-46) G maj (m.46-50) e min (m.51-54) G maj (55-59) e min (m.60-66)	G maj (m.67-71) e min (72-end)
Character		Friend	Piano interlude	Tanchum	Tanchum
Musical characteristics	Piano imitates study mode of the classroom (*study mode is Magein Avot mode built triadically [in thirds]). Used to represent the cheder (classroom). Note values (slow vs. fast) represent intensity of cheder learning.	Melody alternates between recitative and strict rhythm. Recitative used when the friend asks a question. Strict rhythm used when the friend makes a statement. Use of wide intervallic jumps to represent strong commands, i.e. m.23 (a-f) for the word "strength". Accompaniment is chordal, to support vocal line.	Accompaniment still in study mode. Change of mood in m.34-35 perhaps to introduce Tanchum and introduce major key of the upcoming wedding; m.40-41 - soprano notes imitate upcoming wedding theme (m.45-46); m.42-43 - moves into an a minor chord to prepare us for Tanchum's dialogue.	m.44-45 - Recitative used when Tanchum asks a question of his friend; m. 46-50 - Wedding theme. Sounds like Western "classical" waltz music (rhythmic pattern is a 3/4 waltz tempo; major key). Tanchum hears these sounds out the cheder window. m.51-54 - and m.60-67 are in study mode; m.55-59 imitates wedding. This section bounces back forth between Tanchum's anguish over the "loss" of his loved one, and the wedding music he hears outside.	m.72-73 - in study mode. Tanchum's expressed his anguish by calling out to his dear mother. m.74 - end - Tanchum has returned to his studies. However, the melody, which remains the same as the previous 2 measures and earlier measures in the song, suggests that Tanchum is still anguishing.
Text translation	N/A	Friend, take yourself to the lesson of the Gemarra. Study, friend, with diligence. Studying heals sick souls and brings blessings & success. It strengthens each person who studies the Torah.	N/A	Do you hear, my friend, sounds that press from the street, here inside? Now the musicians play gaily. Now they are leading Dvorah from the chupah. May hope is extinguished, through my window presses no ray of light. Oh friend, what good is your consolation, when my heart breaks from pain?	Oh mama, dear mama..... "Rabbi Akiva said...."
				**mm.67-71 could either be part of Section C or part of Section D.	

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