לכל זמן:

MUSIC AT THE INTERSECTION OF JOY AND SADNESS

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The purpose of this article is to explore how music can speak to the soul through a Jewish lens. I examine the Jewish understanding of emotion, the scientific implications of music's impact on the brain, the psychology of music, and personal narratives from cantors and Jewish musicians. My hope is to help cantors as well as other Jewish music professionals utilize music at the intersection of joy and sadness in Jewish contexts.

This article contains seven sections:

I. Introduction
II. Music and the Brain
III. Musical Modes and Emotion
IV. Jewish Ritual and Time
V. Personal Narratives
VI. Practical Applications of Music and Ritual
VII. Conclusion

This article uses a variety of different sources ranging from personal interviews, scholarly articles, blog posts, text books, biblical text, spirituality books, and psalms.

One Friday afternoon in early June of 2018, my long term partner, Adam, and I were driving south on I-95 to spend Shabbat with my parents in Philadelphia. It was a mundane drive. We were singing along with the radio when I looked up from scrolling on my phone and saw a big white box truck spin and flip onto its side. Adam pulled our car to the side of the road while I dialed 911. We were first on the scene. The driver of the truck had died immediately on impact. A second man lay pinned beneath the truck, still conscious. His injuries were severe, and his eyes were wide and terrified. I knelt beside him and told him my name. I asked him to breathe with me as I took his hand and Adam attempted to alleviate his bleeding. I held him and prayed with him and sang to him for 40 minutes until emergency personnel arrived and his eyes fluttered shut for the last time.

The next day was Shabbat, a blessed respite after the tragedy that had transpired the day before. The next day, Sunday, Adam proposed to me. I held death on Friday and life on Sunday. I felt so intensely that I feared turning numb.

I knew how crucial it would be for me to fully process the trauma we had experienced without it negating our tremendous joy. I scoured every resource I could think of for some sort of guide book on how to remain emotionally present in the months that would follow but to no avail. As a cantorial student, it isn't unusual for me to retreat into music for hours at a time. Each day that summer I immersed myself in a musical *mikvah*. Without initially recognizing it, I was utilizing music as a vessel to carry both my grief and joy simultaneously.

The purpose of this article is to explore how music can speak to the soul through a Jewish lens. I examine the Jewish understanding of emotion, the scientific implications of music's impact on the brain, the psychology of music, and personal narratives from cantors and Jewish

musicians. My hope is to help cantors as well as other Jewish music professionals utilize music at the intersection of joy and sadness in Jewish contexts.

Music and The Brain

According to the Netflix documentary series, "Explained," musical instruments found in prehistoric cave paintings suggest that music has played a central role in human society since we evolved from our primate cousins thousands of years ago. For as long as humankind has created it, music has been utilized as a powerful "medicine" capable of activating areas of the brain that register satisfaction from food, the enjoyment of physical intimacy, and the elation experienced from illicit drugs. While there is substantial evidence that animals other than humans are also impacted by music, we are the only living beings capable of processing each component of music, such as pitch, tempo, and rhythm, simultaneously. It is the completed puzzle of these different musical components that elicits emotion.[1]

Due to music's emotionally stimulating nature, we listen to and play it as a means of self-expression, emotional enabling, and catharsis. The American Music Therapy Association defines music therapy as "the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals."[2] There is evidence that music therapy techniques have been utilized throughout history, demonstrating the timeless and universal impact music has on healing.[3]

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[1] Joe Posner, 'Music', *Explained* (USA: Netflix, 19 September 2019).

[2] American Music Therapy Association, "What Is Music Therapy," American Music Therapy Association, n.d., https://www.musictherapy.org/about/musictherapy/.

[3] Stefan Koelsch, "Brain Correlates of Music-Evoked Emotions," *Nature Reviews. Neuroscience* 15, no. 3 (March 2014): 175, https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn3666.

The most well known and perhaps oldest use of music "therapy" appears in the Bible, in the story of King Saul. Saul, the first King of Israel, began to exhibit signs of mental distress. 1 Samuel 16:14 states that "…an evil spirit from the Lord troubled [Saul]." Music researcher, Liubov Ben-Nun, interprets this verse to mean that King Saul likely demonstrated irritable mood, insomnia or hypersomnia, and diminished ability to concentrate. After evaluating the biblical descriptions of Saul's condition, Ben-Nun suggests that the king likely suffered from what might today be diagnosed as Bipolar Disorder I, a condition in which a person experiences acute mood swings that span manic and depressive episodes.[4] In I Samuel 16:23, David plays the lyre and Saul finds relief. David helps balance King Saul's extreme states of joy and sadness through music, significantly improving his mental state.[5]

Music's ability to evoke emotion is complex and not entirely understood by neuroscientists. A rudimentary explanation is that music and emotion are largely processed by the same parts of the brain, with music stimulating the amygdala and the brainstem. The amygdala is where the brain processes emotion and memory, and studies show that the superficial part of the amygdala is particularly sensitive to music since it is processed as a social stimulus.[6] The brainstem is where bodily vital functions such as heart rate, digestion and breathing are regulated. This scientific understanding speaks to the clinical effectiveness of music therapy in the treatment of neurological and psychiatric conditions.[7]

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[4] Liubov Ben-Nun, *Music Therapy In The Bible*, 3rd ed. (Israel: B.N. Publications House, 2013).

[5] Jewish Publication Society, ed., "I Samuel 16:23," in *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, the New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

[6] Koelsch, "Brain Correlates of Music-Evoked Emotions," 172.

[7] Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York, N.Y: Plume: Penguin Group, 2007).

Music is the universal language of humankind, and, as such, it bridges the spiritual and physical worlds by transcending language, space, and time.[8] Many people can relate to the excitement and pleasure of singing along to a catchy top 40 hit in the privacy of their cars. Most of us have had the experience of being immediately transported back in time when hearing the one song we associate with a specific memory. We might struggle to articulate why the "Jaws" theme song has become identified with imminent danger, but film scorers know exactly how to make us empathize with movie protagonists in a profound and visceral way.

Scientifically speaking, music is a universal language because of what researchers refer to as the seven communicative properties or "the seven C's" that are inherently part of experiencing music. These seven social functions are contact (with others), cognition (interpreting what a composer intends to articulate), co-pathy (forming empathy and therefore group cohesion), communication (nonverbal), coordination (group synchronization), cooperation (requiring a shared intention), and cohesion (a sense of belonging). The frequency with which an individual participates in these social functions has been found to directly correlate with mental and physical health, while a lack of engagement in these social functions negatively impacts life expectancy.[9]

Musical Modes and Emotion

Over hundreds of years, cultural conditioning has led the Western ear to associate major scales with happiness and minor scales with sadness. In the 1600s, Claudio Monteverdi wrote his

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[8] Ditty Dokter, ed., "The Use of Israeli Folksongs: Dealing with Women's Bereavement and Loss in Music Therapy," in *Arts Therapists, Refugees, and Migrants: Reaching across Borders* (London ; Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley, 1998).

[9] Koelsch, "Brain Correlates of Music-Evoked Emotions," 175

Lamento della Ninfa with a simple descending baseline. Ever since, composers have replicated this musical device to convey lament. The consistent use of this basic motif in lament solidified the emotional meaning tied to it. When a Western ear hears this familiar line, the listener implicitly associates it with struggle and strife.[10]

Most of the world's musical traditions don't fit neatly into this binary however. A poignant example is that of the Balanise people who employ a major five note scale in their funeral ceremonies and cremation rituals. A Westerner listening in on their mourning rites might misconstrue the gathering as a celebration. While each culture processes emotional connotation of major and minor scales uniquely, associating emotional meaning with scale systems is universally binding, and every culture's emotional associations with scale systems are built and reinforced over the course of many years.[11]

In Jewish culture, music is critical in emotionally and spiritually orienting the community. Jewish musical modes are a set of characteristics within a scale that create a specific scale that root Jews in time. Specific modes and melodies are intentionally chosen for each holiday, festival, and lifecycle moment. Different modes are set to liturgy to differentiate parts of worship.

There are three main Jewish musical modes, *Magein Avot*, *Ahavah Rabah*, and *Adonai Malach*. *Magein Avot* is named for the primary prayer that concludes the *Amidah* on Friday night. Chants in the *Magein Avot* mode are generally simple and will often place pieces of text on

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[10] Posner, 'Music', *Explained*

[11] Ibid., *Explained*

one note in a declamatory fashion. This mode will typically begin with a jump from the first scale ascending to the fifth and close phrases on the fourth scale degree jumping to the first scale degree, many times preceded by the third scale degree. The mode regularly connects opening and closing phrases.[12]

The *Ahavah Rabbah* mode is named for the blessing that comes before the *Sh'ma* in morning services. It is often thought of as the most stereotypically "Jewish sounding mode" because of its distinct sounding augmented second. This mode typically opens from the first scale degree to the fifth scale degree and will descend to the third or first scale degree. Most notably, the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode descends stepwise around the first scale degree before emphasizing its augmented second scale degree in closing phrases.[13]

The *Adonai Malach* mode, (also known as *HaShem Malach* in traditional circles) is named for the first words in Psalm 93. The mode is featured on the High Holy Days. Its opening phrase consists of ascending major triads, while its secondary opening phrase highlights the fourth scale degree. Despite this mode being primarily major, cantors commonly utilize *krechts* (expressive sobs or hiccups). *Adonai Malach* has intermediate phrases that end on either the first, third, or fifth scale degrees or descend from the octave above and include the flat seventh scale degree.[14]

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[12] Andrew Bernard, in *The Sound of Sacred Time: A Basic Music Theory Textbook to Teach the Jewish Prayer Modes* (Andrew Bernard, 2006), 1.

[13] Ibid., 11.

[14] Ibid., 29.

Additionally, there are compound modes that combine elements of these three aforementioned modes. These compound modes utilize unique sounding maneuvers. They are most frequently heard in the chanting of the Three Festivals: Sukkot, Pesach and Shavuot.[15]

Jewish modes are neither major or minor. Each mode contains both major and minor intervals that open them up to emotional complexity. It is the integration of light and darkness in Jewish music that speaks to the human experience of balancing joy and sadness in the same moment.

In any given piece of Jewish music, it cannot be said that there is one prevailing feeling. In the Ashkenazi tradition, there are many emotionally ambiguous melodies. The funeral text *El Malei Rachamem* almost always begins with the same combination of minor intervals. Those exact same minor intervals are utilized in perhaps the most well known musical setting of *Yismechu,* a piece that embodies the joy of Shabbat.

Abraham Joshua Heschel points out that in the Torah, the first use of the word “holy” is used to describe a moment.[16] Jewish music marks time by sanctifying it. The melodies used in the ritual ceremony of *havdalah* emphasize the bittersweet nature of the moment. The *havdalah* ceremony helps Jews distinguish the holy from the everyday by marking the end of Shabbat with a symbolic sensory experience. While we are saddened by the end of Shabbat, we are simultaneously glad to welcome the new week ahead. The wine, spices, and fire symbolize the sweetness, warmth and joy in sanctifying the Sabbath. The extinguishing of the flame in the wine signifies the end of Shabbat.

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[15] Ibid., 58.

[16] Ibid., vii.

In Andrew Bernard's book, The Sound of Sacred Time, Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman notes that "ritual succeeds by means of symbols...the tangible symbol itself is not important, but rather the direct emotional response it elicits. Music is the quintessential symbol."[17] What makes *havdalah* a powerful ritual ceremony is its use of symbols, particularly its music to transcend the superficial understanding of joy and sadness. Like the braided *havdalah* candle, these emotions are intertwined in the moments leading up to the end of shabbat. Happiness and sadness become indivisible from one another.[18] Debbie Friedman's *havdalah niggun* is sung in communities around the world. The minor melody has become synonymous with the bittersweetness of *havdalah*.

I asked several cantors about their use of Jewish music in pastoral work. To my surprise, the majority told me that they don't incorporate music into their counseling. There were three main reasons for this: their perception of laypersons' discomfort with singing; concerns about Jewish musical content being a barrier in interfaith contexts; and their own struggle to find ideal text and accompanying musical settings.[19]

Niggunim (wordless melodies) can be impactful because they are transformative in nature. They are chanted rather than sung, and the chanting can be done joyfully or as lament. A single *niggun* can begin slowly and mournfully but then move into a tempo of celebration. Words can at times hinder expression when we can't find the perfect text to articulate a particular

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[17] Ibid., ix.

[18] Richard Cohn, Interview with Cantor Richard Cohn, Person, June 19, 2019.

[19] Natalie Young, Interview with Cantor Natalie Young, Person, December 23, 2019.

sentiment. Since the melody of a *niggun* takes the place of words, it can express whatever it is needed to, making *niggunim* ideal for communal prayer.[20]

The major and minor elements of Jewish music lend themselves well to the integration of complex emotions. Not only can Jewish music serve as a bridge between emotional states, it can also serve as a tool to the experience and integration of many different feelings at once. Since music allows for a greater expansive emotional interpretation than text, *niggunim* can be a powerful container for holding various emotions simultaneously.

Jewish Ritual and Time

Holding joy and sadness simultaneously is intrinsic to the human experience, and Judaism demonstrates a profound understanding of the nature of these emotions. It is natural to want to compartmentalize emotion into clear boxes of “happy” or “sad,” but Jewish practice doesn’t allow emotion to be reduced to this superficial understanding. Rather, it embraces the complexity involved in sitting with the full spectrum of human emotion. Life is colored by different emotions simultaneously and Judaism can be a guide to painting with every shade.

Kohelet 3:1-8 states that there is a time for all things. “A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven: A time for being born and a time for dying, a time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted; a time for slaying and a time for healing…” *Kohelet* goes on to list seemingly opposite experiences and says that there is a time when each of these actions must take place. What *Kohelet* fails to mention is that there will be times when

[20] Ibid., December 23, 2019

these moments will bump up against each other or intersect entirely.[21] We experience love and loss, birth and death, sickness and healing one right after another if not at the same time. Jewish ritual specifically acknowledges and makes spaces for this understanding. For example, in the traditional Jewish wedding ceremony, the groom breaks a glass to represent the destruction of the Second Temple. With this act, the couple recalls Jewish pain and mourning while celebrating their new life together. Similarly, during the Passover seder, it is customary to pour out ten drops of wine onto our plate when remembering the ten plagues the Egyptians endured. The wine represents our joy, and the sacrifice of this wine reminds us that we our joy took place alongside the suffering of others.

The Jewish calendar attempts to guide and prepare us for this challenge by mirroring the natural, pendulum-like sway of joy and sadness in our lives. There are undeniable calendrical juxtapositions in our calendar.[22] *Yom Kippur*, a solemn time of deep introspection is immediately followed by Sukkot, a holiday that is also known as *z'man simchateinu*, a time of rejoicing. The collective day of Jewish mourning and recalling the destruction of the Second Temple, *Tishah B'Av* is immediately preceded by *Tu B'Av*, a joyous holiday celebrating love. The modern Jewish calendar places Yom Hazikaron, a day commemorating fallen Israeli soldiers, the day before Yom Haatzmaut, the Israeli Independence day. Yom HaShoah, the day of Holocaust remembrance is in the month of *Nissan*, also known as *z'man hariteinu*, the time of our liberation. To attempt to fully transition from one feeling to another would inevitably result in

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[21] Michael V. Fox, ed., "Chapter 3:1-8," in *Ecclesiastes: the traditional Hebrew text with the new JPS translation*, 1st ed, The JPS Bible commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004).

[22] Rabbi Joel Mosbacher, "What Can We Learn From the Juxtaposition of Joy and Sorrow?," ReformJudaism.org, July 25, 2018, https://reformjudaism.org/blog/2018/07/25/what-can-we-learn-juxtaposition-joy-and-sorrow.

emotional whiplash and exhaustion. Our calendar encourages us to be at peace with holding joy and sadness simultaneously.

The Torah teaches us to serve God in a perpetual state of *simcha,*or joyousness.[23] While the verse of Torah where this command is given specifically applies to the celebration of festivals, it has been extrapolated to include the way we serve God every day of the year.[24] While the word *simcha* is frequently translated as "joyousness," our Talmudic sages translated it differently. While joy can be a facet of *simcha*, Rashi understood this word to indicate a fullness of the heart, a *lev shalem.*[25] The Hebrew root שלם means complete or whole and is the core of the word שלום (shalom), "peace." We are not being commanded to feel happiness as much as we are being commanded to feel and be at peace with our emotions. We are asked to approach every experience life has to offer with full hearts.[26]

Personal Narratives

"The purpose of the cantor is to mark time in music. The music's function is to help us live through a moment of confrontation with the presence of God."[27]

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[23] Jewish Publication Society, ed., "Deuteronomy 16:14," in *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, the New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

[24] Jewish Publication Society, ed., "Deuteronomy 28:47," in *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, the New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

[25] Abraham J. Twerski, *Simchah: It's Not Just Happiness*, 1st ed, Artscroll Series (Brooklyn, N.Y: Mesorah, 2006).

[26] Rachel Barenblat, "Sitting With Sorrow in the Sukkah," *Velveteen Rabbi* (blog), September 28, 2015, https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2015/09/sitting-in-the-sukkah-with-sorrow.html.

[27] Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Vocation of the Cantor" (American Conference of Cantors, 1966).

I interviewed cantors and other Jewish musical professionals to collect personal narratives about their use of Jewish music in moments of mixed emotions. I wanted to learn how Jewish music can best be utilized for its therapeutic qualities at the intersection of joy and sadness in the counseling of individuals, communal leadership, and self care. Several key themes emerged in these interviews that are necessary for cantors to consider in pastoral work. The following narratives shed light on these themes.

Music and Ritual - Cantor Richard Cohn

"I was at the ordination celebration of a student to be ordained the following morning and the news had spread about the death of Rabbi Panken z"l. The student went ahead and led *havdalah* as she would have regardless. The music played a role and formed a relationship to everything that was happening that night. It was Saturday night, shabbat was ending, there had been this tremendous loss, and at the same time, we were going to light the candle, and take up the wine, and inhale the spices, and make the separation from shabbat to the regular week. We were going to listen for the candle being extinguished in the wine and sing about Elijah the prophet and Miriam the prophetess. The ritual and the music through which that ritual is expressed became a vessel in that moment for some kind of stability and contextualization. The music in that *havdalah* ceremony held the tremendous weight of that evening- both the joy and the sorrow."

Psalms and Ritual - Cantor Jacob Niemi

"It was only my second day on the floor in CPE. I just gotten back from serving for the High Holy Days. I was very fresh in the program. All of a sudden, we get this call in the

chaplaincy office that there is a couple in the nursing unit who has just given birth to a baby with essentially no brain function. The baby was placed on a ventilator and they were anticipating needing to take the baby off of the ventilator. The family wanted to do a baby naming ceremony before the baby was taken off the ventilator. There was a need for ritual in that moment. The purpose of ritual is to orient ourselves in time and space, especially in times of great disorientation. They needed a moment of orienting themselves by saying something about who they were as a family and by blessing this baby before they said goodbye to him. I pulled text from Psalm 147 because of a piece of music I had remembered that includes the words, “healer of the broken-hearted, binder of their wounds, who counts the number of the stars and calls them each by name.” I incorporated this into the naming blessing and then did a priestly benediction in which I had everyone in the room -including the hospital staff, hold hands. And then in a moment that really drove home that aspect of needing ritual, everyone took turns kissing the baby’s forehead before pulling the baby off of the ventilator. It was clear that everyone there ended that ritual space. And then afterwards, I realized that I needed it too. Both in my role as a practitioner, holding the space for them, it was also in my human response to what was going on. While this ceremony was light on music, my sensibilities as a religious music practitioner certainly informed what I was trying to accomplish. That one particular verse from Psalm 147 that framed my naming blessing came to mind because of that musical setting.”

Music and Memory - Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller

“I was at a very special concert. It was the 50th anniversary of the Boston Zamir Chorale. And I had sung with the Chorale when I was in college. I was asked to write a piece for the event

which was so important to me because Zamir has played a big role in my life. My piece began the program. I didn't know what to expect - and there it was. They sang it with such love. It was such a special, out of body moment for me. I felt such a sense of pride and joy. It was such a mountain top moment. And as I was talking to a friend right after the concert, I started to cry. I realized that piece was a piece of me and my life from before my brother died. I had written that piece before Steve died in November. It was written by my spiritual self before I experienced his death. There is a joy and innocence to the piece; it is so unencumbered. It is just light. I felt such sadness. Hearing my piece that I had written before Steve had died uncovered a piece of me that I had forgotten. That moment held great joy as well as deep loss and sadness."

Music, Memory and Legacy -Merri Arian

"When I was a music therapist, I witnessed the transcendent nature of music. Music imprints on people differently than anything else. I would have patients that couldn't tell me the names of their children, but if I played a certain melody, they could sing to me every word of the song. Music transcends space and time. Certain melodies can transport us and connect us to people that may no longer be alive.

The suddenness of my friend Debbie Friedman's death made it very, very difficult. Maybe three years after her death, I remember being able to shift from the bitter to the understanding of gratitude for how lucky I was and how lucky we all were to live in a time when her music happened. I remember at her unveiling the rabbi said,'I know Debbie, that you'd want us to turn our mourning into dancing, but we're just beginning to find our footing.' I was beginning to turn my mourning not into dancing but into appreciation. There was this horrible

horrible loss, the emptiness, the hole, the pain. Then I began to appreciate the memories and regain my footing. I began to think about how lucky I was to have known her and to have had her as a friend. Now I listen to her music, and sing her music and teach her music and I just feel warmth."

Niggunim and Chanting - Cantor Meredith Greenberg

I had a congregant, Rhona, who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. She was given a very short prognosis. She went into this incredible mode of asking for help. There was a group that chanted with me every Shabbat morning. She had never come to those circles, but she asked this group of people if they would come to her house and engage with her in these deep sacred chants. She just had this sense that she needed this practice as a vehicle to process her grief and review the joy she had lived. The chanting give her a safe place to confront her mortality. She lived for two more years and she chanted every week until she died. Eleven months after her death, her daughters got in touch with me and asked me to do her unveiling. We went to the cemetery and I remembered the 'Rhona chant'- the chant she had loved the most. I offered this chant to her grieving family that I believe she attributed to elongating her life. We all sang it. There was no doubt that the grief was immeasurable, but so was the joy of her memory. We spoke a lot of wonderful words at her graveside, but it was this chant that held both of these emotions fully."

Practical Applications of Music and Ritual

I began my study on this subject with a deep appreciation for music's unique ability to connect individuals with their emotions. After my own encounter with simultaneous joy and grief, music was a great comfort to me. Initially, I sought to utilize music as a way to process and

compartmentalize my feelings. I wanted a quick fix to move past my grieving into joy, but I came to understand that emotions in the wake of powerful life events are complex and overlapping. Through my research and personal experience, I learned about music's ability to aid an individual with being at peace with what is. The goal of a pastoral application of music in a Jewish context is not to neatly sort emotions or help an individual cross from emotional state A to emotional state B, but rather to accompany the individual in sitting with A *and* B until they are able to stand.

Ritual gives order and purpose in the wake of chaos and provides structure when we feel out of control. My research has led me to understand ritual as a key framework for the practical pastoral application of music in a Jewish context. I have crafted the following musical rituals as examples for communal use within a service,with individuals in a counseling session, and for the personal use of clergy. These are but three examples. The possibilities, of course, are limitless.

Communally: A Graduation Service

This ritual can be used with soon-to-be high school graduates and their families by marking the bittersweet nature of this transitional time in song.

1) Jewish musician, Dan Nichols was inspired to write his song, "We Are From the Garden"[28] when his daughter brought home a fill-in-the-blank template[29] of the George Ella Lyon poem, "Where I'm From"[30], for homework. The song's chorus is about the

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[28] Dan Nichols and Eighteen, *We Are From The Garden*, I Will Not Fear, 2019.

[29] "I Am From Poem Template," Freeology, n.d., https://freeology.com/graphicorgs/i-am-from-poem-template/.

[30] George Ella Lyon, "Where I'm From," 1993.

stories that we, as the Jewish people come from. Each high school senior will prepare a stanza or two about where they are from.

2) Invite the high school seniors onto the *bima*. Have the parents form two lines on either side of the group in the order that the students will be sharing their verse. When each student steps forward to share their verse, their parents will join them, holding up their *b'nei mitzvah tallit* over them like a *chuppah*. Encourage the congregation to join in singing the chorus and the soft oohs underneath the spoken verses.

3) Once the song is over, invite the congregation to bless the students with a traveler's prayer. They should use a text of their choosing or something they created. Some examples:

A) A New Traveler's Prayer by Mark S. Kram[31]

"Holy One of Blessing, Master of All things, may [these students] enter this new stage of [their] life with blessing, with strength, with joy, and with a thirst of knowledge. Even as we were freed from responsibility for [their] Jewish life at [their b'nei] mitzvah, today, [they] more fully take charge.

May it be Your will, O God, and God of our ancestors, to direct [their] steps and guide [their lives] with peace, and lead [them] to ever-fuller life. Deliver [them] from every enemy, pitfall, harm on [their] way, and from all misfortune and trouble that [they] may find on [their] own journey in life. Send a blessing to empower the work of [their] hands. May [they] continue to attain kindness, a loving attitude, compassion, and

[31] Mark S. Kram, "Saying Good-Bye at College Time," RitualWell, n.d., https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/saying-good-bye-college-time.

tolerance for all with whom [they] come in contact. You are the God who listens to prayer. Praised are You, God, who hears our prayers.

Praised are You, God, Master of the Universe, who makes the young responsible for their own lives. AMEN."

B) Parent's Prayer Before College by Rabbi Steven Moskowitz[32]

"Adonai Eloheinu, Lord our God, keep my son/daughter safe as they learn more about the world, themselves, and, I hope, their Jewish inheritance at college. Open their hearts to different people and their minds to new ideas. Let them acquire wisdom and skills to navigate life's challenges and struggles without my prodding and help. Indeed, let them grow more independent. Restrain me from texting too often, but let them remain certain I am always available to listen, advise, and, most of all, offer words of love and comfort. Even though my sheltered embrace is now distant from their daily lives let them find protection in Your eternal care. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who listens to prayer."

4) Conclude this ritual with the singing of Debbie Friedman's *T'filat Haderech*.[33]

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[32] Rabbi Steven Moskowitz, "Parent's Prayer Before College," RitualWell, n.d., https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/parents-prayer-college.

[33] Debbie Friedman, "T'filat Haderech," in *Sing unto god: the Debbie Friedman anthology*, ed. Joel N Eglash (New York, NY: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2013), 306–7.

Where I'm From
By George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush,
the Dutch elm
whose long gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I am from fudge and eyeglasses,
  from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
  and the pass-it-ons,
from perk up and pipe down.
I'm from He restoreth my soul
  with cottonball lamb
  and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
  to the auger
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.
Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures.
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments --
snapped before I budded --
leaf-fall from the family tree.

Where I'm From

I am from _____
(a specific item from your childhood home)

from _____
(two products or objects from your past)

I am from _____
(a phrase describing your childhood home)

and _____
(more description of your childhood home)

I am from _____
(a plant, tree or natural item from your past)

whose _____
(personify that natural item)

I am from _____
(two objects from your past)

from _____ and _____
(a family name) (another family name)

I am from _____ and _____
(a family trait or tendency) (another family trait or tendency)

and from _____
(another family trait, habit or tendency)

from _____
(another family trait, habit or tendency)

I am from _____
(a religious phrase or memory)

I am from _____ and _____
(an ancestor) (another ancestor)

from _____
(two foods from your family history)

from _____
(a specific event in the life of an ancestor)

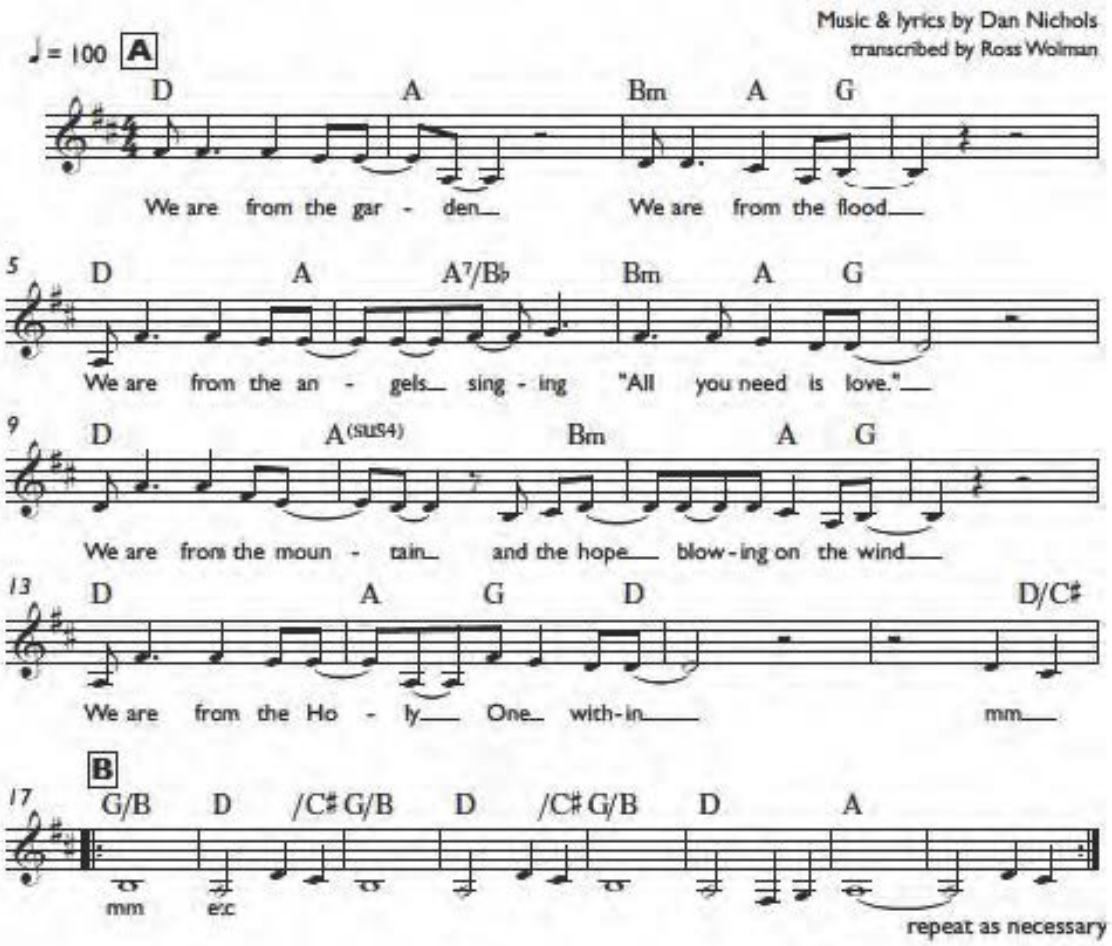
and from _____
(another detail from the life of an ancestor)

_____
(a memory or object you had as a child)

I am from those moments _____

_____
(conclude by finishing this thought or by repeating a line or idea from earlier in the poem)

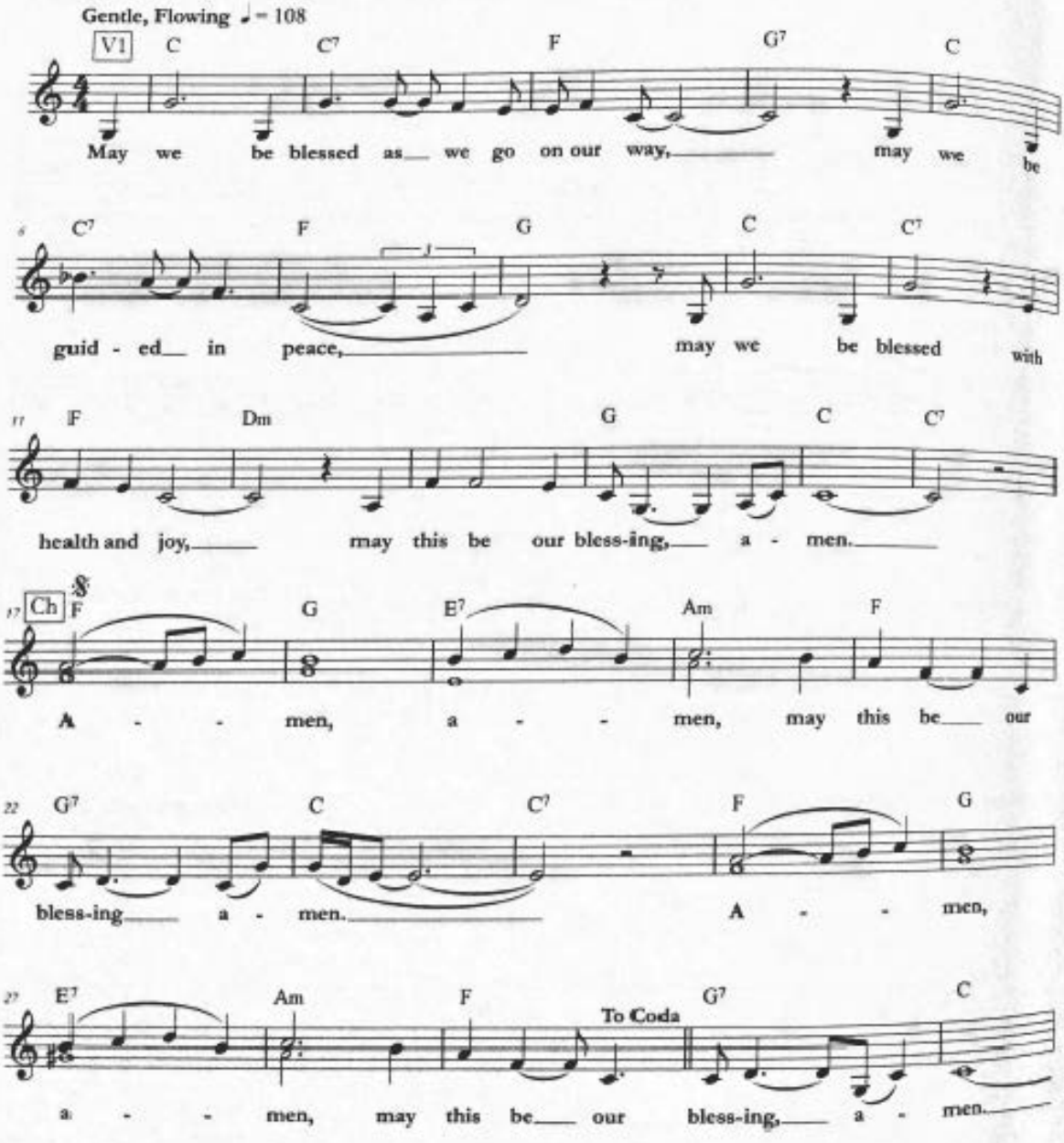
We are From the Garden



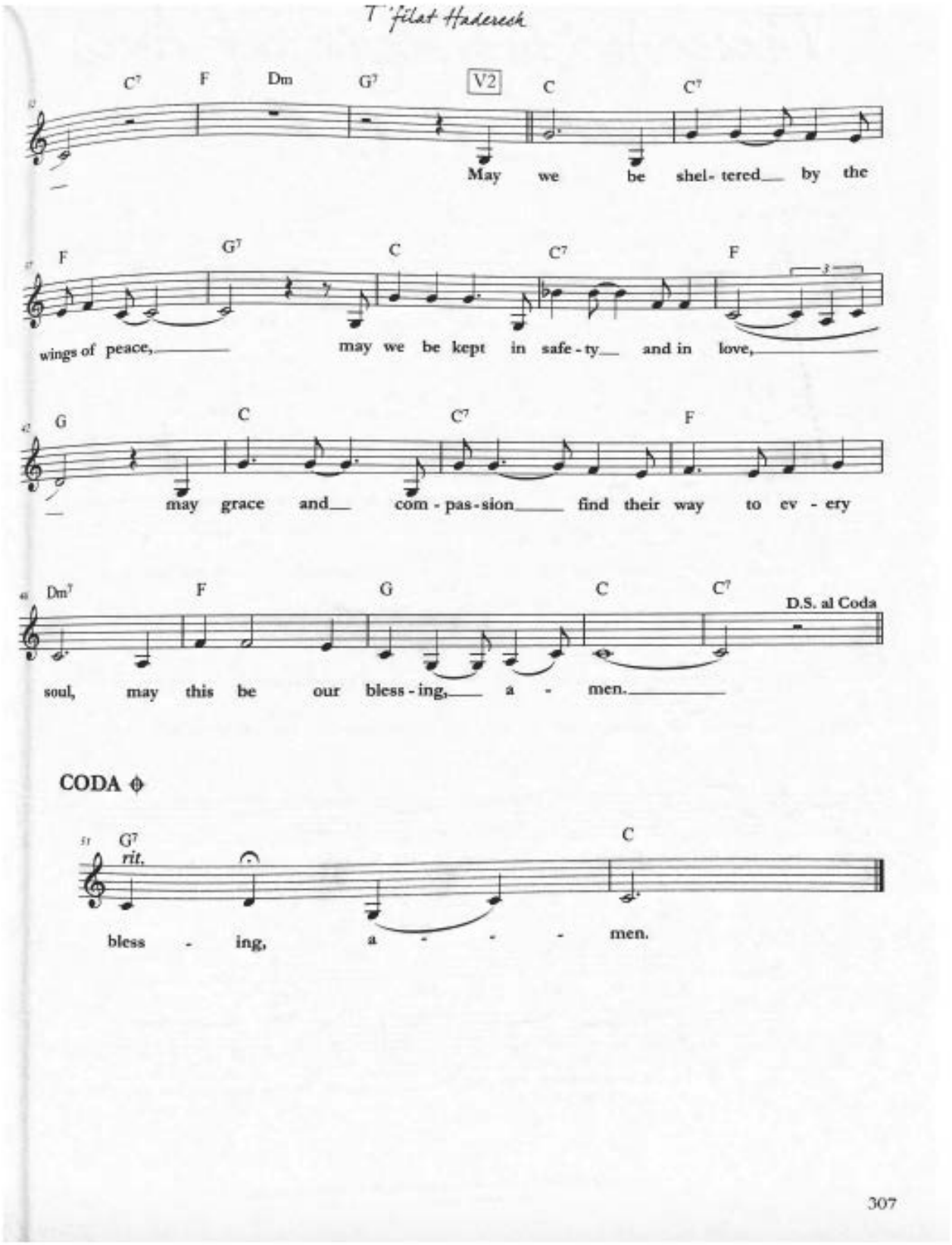
T'filat Haderech

תפלת הדרך

Music: **Debbie Friedman** - Text: **Debbie Friedman, based on traditional text**



From the album *And You Shall Be a Blessing*


T'filat Haderech
C7 F Dm G7 V2 C C7
May we be shel- tered by the
F G7 C C7 F
wings of peace, may we be kept in safe - ty and in love,
G C C7 F
may grace and com - pas - sion find their way to ev - ery
Dm7 F G C C7
D.S. al Coda
soul, may this be our bless - ing, a - men.
CODA
G7 C
rit.
bless - ing, a - - - men.

Individual Pastoral Counseling: Havdalah Ceremony for Divorce

The following ritual can be utilized in a one-on-one pastoral counseling session or the individual can include a few friends in a gathering at their home. This *havdalah* ceremony can take place the Saturday evening after the divorce has been finalized.

1. Before meeting for the ritual, have the individual fill in their answers to the following questions:
    a. In separating myself from _____ I am reuniting with ____
    b. In leaving behind _____ I am moving forward with _____
    c. In letting go of _____ I am gathering _____
    d. In exhaling _____ I am inhaling _____
    e. In closing _____ I am opening _____
    f. In ending _____ I am beginning _____
2. Open ceremony with a *niggun* (ie Joey Weisenberg's *Nishmat Kol Chai*[34])
3. Use Debbie Friedman's setting of *havdalah*[35].

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵנוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵנוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִינֵי בְשָׂמִים.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵנוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

Before the last blessing separating shabbat from the rest of the week, have them read their answers to the fill-in-the-blank they answered. Each answer will be read in between the *niggun* before the last *havdalah* blessing.

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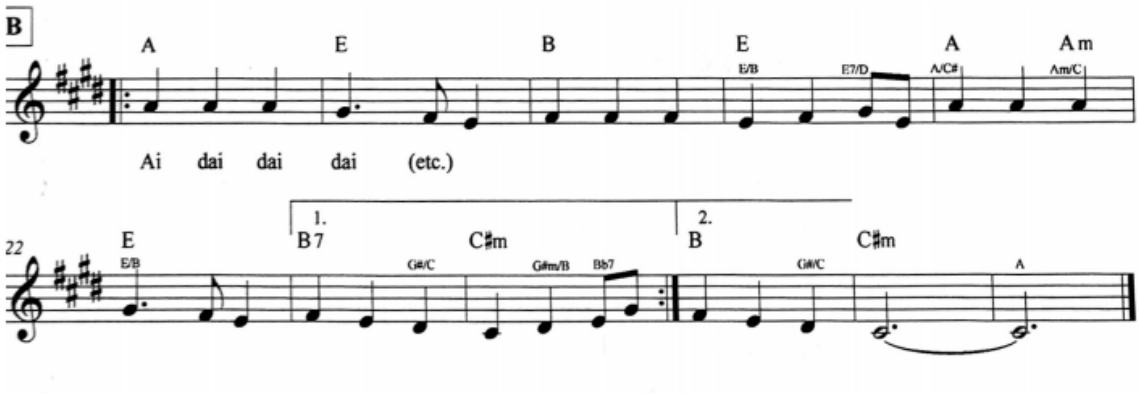
[34] Joey Weisenberg, *Nishmat Kol Chai*, n.d.

[35] Debbie Friedman, "Birchat Havdallah," in *The Complete Jewish Songbook: shireinu*, ed. Joel N Eglash and Eric S Komar (New York, NY: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2002), 65.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵנוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל,
בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לָעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת
יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל.

4. Singing of Tzvika Pik's *Shehecheyanu*[36]

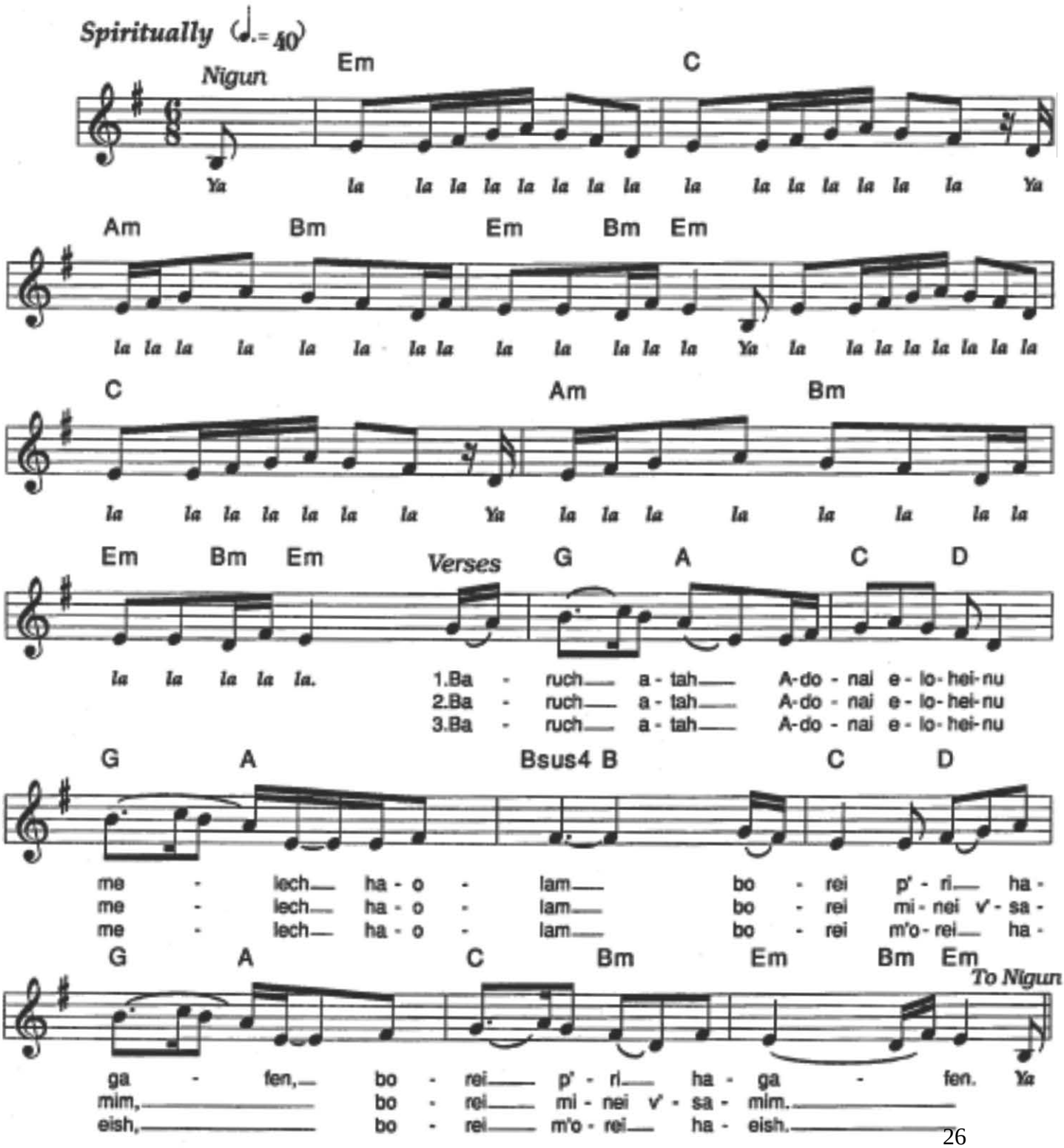
Nishmat Kol Chai Niggun- Joey Weisenberg



[36] Tzvika Pik, "Shehecheyanu," in *The Complete Jewish Songbook: shireinu*, ed. Joel N Eglash and Eric S Komar (New York, NY: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2002), 291.

54. BIRCHOT HAVDALLAH

Liturgy **Debbie Friedman**

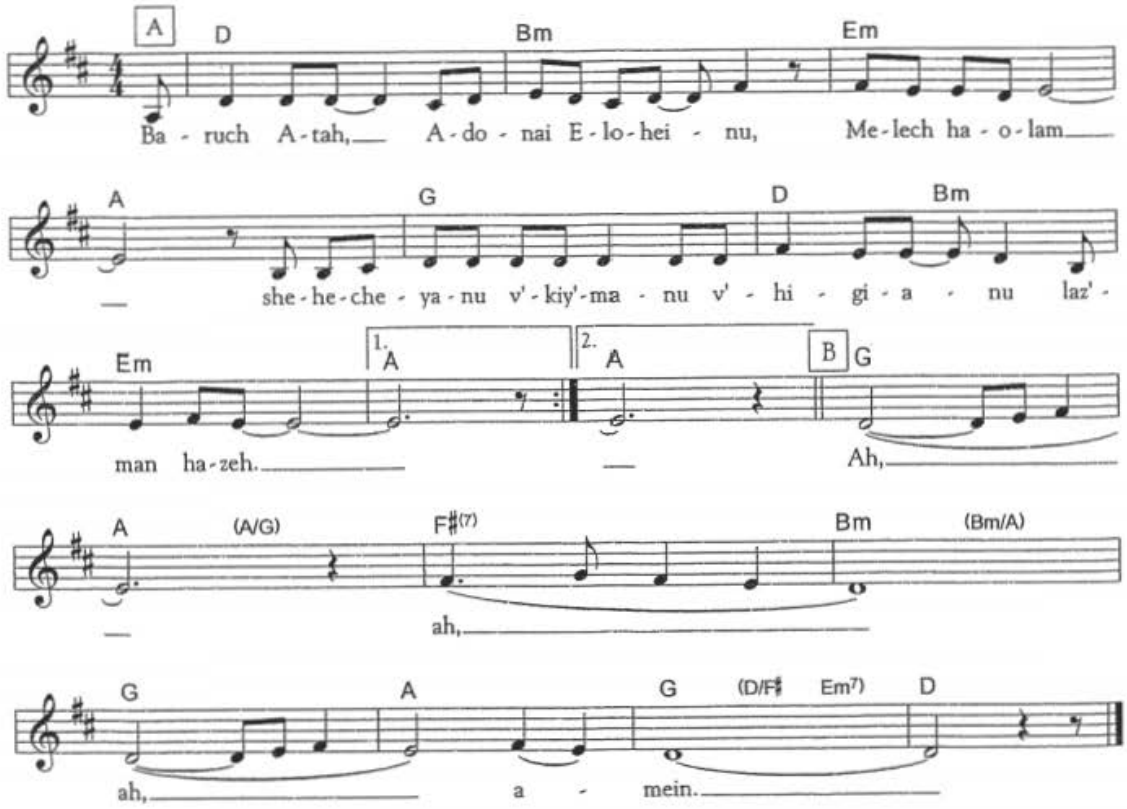


Shehecheyanu

225

Music: Tzvika Pik
Text: Liturgy

Easy tempo (♩ = 104)



Personally: Ritual for Clergy After Administering Pastoral Care

This ritual is for pastoral caregivers after handling a challenging pastoral care situation. It is designed to be performed at a mikvah but can be adapted as a *n'tilat yaddaim.*

1. Begin by sitting quietly and focusing on the breath.
2. Sing a *niggun* (ie Y'did Nefesh Niggun[37])
3. Read the following to yourself and then out loud before immersing:

Teach me
To cry and sing in the same breath
To hold empathy instead of wearing wounds that aren't mine

Guide me
towards a healing of my tired spirit
towards an acceptance that I gave what I could give

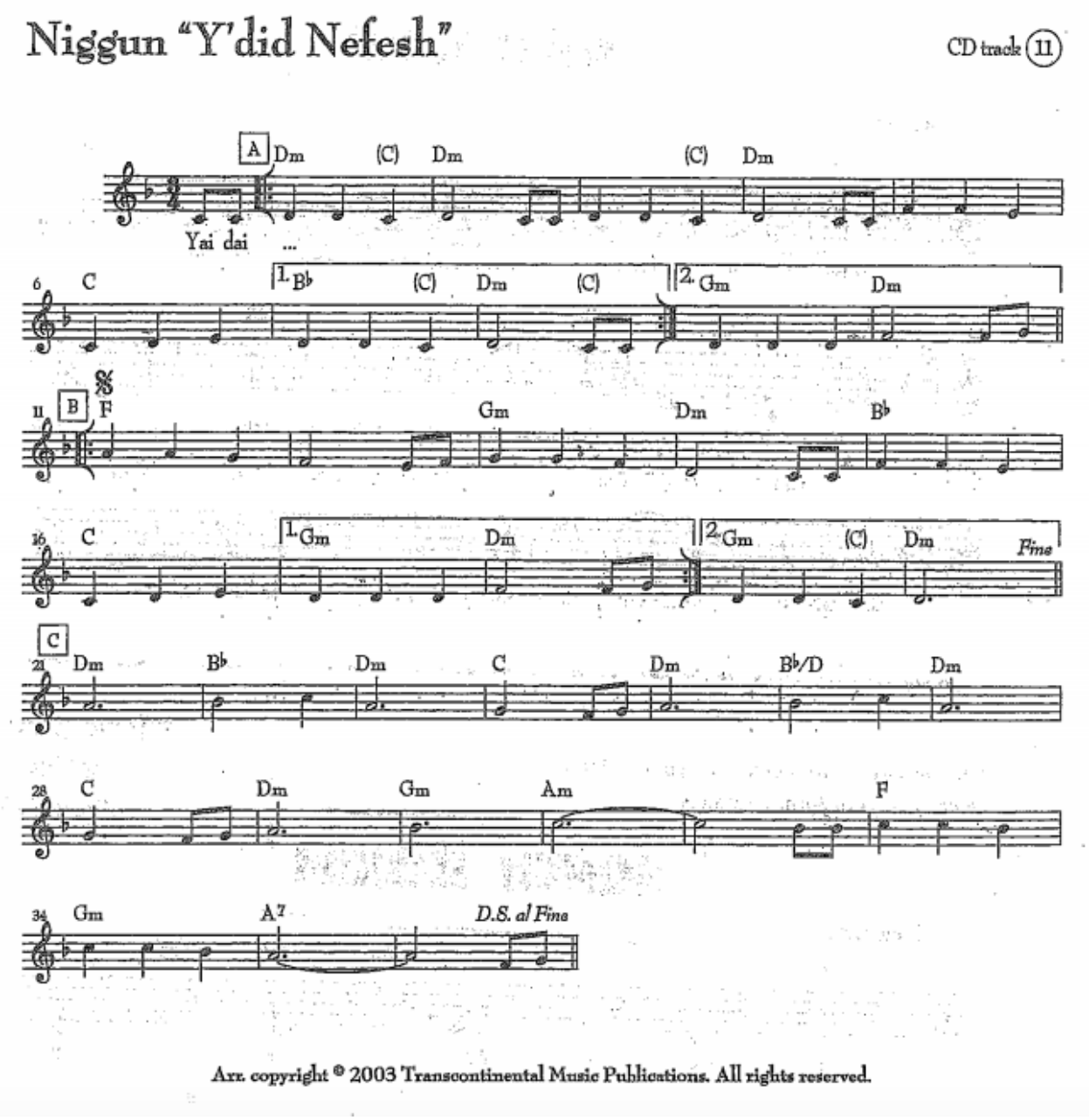
Thank You
For the painful blessing of being Your messenger
For trusting me to cradle your child when they reached out for You- and I took their hand

4. Remaining aware of the breath, enter the mikvah. Completely immerse and say the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל הַטְבָלָה

5. End ritual with the singing of the *niggun* used earlier and a few more moments of sitting quietly while paying attention to your breathing

[37] Various Artists, "Niggun 'Y'did Nefesh,'" in *The Complete Jewish Songbook: Shireinu*, ed. Joel N Eglash and J. Mark Dunn (New York, NY: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2003).



Conclusion

Because it is well known that music can have a powerful impact on the human mind, it is important to more fully consider the pastoral use of music in Jewish contexts. Cantors

understand the importance of being intentional about their musical choices. We appreciate how a specific musical setting in the right moment can move our communities in profound ways. Sacred moments of deep connection can be crafted through intentional chant and song in ritual.

When I first began my research, I wondered why more cantors did not report utilizing music in pastoral work. In addition to the reasons some cantors themselves shared with me, I think there are a few additional explanations for this. The evolving landscape of the cantorate has offered the cantor the opportunity to function as a pastoral presence only relatively recently; traditionally, it was almost always the exclusive job of the rabbi to take on pastoral care responsibilities for their communities. I also came to understand that when cantors ask their congregants to sing outside the walls of their prayer spaces, there is the potential for them to feel awkward about such an unexpected request. My research also compelled me to reconsider my earlier thinking about joy and sadness, to see them not as opposites but as two halves of a whole that is *olam*. Jewish ritual roots us in our identity, links us to our ancestry, and offers us a sense of structure and order in times of utter chaos, while music grounds us firmly in the present moment. The partnership of music and ritual can foster a space for individual and communal acknowledgement of our emotions while leading us towards a sense of peace with joy and sadness being inextricably linked.

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