

***Shalshellet Ha'Shirah***  
**Noah Schall**  
**A Living Link in the Chain of *Hazzanic* Tradition**

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**Advisor: Dr. Stanley Nash**

Noah Schall has made remarkable contributions to the preservation and continuity of cantorial music, specifically *hazzanut* of the Golden Age of the Cantorate in America. Through his teaching, transcription, composition and publication of *hazzani* recitatives, he has helped to ensure that this tradition will not be lost to history.

This thesis draws primarily from two interviews that I conducted with Cantor Schall, in June and November of 2002. Using mostly his own words, this document explores the musical elements as well as the personalities involved, as he tells stories about many of the great cantors of the Golden Age. Schall's personality and sense of humor come through in these stories, but the main objective is to preserve a piece of the history of both the Golden Age and the period immediately after that, when Schall was most actively teaching and transcribing.

Elements of Schall's personal style of *hazzani* composition are examined, as well as his thoughts about teaching *hazzanut* in general, and specifically in the Reform cantorial school, and to women.

The thesis is organized around these themes, and, through its narrative, gives some new insight into Schall and the history that he represents.

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**Tanya Tamarkin**

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

**Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
School of Sacred Music  
New York, New York**

**2003  
Advisor: Dr. Stanley Nash**

Noah Schall is a living link between the greatest generation of cantors and the cantors of the future. The so-called "Golden Age" of the Cantorate in America corresponded to the "great movement to America from 1880 to 1930," when, "an influx of exceptional liturgists arrived here, and they established a remarkable milieu in this country for Jewish devotional music."<sup>1</sup> As a child in the 1940's, Noah Schall was exposed to many of these great *hazzanim* in his neighborhood synagogues, on the radio, and, later, through his personal and professional relationships. As the last of the Golden Age cantors passed their legacy on to him, Noah Schall continues to pass on and preserve the art of *hazzanut* through his transcriptions, publications, compositions and teaching.

Only time will tell if a place will exist for this music in the synagogues of the future. Schall himself believes that he is teaching history, and if this proves to be the case, then this document preserves some of the rich history that he possesses and embodies. As for the future of the cantorate, Schall says,

There is no future. See, I'm pessimistic. Is there any future for the cantor? It depends on what kind of cantor you mean, if you're talking about a traditional cantor, or conservative, or reform, or whatever it is. It seems to me that; I might be wrong; that some students, when they take their first position, they're disappointed. Here (at Hebrew Union College,) they're practicing how to sing, for years and years, and in different styles, and when they go into a congregation, they have to do other things; there's very little singing. They have to teach choirs, or, I don't know, handle children, bar mitzvahs, and all sorts of other things. It hasn't got so much to do with the actual singing. It's the personality...it's a lot of jobs in one. I know that many of them would rather just be singers if possible, or do very little teaching. The traditional synagogues are hiring very few full time cantors; they don't bother with it anymore. They still usually hire a cantor for the holidays, and during the year, the laymen get up.... Most of them know how to *daven* plain. They don't need it fancy.... The Conservative congregations have a greater need for a cantor than the Orthodox, actually. They hardly have anyone in the audience who can get

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<sup>1</sup> Irene Heskes, "The Golden Age of Cantorial Artistry," in The Golden Age of Cantors: Musical Masterpieces of the Synagogue, Velvel Pasternak and Noah Schall (United States of America: Tara Publications, 1991), 9.

up and lead the service...so, most of their jobs are also combinations. They teach bar mitzvah's, maybe do some choral work, and adult education, whatever they find to keep busy. They might just sit in the office and see that the others are working! The question is if you want to do it. Look, we're living in a certain time, in a certain era, with certain demands; we do the best we can. I'm only working on the musical angle.<sup>2</sup>

When asked what it was about cantorial music that made him want to write it down and keep it alive, he answered that, "the earlier publications were just to be able to put down some, maybe interesting material that was never published before. That's all. And it would have gone down the drain otherwise. I don't know if we need it today, but, at that time I thought it might be useful for some."<sup>3</sup>

Whether these pieces are performed in synagogues and cantorial concerts, studied by cantors and students of *hazzanut* who are trying to emulate the vocal technique of the Golden Age cantors, or simply studied by musicologists and historians, they have already been "useful for some," and promise to be invaluable in the future, when Schall and his contemporaries can no longer pass on this legacy themselves. Although he claims that the Golden Age was unique to its time, and that its music is no longer relevant except for its historical value, he also recognizes the few *hazzanim* who continue to carry on this tradition. "I'm not the only one. You have the others there (at Hebrew Union College) teaching the same thing. David Lefkowitz is teaching the same thing, and Jack Mendelsohn, and Israel Goldstein, and Faith Steinsnyder."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps they will be able to keep the rich musical and liturgical tradition of *hazzanut* from fading into the realm of history books.

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<sup>2</sup>Appendix 1: Interview 1 by Tanya Tamarkin with Noah Schall, June 2002, 18 – 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 20.



This document contains only a few of Noah Schall's stories. Each is a pearl in the chain of *hazzani* tradition. They also capture some of his personality, style and sense of humor. When the name Noah Schall is mentioned, people who know him most frequently respond with a smile and a quiet laugh, often accompanied by a head shaking back and forth slowly and a faraway look in their eyes as they describe him as "a character." That response is almost certainly accompanied by some personal memory of a story or incident such as the ones included here. There is so much more to learn from Noah Schall. He is an invaluable resource to his students as a master of Judaic knowledge and practice, and especially of the music of the traditional synagogue. He is, according to Velvel Pasternak of Tara Publications, "recognized world-wide as an authority on all things cantorial."<sup>5</sup>

Noah Schall was born on August 30, 1929 in his parents' home in Williamsburg, Brooklyn (now Bedford- Stuyvesant). He grew up as an only child, with his grandparents living downstairs in their two-family home. Until the age of ten he attended Public School 25 Annex, on Kosciusko Street. Never one to pass up an opportunity to tell a funny story, Schall recalls that the name of the street was pronounced,

"kush-kushkeh," I think. You know, that story...there was a horse, there was an accident or something; a horse dropped dead on Kosciusko Street. So the policeman came, had to fill out the report...he didn't know how to spell Kosciusko. He says, "could you please pull over to Gates Avenue?" He knew how to spell Gates."<sup>6</sup>

After public school, Noah Schall spent two and a half years at Yeshiva Torah Voda'as in Brooklyn before switching to Yeshiva Rabbi Jacob Joseph on Henry Street in Manhattan, right behind the Forwards building, where the Jewish newspaper was produced. Upon his

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<sup>5</sup> Velvel Pasternak and Noah Schall. The Golden Age of Cantors: Musical Masterpieces of the Synagogue, 4.

graduation from high school, Noah went on to Yeshiva University, where he studied various subjects. He graduated with a degree in Philosophy, not, as he is quick to point out, because of any real interest in the subject, but because he had more credits in Philosophy than in any other subject. "I majored in Philosophy by accident," he explains, "because it just happened I had more credits towards that, so...it worked out that way.... Then I even took some credits towards a Masters degree, which I wasn't interested in, but I was there, anyway...I think it was in education. I never used it."<sup>7</sup>

Noah Schall met his wife, Shirley, around the age of twenty, and was married at twenty-four or twenty-five. She only discovered his interest in music when he took her on a date to a cantorial concert featuring one of his students.

She's very unmusical, by the way. I never told her I knew anything about music; never spoke about the subject. Later on, naturally, she found out. I think I once took her to a concert given by one of my students. His picture's on the wall. He's now probably over 80. He had a terrific voice. Here's his picture. (His) name is Koningsburg. He just retired recently.... There was in a big concert in Newark. I think I took her at the time, and he sang. I wrote a song for him, and he asked me to stand up.<sup>8</sup>

One of Schall's favorite humorous stories is about a conversation he had with Pinchik. In the beginning it sounds like another great anecdote about another great cantor, but this story has a twist.

Before I got married, Pinchik invited me once to meet with him in his apartment. He was a big cantor, Pinchik. We discussed something that he sang on a record, and he didn't remember; at least he made believe he didn't; he didn't remember how he ended that piece; he said he always changed his mind about how the ending should go.... The end was that he was sorry that he ended that way.... We were discussing one of his records. He said, "Well, in this piece, I wasn't sure to make it this way, and then I changed my mind".... He said he doesn't remember from one time to another, he said, "I'm always changing my mind. You see this

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix 2: Interview 2 by Tanya Tamarkin with Noah Schall, November, 2002, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 7 -8.

piano here?" He said, "Next time I think the piano should be over here. You see this picture here? I think sometimes the picture should be there." And he's getting all through this routine. He says, "That's why I didn't get married." That's the punch line.<sup>9</sup>

Schall did get married, and throughout their marriage, his wife has not involved herself in his musical endeavors. When students come to the house, she directs them to the basements, where he does his work. They have five daughters, who are all married themselves. They inherited some of their father's musical ability.

As a child, Noah sang in synagogue choirs and listened to all of the great *hazzanim* of the day. In 1929 or 1930, his father sang tenor with the famous cantor, Zeidle Rovner, in America. Noah's first introduction to music theory came from his father, who taught him beginning solfeggio, scales and intervals. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, Noah took lessons in sightsinging. A talented young singer, he had been hired to sing in the choir with Zeidle Rovner's son, Elias, who offered to teach him music for as long he wanted, free of charge.

Yeah, that was the deal when I sang in the choir by Rovner's son.... He said, "I'll teach you music." I think he said, "I'll give you thirty-five dollars." It was not a bad price...and he said, "and I will teach you music, as much as you want. You come around for nothing." And I did.... But he didn't speak English, that's why I didn't understand anything he said.<sup>10</sup>

A lesson lasted about ten minutes, and, although Noah knew some Yiddish from hearing his grandparents speak at home, he did not understand the musical terminology, "and if I'd ask him a question, I didn't understand the answer. Now I think, maybe he didn't understand the question. That's also part of it."<sup>11</sup> As anyone who has seen Noah Schall's musical transcriptions and compositions can attest, he certainly managed to figure out the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 40 – 41.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 4.

music theory and terminology despite this language barrier. He practiced and studied, and quickly learned everything he was taught. His teacher only taught him solfeggio, building upon the musical education begun by Noah's father. Noah Schall never formally studied "*hazzomus*." Until recently, cantors were not trained by schools, but grew up singing in synagogue choirs and simply cultivated their musical gifts in the context of their religious life.

Years ago there were no cantorial schools; you studied privately. There are certain advantages to studying in a school. At least if you went to a school, you would get a better background, and have some kind of a basic training. You would know something about the prayers. You would have a little background, and you'd learn the *musach* and how it's made up, you'd know the parts, you'd know the motifs. Like this, you really don't know it, it's just general knowledge. For example, if you have a *ba'al tefilah*, he didn't go to school...and he does it right, because he heard it so many times and he has a good ear and he has a feeling for it. He does it right. He doesn't have to tune up. He doesn't know if it's in *magen avot* mode or a different mode, or *pie a la mode*! He does it right, that's all.<sup>12</sup>

In those days, according to Schall, there was no permanent cantor in his neighborhood, but this actually contributed to his exposure to great *hazzanim*. Each week, the synagogues would audition cantors for the High Holy Days, so young Noah heard many cantors right in his own neighborhood, although the famous ones only came for special occasions, where they *davened* with choirs and tickets were sold. He also listened to the cantorial programs on the radio and attended every cantorial concert he could.

Since I was a kid I heard all the *hazzonim* in the neighborhood; there were plenty. Because, if a synagogue wanted to take a cantor for the holidays, they'd start auditioning all year, every week somebody else, so they had a free *hazzan* every time. I heard most of them that were floating around, and I went to all the concerts that were in New York, or Brooklyn, or anyplace in the area. That way I was able to hear all the guys, and many of them sang on the radio, so I followed it, and, sort of got interested.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Appendix 1, 15 - 16.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 6 - 7.

Schall also collected cantorial records. He talks about how this collection began.

On my block where I lived, there was a tiny music store, and this music store, obviously, besides the regular stuff that they were selling, they had some cantorial, second hand records. I passed by once, and in the garbage there were two cantorial records, and they were from Karniol. Karniol is the *hazzan* that's, everything is coloratura, from beginning to end. I took these two records out of the garbage, and I didn't have a machine to play them, so my family bought for me; it cost at that time five dollars; it was a Victrola. You had to wind it, like this, for every time you played the record, you had to wind it. Once in awhile change the needle. They bought me, for a present, this Victrola for five dollars, and I played these two records constantly. I had no others, I didn't buy any records, and that's what I had, so I was brought up on these two records. That sound went into my head. Not that I was able to copy it; it's very complicated. Then later on I picked up some records, I think, probably from some relatives, then they had a few records from Rosenblatt, and some from Kwartin, and this one and that one. Later on I even bought a few records. There was a store on the East Side, Essex Street. They charged, for the large record, I think it was twenty-five cents a record...maybe thirty-five. I think twenty-five, and the small ones were about fifteen cents or ten cents...for a ten inch record. I used to buy some sometimes. A regular record cost at least a dollar that time.<sup>14</sup>

As his musical curiosity grew, he began transcribing cantorial pieces that he heard on the radio. Many *hazzanim* at that time did not read music, but would buy notated pieces from other cantors. This practice provided the perfect business opportunity for the young Noah Schall.

I taught at a very early age. I studied sightsinging when I was about fourteen and fifteen. I studied; I took lessons for two years. By the way, a lesson was ten minutes and the teacher didn't charge me for it. So as soon as I was able to read, I knew some *hazzanim* who had some pieces. They didn't know how to read music, but I did, so they invited me to go over the music with them. Then I'd do it. Naturally, I was able to read it, so then, in a sort of an exchange or as appreciation, they let me have the music, so I was able to copy a lot of pieces and then, the style was to exchange with others (because) you couldn't afford to buy everything. I would teach it to them, and then they would let me have a copy. I was about 17 years old when I started, and as time went on I got some more customers who were, a lot of cantors. Same story, they needed help with reading the pieces. I

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<sup>14</sup> Appendix 2, 5 - 6.

helped them. That's how I learned, not that I knew anything. They supplied the music. That's it.<sup>15</sup>

By the age of seventeen he was making a decent living by teaching these cantors the music they had bought, but could not learn on their own. In return, they would often let him keep the manuscript, since they no longer had any use for the written music. Eventually, he had quite a collection of cantorial recitatives, and expanded his business to teaching the same pieces to several cantors. He also used his transcription skills to write out some of the pieces he heard on the radio, and began to teach those pieces to other cantors, as well.

I have laying here the first piece I copied; I just happened to hit it by accident. I think it was laying here. Yeah. Isn't that funny? I think I laid it down right here. Anyhow, it's in this pile. It was a piece (that) somebody sang on the radio, and there was a part that I didn't know how to put down on paper. It was hard to catch it. It was a long coloratura. It took up about two lines. At that time, I had a friend who was close to Wiesser. Wiesser wrote the most music in America. He lived two blocks away from me. Nobody wrote as many books as...Joshua Wiesser. His real name was Pilderwasser. From the Wasser they made Wiesser, so on and so forth. He lived near me.... He wrote tons of music; choir, cantorial, (etc.) Anyhow, I went up with my friend. He said, "let's show it to Wieser." I was embarrassed, so, (I) showed him the piece. I knew it...couldn't have been right... Weisser said, "not bad." He probably didn't want to make me feel bad, then he told me, "when you write out the cantorial pieces, you have to beat...as if it's a song," I didn't know about beats; you write whatever you hear! He's talking about beats, and then the coloratura... he wrote it out... just to give me an idea how to make it. I had no idea!<sup>16</sup>

As time went on, he became more skilled at transcription, so that today he is among only a handful of people in the world who can capture many of the details of the *hazzanic* style on paper. His talent for transcription of *hazzanic* recitatives was honed over time.

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<sup>15</sup> Appendix 1, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Appendix 2, 8 – 9.

I tried to copy some records from Hirschman. Why? Because there were a lot of people who wanted to have those notes. A lot of *hazzonim* used to sing it... because he's...less difficult than, let's say, Rosenblatt. Rosenblatt is a little more intricate. For...a *hazzan* who wants to...sing a fancy piece, he would copy Hirschman. It's not too overloaded with *kvetches* and *dreidlach*. There's just enough. So, I figured, if I wrote it out, I could sell it, and that's what I did. I would write it out, and then I had customers for it.... Now that, after, when I saw them later, I saw they're not written right. I mean, later on I got more of a knack to it, or...it became clearer; whatever it was. I used to write some songs for (one cantor) and then others bought it, even the way I had it written.<sup>17</sup>

As he transcribed more pieces, he did develop his own style of writing out the music. The more he practiced transcribing other people's music, the more finely tuned his transcription skills became.

I got more of a knack to it, or it went a little faster. I got the idea of trying to group the runs clearer, in order to learn them. I think mine are clearer than some of the others, because they didn't group them. Maybe they can't catch it, I don't know. I figured it out...maybe someone will do it better; I don't know. It got slightly clearer as I got older. (At) least, I imagine so.<sup>18</sup>

His skill at transcription caught the attention of publishers of Jewish music, and he began to receive commissions to edit and compose collections of *hazzanic* recitatives.

I was commissioned, in the days of the Thesaurus, to do a Sabbath and *sholosh regolim* service; not exactly my own. It was supposed to be a combination of all the fellas that were around; Carlebach, and all the fellas that were writing music at that time. We had a meeting. I took a picture with them. And they were all supposed to contribute towards the publication. Not one person gave me one note, from all of them.... So they said, "when is the book coming out?" I said, "Nobody gave me anything!" They said, "write what you want." That was the end.... So that was the book...first came the High Holiday book. That I did for nothing. The Thesaurus of the High Holiday I did free of charge. And I was commissioned to do the Sabbath... with, sort of Festivals. The first publication was the Cantorial Council of the Yeshiva University.<sup>19</sup>

Eventually, Schall's publications were taken over by Velvel Pasternak's Tara

Publications, and the insignia of the Yeshiva University was removed in later editions.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 11 – 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 17.

Schall's collection of manuscripts continued to grow over the years, so that today he may have one of the largest collections of cantorial manuscripts in the world, including those in libraries. At one time, he knew where each piece could be found, but by now the collection has outgrown even his own ability to locate music. Noah Schall's basement, where he does most of his writing and coaching, is like a time capsule. The walls are covered with photographs, concert posters, and all manner of memorabilia from the Golden Age of the Cantorate through today. There are piles and stacks and boxes of music everywhere, hand written manuscripts of some of the most famous cantorial recitatives ever recorded. The music collection has overflowed the large filing cabinet at the bottom of the stairs, and even the piles on the floor are only a small fraction of the music in Schall's collection. The rest of the music is in storage in boxes in the garage. Now, when a student asks for a particular piece, Schall might spend an entire day searching for that piece in his collection, and not always with success. Many of the manuscripts are not even labeled, but Schall can tell by the handwriting which cantor wrote each particular piece. By now, his collection has grown to the point that he cannot take the time to go through each piece and catalogue all of that music by composer. Sitting in his basement, he describes the enormity of his collection.

You have no idea how much music is in this house.... It's probably, from the recitatives, probably the biggest collection that anyone has, most probably. I think so, yeah, including libraries. I'm not talking about printed books; I'm talking about manuscripts. There must be, in this (filing cabinet) here, it could be a few thousand pieces in here. See stacks like this? These are all from manuscripts! They're not printed pieces. I don't even look at them. In an earlier stage I knew where every sheet was; I knew exactly what I had, and if I needed it, I could find it. Now if I need something, I have to spend a whole day, and then I don't find it.... I can't throw it in the garbage, I can't sell it; no one will buy it; and I can't throw

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<sup>19</sup> Appendix 1, 8 - 9.



it out. So what's the solution? When I'll be here no more...one match will take care of it. (I'll) tell my wife to burn it.<sup>20</sup>

Now that his colleagues are aware of Schall's irreverent plans for his collection, they will make sure that the music is saved. Cantor Jack Mendelson intends to go to Schall's house himself with a truck, if that will be the only way to save the music. Schall is skeptical that anyone else will be able to make sense of his collection.

They wouldn't even know what it is. I have to catalogue it! I can identify, from the manuscript, even if there's no name on it, and in a lot of cases, I can tell you who wrote it, just by...the way the notes go, or a certain expression. I know this one makes it this way. The other one makes it the other way. The same thing, how it's expressed. Not everybody, but from the popular ones. I can tell Weisser, even from a manuscript, Schnipolitsky, Alter's easy to tell, you know, all the popular ones. Rosenblatt, anybody!<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps whoever inherits Schall's collection will in fact be able to make sense of the pieces by comparing the style of each cantor, and maybe it will even be catalogued at some point in the future. Schall could identify each cantor by his particular style, and if even one or two of the manuscripts by a composer is labeled, it is possible that someone else might be able to identify others by that cantor.

When it comes to the most famous cantors, I knew their whole routine. Pinchik I knew almost the whole business. The ones that I heard, see, most of them, they *daven* the same every time, because they were usually in different places, and the old *hazzonim*, they *davened* once a month...when you *bench rosh hodesh*. So they could repeat. Chagy *davened* the same all the time, Vigoda *davened* the same, Liebele Waldman *davened* the same. Ganchoff changed. He probably wanted to improve, or he had a lot of music he wanted to air out. Kapov-Kagan was the same. Most of them were the same. You could pick up their routine if you followed them. In other words, I remember, Pinchik had fans, people used to run after him. And, if he would stop in the middle of the singing, a guy in the audience would...sing the next word. He remembered how he made it. That was how they did the improvisations. They rehearsed them.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Appendix 2, 31 – 32.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 32 – 33.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 53.

The Golden Age, according to Schall, encompassed a fairly wide stylistic range.

Each cantor had a unique style, but they all fit into the same general category.

It's not one style. It's one school, and each one has their individuality. Rosenblatt didn't sound like Hirschman, who didn't sound like Kwartin, who didn't sound like Roitman. I'm shooting out the names of the ones who were popular. Pinchik didn't sound like Glanz; altogether different style. They all seem to have some originality. It's possible that they're copying people who came before them but, anyhow, they perfected it.<sup>23</sup>

Schall balks at the suggestion that his collection should be donated to a library or some other type of music archive.

I'll bet you if it was in a library, no one would even come to look at it. I'll give you an example. Alter's stuff went into the library in the school.... Do they have a record of who comes? I'll bet you very few people came to look at it, or ask about it, or whatever it was. So, you see, nobody's interested. The Rapaport collection was given someplace. Nobody comes to look at it. Years ago, people would run for miles to copy a number from him by hand! Today they wouldn't give you two cents for the best pieces.<sup>24</sup>

Although he seems to recognize the value of his collection, he regards it with the same mix of sarcasm and humility that comes out in his critiques of students. He seems almost torn between his own respect for the tradition and desire to preserve it, and his feeling that no one will use it in the future. If it will not be used, perhaps he feels that it is not worth the effort of preservation. At the same time, he continues to devote himself to just that task.

I had a lot of material put on film. And I threw out the film later.... I didn't have the slide machine; I just had the film.... I figured, who needs it.... I have some manuscripts that, for a collector they'd be valuable, but there's no collectors. I have some things from, European manuscripts, probably from Russia,

He explains his dilemma.

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<sup>23</sup> Appendix 1, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix 2, 33.

I can't give it away, because it's something that's supposed to be a little bit dear to me.... You can't give it away, you can't sell it, and you can't throw it out. That's why I have all the boxes there. My wife would like me to throw them out! Besides the boxes, there's plenty in the cabinet, the garage, a lot of junk. I should throw out a lot of it. Every once in awhile I tear up a few sheets; just to say, "See? I finally got rid of something." I put it in the garbage. Maybe I have some here.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, he once gave me a piece of music in Ganchoff's hand that he took out of the garbage during a coaching in his basement. It seems extreme and almost unspeakable to destroy or dispose of these original, irreplaceable manuscripts, but if my experience is any indication, then very few if any are actually destroyed. After he throws them out, he finds them again in the garbage and gives them to his students. In this way, his collection will be distributed among the people to whom it still holds meaning.

Many of the manuscript in Noah Schall's collection are written in his own hand. While in the beginning he was either transcribing from the radio or records or copying pieces that had already been written out, he is also known for his original cantorial compositions. His career as a composer began at the age of seventeen or seventeen and a half, on a dare.

This fellow, this friend of mine, who lived near, who was friendly with Wieser, he liked to collect manuscripts, too, for some reason. He used to call me to his house, every time, and he would say, "let's go over the music. Let's read it"...so, he would put a stack of sheets on the piano, and we'd go through them. After we did them, I said to him, "I think I can make up this type of song myself." I saw what it was, and I saw the books and I saw the pages. I said, "I think you can make up one just as good." So he says he dares me! I think he gave me a week. So then I wrote the first piece that I remember. It was even printed. I took it off the market later, I was sort of embarrassed from it, wasn't that bad, but, there weren't too many around, and I took it off.... It was a *mishebeirach*. For Shabbat. I think I have one copy laying someplace. So, anyway, that's the story.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 34 – 35.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 16 – 17.

Over the years, Schall became a prolific composer. He always writes for his students, and has never simply composed a piece out of inspiration. When a student needed a specific type of piece, or a setting of a particular part of the liturgy, he would deliver a piece to their specifications. His method of composition has changed in recent years, and he has developed a system for writing new pieces.

I'll tell you the last system of writing. I found out, if you sit and write; think of something; write it down; it doesn't come out, it's not natural. You're thinking of how to make this phrase and that phrase, I remember, for instance, the first piece that I wrote, I couldn't make it straight through. I had a beginning, then I thought of a melody at the end, and maybe something in the middle, and I had to fill in all the in-betweens. Sometimes it doesn't match, or it doesn't fit. The latest way I did it was like this. I took a recording machine.... Let's say, for example, in the *Shabbas* service, let's say "*Yismach Moshe*." I want to write it, to see how it comes out, how would I improvise "*Yismach Moshe*" without thinking about anything. Whatever comes out. I make believe I'm *davening* someplace, so, I take a key. I start... whatever it is, I say off the whole *Yismach Moshe*. Then I stop. Then I say, "I'm starting again. Forget what I did before, whatever it is. Do it again." I do the same thing again. I do it three times. And then, in pencil I have it written out three times. Then I see which parts I said all the time the same, or what I don't like, and if I thought it's okay, I just improve on the *dikduk*, because, when you improvise, here and there you're going to make some small errors. I did that several times. And each one was in the same style, but a little different...that was step number one. Then I found out a new thing. The method was, I just improvised it, like this, and then I did it, maybe not after, or later on, a couple of hours later, the same, then I found out a new thing. If I'm going to improvise in a different key, it comes out different. In the same key, the improvisations were almost the same. If I started in a low key, somehow I had a lot of room on top to maneuver, or if I started it high, I found that I had room on the bottom. So, it took a different turn. And in all of them, no words repeat.... That's the best part! No repetition. So that was the system. I repeated the same improvisation about three times, wrote it out, then see if I could combine them, or what I didn't like, and improve the Hebrew. I put it down like that; that was step number one. Or, then, sometimes, if I would do it in a different key, it came out a little different. That was sort of the way I operated. In the old method of writing, in longer pieces, I couldn't go straight sometimes, I had to, like I said before, I had an idea for a beginning, or an ending, or in the middle or something, but not straight. But, as a *nusach*, I could go straight. Whatever it is! It's no good, so it's no good! Move on. I've been doing that for the

last few years. First of all, when you sit and write, you think, "I do like it, I don't like it," you stop and you go.... You do it! You finish it, and you don't like it later, don't use it! The other way, I realize, if you stop on one phrase enough, and you sing (it).... "Now I'm stuck. What should I do now?" So, you're stuck! You just keep going, try it a few times, and that's it.<sup>27</sup>

Not only is Noah Schall an expert on *hazzanut*, he is also a learned and observant Jew. Although he is most widely known and respected for his contributions to the preservation of the cantorial tradition, he has no cantorial training other than the experience of a lifetime listening to and working with the great cantors. He only worked as a full-time cantor in a synagogue for about eight years. One bit of trivia that most people do not know is that Noah Schall has a rabbinic *s'micha*. When he was working as a Cantor, he was called up to serve in the army, and he suggested that the Rabbi list him as an Assistant Rabbi, rather than as Cantor, so that he could avoid the draft. He studied and quickly passed the necessary tests for Ordination, and became a rabbi. His certificate of Ordination is probably somewhere in the basement, he says, along with the stacks of music, but he never practiced as a rabbi.

He was originally hired as a Cantor for his first job in Spring Valley, NY, which he left after a year when they refused to give him "a decent raise." His second position was in Glen Cove, NY, where he stayed for seven years before he "decided to get out of the business."

The cantor who was there before me, his name was Arnold Rothstein.... He taught at the Yeshiva University. And he had it in mind to quit. So, he asked me, if I was interested, he would tell me how to get the job, and he did. I followed him at the position in the synagogue and he quit, and then Yeshiva he quit again and I followed him. I was there for twenty-five years. That was in the 1950's. Fifty-what, I don't remember. Maybe fifty-eight, fifty-nine, I don't know.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 36 – 39.

<sup>28</sup> Appendix 1, 4.

In order that no one would dispute his ability to teach at Yeshiva University, Rothstein suggested that he should get a cantorial diploma from the school. Since the program was still in its early stages, they had no graduates. They suggested that Schall sit in on a few classes here and there, and then they gave him his diploma. He actually may have been the first graduate. During his tenure at Yeshiva University, Schall earned some extra money working for New York State as an "inspector for *Kashrus*," in the area of consumer fraud. He also taught music in different yeshivas, and has always "had some private students, so, altogether...managed."<sup>29</sup> After he left his position in Glen Cove, he continued to sing for the High Holy Days, in order to supplement his income, but he stopped singing entirely twenty or twenty-one years ago.<sup>30</sup>

While he was still teaching at Yeshiva University, he was asked to join the faculty of a new cantorial school on the Upper West Side in Manhattan.

There was a school that opened up; it was called Combs College of Music. They opened up a school...that college is in Philadelphia. They opened up a branch, that they operated on Broadway and, I think, 93<sup>rd</sup> Street, in that building there's a synagogue there. Ganchoff was *hazzan* there; Roitman was *hazzan* there all the way back. The men sit with those high hats Friday night...anyway...They opened up a cantorial school, and they took me to teach there. And I taught at that time, at Yeshiva University. Yeshiva University called me in the office, they said, "If you're gonna teach there, you can't teach here." You hear? They stopped me! Anyhow, I had started to teach there, and then they let me know, if you're going to continue there, you're going to be taking away students from us; that's not even true.... So I told them, "Ok. I'll quit there." In fact, I still have the program with my name on it. So, to replace me they took David Koussevitsky. He was sort of flexible, they wanted him, he came to teach, he didn't mind. So, the guy who was the head of the school, his name is Weintraub, he has a school in Israel now, he said to me, "You know, David Koussevitsky's gonna come here, he's coming next time. You don't want to come, you can't come." He said, "Prepare some music for him, so he'll have what to teach, then after that he'll do whatever he wants."

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 4.

Prepare something." So, this was funny. I couldn't say no, after all, I'm the bad guy! I'm quitting! So, what is he going to teach? He's going to have to teach the *shacharit*, for Shabbat. So, what did I do? I wrote out a page the way he *davens*. You hear? The way he *davened* it. And I wrote it out, and he's going to go teach it. Now, this is funny! So, the guy, the head of the school, Dr. David Weintraub, said, "The first time," he said, "he's gonna take over your class. Be there the first time, and I'll introduce you, and then, go home, you'll do what you want. You give him the page, and he'll carry on from there." So I hung around to give him the music, and he's teaching that page, and he can't figure it out yet. Eventually he said to me, "Where did you get this music from?" I said, "They told me that you're going to teach here. So I figured, I'll prepare the page on your style." "Oh!" he says, "no wonder!" he says. He says, "so, you're a crook!" You know what, that was funny! He says, "I see!" He says, "Isn't that funny," he says, "that's the way I *daven*!" And he became my friend after that, and that was it. "How could you write this?" He said, "I *daven* like this!" I knew the routine.<sup>31</sup>

About twelve years ago, Schall left Yeshiva University, and he began teaching at Hebrew Union College in the School of Sacred Music about five years ago. He also taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary for a few years. He explains how he, an Orthodox Jew, came to join the faculty of the Reform cantorial school.

Actually, they called me a long time ago, and the one that was in charge was Avery. He asked me a few times, to teach there, then, of course I didn't, I was busy during the day, and I couldn't teach there anyway because I was teaching in the other school (Yeshiva University). The other school didn't permit me to...teach anyplace else. That was their policy, they thought I would be pulling away students...Ganchoff strongly encouraged me to come there. I think him, and through maybe, maybe Jackie Mendelson, possibly. And that was it.<sup>32</sup>

Cantor Schall is regarded with equal amounts of reverence and humor by his students and colleagues on the cantorial faculty at Hebrew Union College. He is famous within the cantorial school for his critiques of students in the weekly Practicum discussion each Wednesday afternoon. His comments are almost always saved for last, and he invariably begins by saying that everything has already been said. What follows is

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<sup>31</sup> Appendix 2, 50 – 53.

often a detailed account of each phrase that the student sang, with a healthy dose of liturgical and cantorial trivia thrown in for good measure. Those who know him recognize when he is offering his highest praise, which usually sounds something like, "it wasn't half bad," or, as he once told me after a coaching, "you're not the worst student in the school." Those who are not tuned in to his unique sense of humor may take offense at his criticism, and he can be extremely intimidating to the new students who have probably never experienced this type of critique before. While he may not be a master of the art of constructive criticism, there is much that can be learned from what may seem on the surface to be insensitive comments. His critiques are often sarcastic, and probably reflect his own humility, rather than intending to hurt his students' feelings or bruise any egos.

Noah Schall is a master of *hazzanus*, and there are few coaches who can transmit the nuances and flavor of the style as well as he does. At the same time, he has little experience with Jewish music outside this realm. His ideas about the Reform movement seem to be a mixture of folklore and hearsay. While I would not go so far as to say that he regards the non-Orthodox movements of Judaism with contempt, he does not concern himself with the value of other types of Jewish music. That is not to say that he sees no value in these genres, but simply that he is not equipped to comment about them, as they are not a part of his education and expertise. When asked if the "real *hazzanus* and traditional music" is his specialty, he answers with humor and a twinkle in his eye, "if I have a specialty, then that's it. It's not 'Let us Adore,' or 'May the Words,' that you could do yourself."<sup>33</sup> While he enjoys teaching at the college, he doubts that his students

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<sup>32</sup> Appendix 1, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 6.



will be able to use what they learn from him in the Reform synagogue. "You probably won't use anything. Yeah, a little bit, here and there, maybe, in a reform service you can sing something traditional if you want, I suppose."<sup>34</sup>

Despite his lack of familiarity with the Reform movement and its music, he enjoys teaching at Hebrew Union College.

It's lots of fun, to see, if you work with somebody who has no background, if you get them to imitate a certain sound, it's some kind of a talent to be able to pull out from somebody something that's not there. See, if you're teaching in a *yeshiva*, they know the pages, they know about the prayers, they have no voices, and they can't read music, so that's the problem there.<sup>35</sup>

He prefers to work with students who are musically knowledgeable and who have the skills to take the music to a higher level of mastery. He does not have the patience to work with students who cannot read music.

You don't have to be a cracker jack, but at least be able to be corrected! If you make a mistake, so you show them...you break it up. It doesn't matter; even ten times, but after you do that, they can do it! I don't mind that.... I don't take students who don't know any music, and just to do orally, just drill. So, it takes you a couple of months, you're doing one piece, then it still doesn't come out right. I have no patience for that at this stage. Only for ...a professional who just wants to go over some points, get a little bit more, maybe, of the character of it, like, where to stop, where to drag, where to yell...you know. all the dynamics of it, who is basically musical. Not as a beginner, starting from *aleph beis*.<sup>36</sup>

There are some basic ideas that Schall tries to get across to his students.

...most important, to be faithful to the notes, the way they were written, and to sing with some kind of interpretation! There's not just one way! I show, sometimes, one way, or a way and a half, but it doesn't have to be that way. Because you can have five people sing the same piece, and each one would be different. There was a record with arias, with different opera

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>36</sup> Appendix 2, 45 - 46.

singers. They all sang a little bit differently, and they were all good, because each one has his style.<sup>37</sup>

As far as his students at Hebrew Union College, he says that, "the ones that make the most progress, are the ones that know something already."<sup>38</sup> When he works with a student who has some background or ear for *hazzanut*, he can be much more specific in his coachings, and these students usually reach a higher level than those who come in with no experience of *hazzanut*, even if their musical backgrounds are comparable.

When I get someone who's a complete beginner, I don't tell them all the details...I'm glad in the beginning if they can just follow the notes correctly, and the timing should be, more or less right.... Those who have that down, I try and work more on the expression, to put in a little more character, a little bit of a *ta'am* into it. That's the idea. It's not what you do; it's how you do it. You can sing a junky thing, if you have a nice delivery.<sup>39</sup>

Many of Schall's students at Hebrew Union College are women. I asked him how he feels about woman as cantors, and his answer was somewhat surprising.

For the places where they're going to be cantors, it's okay, and they wouldn't take them in the other places, so, there's no question! For a concert, it's a different story. If a lady can go up, and really sing *hazzanus*, we had that! We had lady cantors, but they didn't *daven*! They only sang at concerts and on the radio. They did not *daven*. Technically, you could have a ladies' *minyan*! You could read the Torah, you could *daven*; everything. I suppose there are a few *minyotim* like that; not too many. You could have a regular service. And it's legit!<sup>40</sup>

He does not feel as competent teaching female students as he does teaching male students, because he does not understand the way the female voice works as much as he understands the male voice. While he is feeling more comfortable after years of teaching female students, he still believes that a woman is the best coach for another woman.

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<sup>37</sup> Appendix 1, 12.

<sup>38</sup> Appendix 2, 46.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>40</sup> Appendix 1, 26 – 27.

I think you're better off with a female teacher, because she understands the voice better. I don't have that much of a background for it. I know how to show, more or less the timing or the intonation, but how to make it...to aim the voice in the nose or in the foot, or...I don't have that angle.<sup>41</sup>

Noah Schall enjoys working with talented students, but he is careful not to heap praises on his students just because they have good voices. As far as he is concerned, that is up to God, and has less to do with the how much work the student has put into practicing. "Of course, if you're born with a beautiful voice, everything sounds good. Do it with a sour voice, then..."<sup>42</sup> One of Schall's favorite cantorial stories pivots on this theme.

There was a cantor; his name was Arye Leib Rutman. Ganchoff thought he was the greatest cantor that there was. So, he was sitting with some other cantor; oh, with Rapaport! They were listening to Rutman. He was *davening*, or singing in a concert, I don't know what it was. And he made all these trills, and he sounded like a bird here and there. And he had tremendous artistry in the delivery of the solos. So, Ganchoff asked Rapaport, he says, "Nu, what do you say about that?" As if to say, "Nu?" Rapaport replied, "eh!" He says, "Let him do it with my voice!" That's the idea; it's no trick for him to do it! He says, make it on his voice. That's the trick! If you haven't got worth what, and you can still sell it, you're a good salesman! If you have Pavorati's voice, everything is sounding pretty good.<sup>43</sup>

Schall describes how he went about teaching himself the technique of transcribing *hazzanic* recitatives. His musical background was strong because of his early training, but he never studied the *nusach* or modes. He absorbed the *hazzani* style as if by osmosis, but not without significant effort and attention on his part.

...what did I know about the *nusach* or pieces or what? My students had the pieces; they had everything written, so, by teaching each one, that's how I picked it up. I looked at one version, and then I got a different version. Then I went to the music store. I bought up all the cantorial books that were around; they weren't expensive. I remember the first book I

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>42</sup> Appendix 2, 46.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 46 - 47.

bought was by Jacob Wassilkovsky.... He wrote nicely. The music was clear and singable; not too complicated. The first book I bought...I have it yet here. It's marked \$3. I think they sold it for a dollar fifty. They marked up the prices. I was afraid at my house they'd yell at me for spending money. So, then I brought it home, I think I told my father...he didn't mind; they didn't say anything. "Yeah, okay, you like it?" No opposition. Then I went over the pieces, I learnt them, and, I caught on. I was able to figure out the style. Then I bought Zemachson.... Ganchoff learned by Zemachson. He sang by him when he was about nine. He sang in the choir, and Zemachson taught him solfeggio and an embellished, cantorial weekday *ma'ariv* when Ganchoff was only about thirteen. I was able to go through the notes. I couldn't figure out any style in him. His was more difficult. I couldn't figure it out. They told me, "this piece is good, and *Al Rishonim* is good, and this is good." I couldn't dope it out. I didn't understand the style. The others were simpler. Wasilkowsky was sort of straightforward. But Zemachson was very difficult for me. And, I went through all the books. Then I had students, and the students that I had, they already studied with others. They studied with, there was a guy Schnipolitsky.... They learned by these *hazzonim* or teachers, but they needed to review the material. They didn't learn it so well. So, that's how I picked up all the music.<sup>44</sup>

Schall is not the only one who still teaches and publishes books of *hazzanut*.

There are a few others who Schall considers to be talented at transcription, as well.

There's a guy in Israel; he does it. I think he's over ninety already. His name is Taub; Samuel Taub... and there was a teacher who taught *hazzanus*. He also wrote a lot, but he had a bad handwriting, and the details, were not exactly...he wasn't that particular...but he was very fast. His name was Raizen. His student was Avery. Avery studied by him.<sup>45</sup>

Schall remains humble when discussing his own talent at transcribing *hazzanut*. "Maybe somebody else will do it better. I don't know."<sup>46</sup>

A new two volume set was recently put out by Sholom Kalib, a contemporary of Schall's. Schall spoke of the project before it was published.

Kalib also knows how to notate. Did you ever hear of Kalib? He's coming out, shortly, with three large volumes.... He's explaining the styles, and the choral music and, I don't know, whatever he does. It might be

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 14 - 15.

<sup>45</sup> Appendix 1, 10 - 11.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 11.

interesting. He got a big grant for it. Before he got the grant, he called me up to endorse him; to say that it's an important work, and he wrote down that, when it would come out, or before it came out, I would look it over and get paid for it.... He wouldn't show it to me.... Maybe he's afraid I'll say something? It would be better that I tell him before. Anyhow, he's a good choral arranger; that's for sure. He did a lot of notations which were ok.<sup>47</sup>

Schall holds Kalib in high regard on many counts, even though he disagrees with much of Kalib's musical analysis. Schall has the books on a top shelf in his basement. "They're very expensive. These are the books. See? He's my age. They used to say, 'Schall is the Kalib of New York.' And then to Kalib, they used to say, 'Kalib is the Schall of Chicago.' That's what someone would say."<sup>48</sup> They have similar backgrounds, although their expertise lies in slightly different areas.

Since he was a kid, he's better than me...he writes choral. Cantorial, I'm deeper than him; better background. The background, he had, but, it's deeper...if there is such a thing. Choral he knows better than me. Not that it matters. Nice fellow. He quotes me in the book so many times. A million times! I suppose it's by accident. There's a lot of pages; I xeroxed some. I don't know. There's a lot of times. Thesaurus.... He takes out lines from here and there. He talks about it.... I don't like his analysis. Oh! I can't take his analysis!<sup>49</sup>

Schall's most important collaborations were with Moshe Ganchoff. According to Schall,

Ganchoff (was) my main link, probably, with that generation. I worked with him for about forty years, so I heard all the stories, and all his imitations of the fellas that were around. So, that sort of connected me. And of course, it was a connection for him. He had nobody to talk to! So, it was a good connection.<sup>50</sup>

This connection is perhaps the most significant link between Schall and the cantors of the Golden Age.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 11 – 12.

<sup>48</sup> Appendix 2, 41.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 41 -42.

Ganchoff is sort of the last one from the Golden Era. He's a kind of a combination of various styles all together, but the combination came out right by him. He figured it out, that it fit him. See, the others were, seems that they were more original than he was, and of course we know that he didn't really compose anything. He sang other people's material. He just twisted it here and there.

Before Ganchoff had ever heard of him, Noah Schall had been following his career and transcribing his music.

He was the first cantor I heard, I think. He was the yearly cantor in my neighborhood. I was about ten years old. I used to follow him, he sang on the radio every week. So I heard him a lot of times. Later on, when I knew some music already, I used to write over his radio programs. I wrote them out, and, sometimes, if he *davened* in a weekday *ma'ariv* service, I wrote it out...<sup>51</sup>

Each week Ganchoff would sing one piece on the radio. "I took down most of them...and then I worked with him, sort of assisted him, for about forty years! I must have notated for him a few hundred selections. A lot of them are still in pencil."<sup>52</sup>

The beginning of their working relationship is a perfect example of Schall's mischievous sense of humor.

It's a funny story...he *davened* a weekday *ma'ariv* someplace, I think it was in Brooklyn, and I wrote out one of his numbers. I think it was, maybe the first time he sang it. A little later, there was a Conservative convention, in the mountains, in Grossinger's. There was a fellow, his name is Danto, he's just retired recently, already, too. So for the fun of it, I told Danto, or I showed him what I wrote out, and he memorized the first line. He ran over to Ganchoff and he said, "that number that you sing there," then he said, "I can sing it." Ganchoff asked, "what are you talking about?" He sang for him the first line. Ganchoff asked him, "Where'd you get that?" Then he said, "there's a fellow here, he has all the music." He said he wanted to see it. So I met him officially, sort of. Then, he invited me to his house, and then he wanted to see all the music that I wrote...that he sang, which was stacks, naturally. Then, he offered to buy them. He wanted to buy them. Why did he need to buy them? Yeah! He's going to fix it; he's going to change it, listen.... So, from then on, we became

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<sup>50</sup> Appendix 1, 20-21.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>52</sup> Appendix 2, 18.

friendly and that was it. And he would ask me an opinion; should he sing it this way; should he do it that way, whatever it was. That's it, in a nutshell.<sup>53</sup>

Schall also developed a relationship with Israel Alter toward the end of Alter's career. He learned some of Alter's technique of writing out the *hazzani* recitatives with bar lines, and adjusting the rhythms to fit into a framework of musical notation. With all that he learned from Alter, he still regrets that he never asked him more before he died. With each generation, we are further removed from the source; in this case, the Golden Age itself. As much as there is to learn from Schall and people like him, so much is also lost to history.

In the latter stages of (his career), Alter, you know, used to call me a lot of times on the telephone; he would ask for advice. "Do you like this phrase better, or this phrase?" He would sing it for me, and, I was friendly with him towards the end of his career, if you want to call it a career, and, I think he only gave me one piece. Yeah, and it was a printed piece. I think he gave it to me in a different key! He never gave me anything! That was interesting. I probably never asked him for anything. There was one thing he said to me, I mean, after all, he was considered very knowledgeable on the subject. He said to me, "if you have any questions about *hazzonus*," he said, "ask me now." He said, "soon, there'll be nobody to ask." That remained with me. I didn't think of anything to ask, and I said, "I can't think of anything." I said, "You tell me what to ask." That's where it ended. I didn't think of anything at that time.<sup>54</sup>

Even though he never asked Alter the questions that he might have, he did pick up some of Alter's style along the way, just by working with him and studying his pieces. Schall figured out some of Alter's technique, but still wishes he had asked him what he had been thinking of when he wrote *hazzanut*.

Alter was very mathematical. I don't know if he learned mathematics. His music is very mathematical, in a certain way. It's figured out; he has certain ways of figuring something. That's why you see, it always balances by him. Some phrases are stretched on purpose, or whatever it

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<sup>53</sup> Appendix 1, 21 - 22.

<sup>54</sup> Appendix 2, 25 -26.

is.... I'm sure he had certain things in mind when he writes; certain calculations. I'm positive! And I wanted to find out what he's thinking about! Or how he's thinking. I had a certain thing I found out. I said, "when you write," I say, "who do you want to satisfy? Who do you want to say it's good or bad or what? Whose okay are you looking for?" He said Glanz.... What would Glanz say about it? That's interesting. He didn't agree with him on a lot of points, but he thought that he was very talented.... I wanted to find out what he keeps in mind when he writes, or even on certain subjects. I didn't even know how to ask him, and I couldn't find out. The only thing that I think I picked up from him is the formation of certain triplets. He showed (me), he said, "whenever you get in trouble, or you can't figure out, there's a triplet that seems to solve all the problems.... You see, in my writing there's a lot of marked triplets; more, maybe, than by somebody else; that add up to a certain calculation...see, this music is not supposed to be barred. But we're putting in bars so you can see where the accent is, to help you learn it. It makes a clearer picture. When you sing it, you're not announcing, "this came on the third beat," or, "this came on the fourth beat," or where the accent was. (Alter) gave me the idea how to maneuver the triplets that you can somehow figure out all the bars, that they should balance. I imagine that subconsciously, I picked up a little knack of how to make all those triplets. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think that's how I picked it up. Also, you know, he was very good in setting down the word. His words come out pretty much honorable. He doesn't swallow any syllables or anything. He gives each word some kind of a character or a use or translation or expression. Others are not so particular.<sup>55</sup>

Over the years, the style of *hazzanut* has changed to fit the needs and attention spans of congregations and audiences. While today it is frowned upon to repeat words, during the Golden Age of the Cantorate, the pieces were made up of elaborate repetitions, with each word or phrase taking on its own character.

In the old style, you could have a piece, and every word would have different motifs and different *dreidlach*. The example was, like "*l'keyl baruch n'imot ylteinu, l'melech keyl chal v'kayam*." So you'll have, "*l'keyl*" would start with a *drey*, (singing) "*l'keyl*" followed by "*baruch*", whatever, and "*n'imot*," so, when you finish the sentence you had so many pictures, and besides that, sometimes you repeated the same words a few times.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 16 - 18.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 18.



While this style of elaborate word painting and vocal acrobatics was popular in its day, the needs of the congregations and audiences changed over time. In the Golden Age, the cantorial programs on the radio were one of the main forms of entertainment. People would go to the synagogue specifically to hear a great cantor *daven*, so they were expecting to be entertained and amazed even there. As time went on, other forms of entertainment began to compete with the *hazzan*, and people became less interested in listening to long pieces. "Later on, we were thinking of longer phrases. Like, we said, (singing) "*l'keyl baruch n'imot ylteinu, l'melech keyl chai v'kayam.*"<sup>57</sup> So you made it on one or two lines." This is in contrast to the old style, which is characterized by more intricate vocal and musical techniques.

The other one, till there, you took a half a page, already! They're longer. That's the old style, anyways, and there was a lot (of) repetition, of course, and there was a lot of crying intonations.... It could be a little bit melodic, but it's not a tune that someone's going to hum along with you. You're going to sing all these coloratura's and crying; you're not going to have congregational singing with that. The repetition is because they wanted to make the pieces longer. Let's say if you had two lines of music, they wanted to make it into a composition, or recitative. Composition is not the right word. Composition means, (it) implies that there's more than one part to it. All right. So, that's why you have the repetition. They used it (in the synagogue and in concerts). They repeated a lot.<sup>58</sup>

While the style may have changed to suit the changing needs of the community, there needed to be a religious reason to justify such a shift in the *hazzani* style.

Today, everybody's against repeating. They want to make it that it's *halachically* incorrect to repeat so many times. All right. So, there are rules about that; what you could repeat, what you can't repeat...*hashem's* name wouldn't be right to repeat, or certain blessings; it keeps the original wording. Some places don't matter, really. Like, if I ask you for something. "Aw, come on, aw, please..." So I'm asking you the same

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 18 - 19.

thing fifty times! "Aw, come on! What do you mean you can't...give it a chance, try!" So, it's a sort of a pleading....<sup>59</sup>

The music of the earlier period was rooted in the text, even with the extensive repetitions and drawing out of words and phrases. While the later style may have sounded more cohesive liturgically, the earlier style explored each word or phrase as a discrete section of the liturgy, and the music helped to bring out those meanings. In the older style, the music also served as a vehicle to showcase the great talents of the day. *Hazzanim* could show off their vocal range, agility, and depth of emotion through this music. They also worked within the framework of *nusach* and mode that was appropriate for each piece, according to the time it would be used. "First of all, they had to be in a certain mode.... If the piece is in major you're not going to start crying or be in *fraygish*<sup>60,61</sup> Even so, *hazzanim* had a wide range of options within those boundaries. Many of the prayers have a free style.

In other words, if you're starting a paragraph, say a *ba'al tefilah* ends *hashkiveynu*. He sings the last line, "*ufros aleinu*." So he's following more or less a certain pattern. More or less, like a *ba'al k'riyah*. One reads this way; one reads that. They're reading the same. It's just a tiny variation. So, until that part where the *ba'al tefilah* starts, you have a whole big paragraph before. You're free to do anything you want over there. You can go in any mode you want, and you can do whatever you like. As long as you sort of come back to a *nusach*. The conclusion makes the first part okay. Unless you're using certain motifs that specifically don't belong here. Let's say I'm using the Rosh Hashanah *ma'ariv* motif, and I'm *davening* Friday night, or *shalosh regolim*; then you know something is wrong.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>60</sup> *ahava raba* mode, the most typical Eastern European minor Jewish mode

<sup>61</sup> Appendix 2, 20.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

In addition, there are certain musical elements that characterize the *hazzanic* recitative genre. Schall's own compositions are fairly consistent in their structure. He describes the general musical analysis of his own pieces.

Even without looking at any music, you'll find here and there, something that will resemble tropes...most probably, and if they don't, you'll force them to resemble...that'll be the basis, and, of course, the mode will be the mode of that prayer in the service! Unless you have ten different services that are using the same words with a different tune! Like the *Ma'ariv*. If it's a Rosh Hashanah *ma'ariv*, or if it's *regolim*, or it's a weekday, or whatever it is.<sup>63</sup>

The basis of the music is the traditional music of the synagogue, including the biblical cantillation figures, or tropes, and the scales and motifs that make up the Eastern European prayer modes. The recitatives, even when they are most elaborate, still are grounded in *nusach*. Schall also pays particular attention to the Hebrew. He makes sure that the grammar is correct, and that the music is structured rhythmically so that the words will have the correct accents. "Then you'll see...the words are mostly correct according, with the *dikduk*, and where they fall in the bar on the right accents."<sup>64</sup>

His music is mostly written for more experienced singers, although when he writes for his students, he is sensitive to the level of difficulty.

The fancier pieces require a little talent to put them over, because they need various intonations; you can't just sing them bland. You have some kind of a *hazzanic* expression. They move. You have softer, you have louder, faster, slower. Sometimes you have an odd interval. Once in awhile...maybe it wouldn't have any. And it requires some experience. A beginner usually can't sing these pieces; not equipped with it. And you have to be flexible. And it's good to know what some of the words mean, or else you can't bring out the expression.... Sometimes, it shows you the action of the word; the direction. It sort of interprets the word.... And slightly melodic, and you have a combination of syllabic and melismatic. Syllabic means that each syllable has one note, while melismatic music has more coloratura or runs on a single syllable. So you have that, you

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

have the *nusach ha'tefilah*, and on top of the *nusach* you have elaborations or embellishments. You have the plain *nusach* sometimes, with cantorial embellishments. That's all. What else is there? What else does anybody have? Everybody has the same thing; one has less, one has more. And then you have here, key, then you have the modulation. Is this a *nusach* modulation, or is this a modulation from Mozart or Beethoven? I tried to make the modulation through the *nusach*; a *nusach* modulation, as opposed to just a music modulation; through maneuvering with a diminished chord, or this or that, you know, you can go up to any key from that.<sup>65</sup>

Schall does not write accompaniments for his pieces. He sometimes puts in chords to guide an accompanist, but he does not feel comfortable writing complete accompaniments on the piano. Despite his professed lack of skill on the piano, he has even made a little bit of money as an accompanist.

I played the organ on a few programs, on TV. There was a program from the board of rabbi's. They had, I think every Sunday, a program, if it was before Chanukah, or before Purim, before this and that. They had a different cantor on every week. I was on a few! I got paid, in fact! The guy who sang didn't get paid. I remember one case, I was accompanying a guy, and he sang off pitch, and I didn't know what to do. He was in between. It was *Kol Nidre*. Everybody knows *Kol Nidre*. So, when I saw he was closer to a different key, I went up a half a tone. In the middle of the piece! I just continued a half a tone higher! Then he did another number, and he did the same thing. In the middle of the piece I had to go up a half a step. He was off pitch. I might have it on a tape someplace. It was live. They didn't do redo's! If you were on the TV, on that program, you couldn't do it over. If you made a mistake, or you cracked.... It was a one shot deal. I was on about three times, I think! Two, for sure. I played on the radio, also, for some guys. All the way back. They sang without music! Without anything.<sup>66</sup>

It seems that whenever he was accompanying a cantor, something would go wrong with the key, and, despite his claim that he cannot play the piano, he always followed them into the new key without missing a beat. Sometimes he followed so smoothly that the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 43 - 44.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 47 - 48.

cantor himself was unaware of what had happened. This was the case when he accompanied Dovid Kosevitsky for a wedding.

With Dovid Koussevitsky, an interesting thing happened. He did the *Sheva Brachos*. I was accompanying him for a wedding. With choir! So, it was a style, all the way back...after he finishes the last blessing, the style was, either a kid or a girl, or even a lady, would sing "v'yima-," there are the words, "*vimalei mishaloseinu b'mida tova yishuah v'rachamim.*" That sentence. There was a style. (singing) "*Vimaleh,*" and the choir would answer, whatever it is. So, he decided, after the kid, or the girl's going to sing that, he is going, not to let it end there, he's going to start repeating these words, and scream on top! "*Vimaleh...*" In other words, they shouldn't take away the prize.

This incident is an example of a cantor who could not stand to be overshadowed or outdone. In the end, his pride got the best of him.

The kid sang, oh, everybody loves a kid; that ends it. Now, he's going to scream on top. So, what happened? I was accompanying him. It was in the Sephardic Temple on Branch Boulevard, in Cedarhurst. He said to me, "after, the girl is gonna sing, *Yishua v'rachamim,*" Then he would go on, "*Vimaleh, Vimaleh,*" You understand how that works? She's ending, then he's taking it, then he's going to...(singing) "*yishua b'rachamim.*" Then he'd go, "*Vimaleh, vimaleh...*" in screams on top his lungs!... That's what he made up. He's going to take that note. He's going to continue. So, what happened? So, I know already, he told me, he let me know what's going to be, but to continue. So what happens? So I knew the key.... She sang it, in not the key that he thought. She sang it, let's say the piece normally was in F minor, so she sang it in G.

Since the piece was a whole step higher than he was used to singing it, naturally, Koussevitsky had some difficulty with the high notes. He had planned the piece so that he would end on his best high note, in order to leave the audience with the memory of how talented he was, instead of letting the girl take the praise. Since the piece was now too high for him to sing comfortably, he was in trouble.

So, when she goes, "*V'rachamim.*" He sang, "*vimaleh, vimaleh,*" and he screamed, and I'm following, and I see...he didn't know, he didn't realize that it wasn't the key that it was! It's very funny! I figured, should I tell him anything? At the end, after the ceremony, in the dressing room, I said,

"Do you know what happened?" I said, "You think you were in this and this key?" I said, "No, you were in this key!" "Oh!" he says, "Now I understand!" He couldn't understand why he's having so much difficulty! At that, he always has that easy! But he's a tone higher. That was funny. Oh, he was relieved to find out that his voice is really ok, but was not coming out. That was funny.<sup>67</sup>

Noah Schall's contributions to the preservation of *hazzanut* extend far beyond his published music. His students are his true legacy, as we absorb some of his musical knowledge and skill, along with his stories of the cantors of the Golden Age. Teachers always have the ability to transform the future through their students. Noah Schall is keeping the art of *hazzanut* alive even while transmitting its rich history. His passion and enthusiasm for this music are contagious, and engender a desire on the part of his students and colleagues to ensure that this chain of cantorial tradition will remain unbroken and continue to grow, long after Noah Schall's personal contributions take their place in history.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 49 – 50.

**Appendix 1:**

**Interview 1 by Tanya Tamarkin with Noah Schall  
June 2002.**

Track 1

T Here we go! Ok  
S You're on the air?  
T I think we're on the air. It looks like it. So  
S oh, you came with a lot of stuff!  
T I have a lot of stuff. I'm gonna try to take some notes, but I want to mostly just talk to you. Um...so I'm gonna write my thesis about you  
S all right  
T (laughs)  
S Poor choice, go ahead  
T eh! So the first thing I want to know is, just, what you want me to say about you  
S Nah! Say whatever you like  
T well, I don't know anything yet, so you have to tell me something. I wanted to find out more about the music that you've written and  
S yeah  
T published and transcribed and taught.  
S yeah.  
T So...tell me, um, let's see...  
S (laughs)  
T I made some questions, but I don't know if they're any good.  
S they're good, they're good  
T ok. So, I know that you've transcribed and published a lot of  
S yeah  
T cantorial music.  
S yeah  
T um. Tell me about the music, and what it was about that music that made you want to write it down and keep it alive.  
S eh, depends what, which books you want to talk about. Eh, well, we'll speak in general. Eh, the earlier publications were just to, us, be able to, uh, to put down some, eh, maybe interesting material that was never published before  
T ok  
S that's all. And it would have gone down the drain otherwise. I don't know if we need it today, but, uh, at that time (laughs) I thought it might be useful for some  
T uh huh.  
S (laughs)  
T well, it looks like it's still, the books are still selling, at least to cantorial student  
S yeah, I don't see anything coming in  
T&S (laugh)  
S yeah  
T well, I know I bought a bunch of them (laughs)  
S well, so, one customer. I also did, uh, volume 2 for the Spanish Portuguese. I notated it for them, eh, uh, for Reverend Cardozo. So he's, he's now uh, eh he retired already.  
T huh. Did he ask you to do that



S no, he, well, he asked me to do it. And he recorded it, and it sounded like, eh, when he was recording it, it sounded like he was sleeping

T&S (laugh)

S the pitch wasn't too good

T ok (laughs)

S and some spots were not clear

T uh huh

S so I guessed what he meant, and then I, uh, there were certain things I couldn't actually make out, so I told him to redo it.

Track 2

S And when he redid it, (laughs) it didn't match the first take

T uh, huh (laughs)

S so the end was, I, uh, I, eh, in certain case I mixed them,

T uh huh

S what I heard the first time and the second time. And I asked if it was ok. Yeah, he says, fine. (laughs)

T ok

S then I found out the purpose of the book was to be at the coffee table

T oh yeah? (laughs)

S that's, so it doesn't matter, cause, I, I, I, I knew there were some mistakes in there, they, and they didn't let me proofread it.

T mm hmm

S They said it's ok the way it is

T huh!

S so it's ok. Very interesting work

T ok. (laughs)...um, now as far as your

S eh

T teaching. Oh, go ahead

S go ahead!

T no, I want to hear what you have to say

S uh, what I have to say?

T (laughs)

S Uh, I forgot already.

T all right

S I have Alzheimer's

T all right, well, then I'll ask you my question. Um, when I like, I mean, obviously I know you

S yeah

T from your teaching at HUC

S yeah

T and obviously you've taught other places, too.

S yeah

T How did you get involved in that?

S How did I become a teacher?

T mmm hmmm

S uh, I, I taught at a very, eh, early age. I studied sightsinging when I was, uh, about, uh, eh, 14 and 15. I studied, I took lessons for two years. By the way, a lesson was ten minutes

T wow

S and the teacher didn't charge me for it. So as soon as I was able to read, I knew some hazzonim who had some, some pieces. They didn't know how to read music

T mm hmm

S so but I did, so they, uh, they invited me to go over the music with them. Then I'd do it, naturally, I was able to read it, so then they let me have the mu- in a sort of an exchange or as appreciation, they let me have the music, so I was able to copy, uh, a lot of pieces and then, eh, the style was to exchange with others

T uh huh

S cause, you couldn't afford to buy everything

T so they actually had sheet music and you would learn it and teach it to them?

S I would teach it to them

T (laughs)

S and then they would let me have a copy

T huh...ok

S I was around, about, I was about 17 years old when I started

T wow

S and I, uh, then, uh, as time went on I got some more customers who were, a lot, a lot of cantors. Same story, they needed help with reading the pieces. So I helped them. That's how I learned (laughs)

T huh

S not that I knew anything. They supplied the music. That's it, so, and then I started, eh, I, I started to collect, I bought old books that I was able to find in the, there was a store Metro Music Shop on (clears throat) second avenue, maybe on third or fourth street, I don't remember. That was the main, main eh, outlet, if you wanna call it

T uh huh

S for liturgical music and, eh

Track 3

S Yiddish songs and records

T mm hmm. So, what's your favorite kind of music?

S I don't know, I don't have any (laughs)

T What are some of your favorites?

S (laughs) Tchaikovsky (laughs)

T (laughs) and what about you singing yourself?

S I'm don't...I, I'm not, I'm out of the business, uh, I was only in the cantorial line, on a full time basis, for about, eh, eight years.

T mm hmm

S eh, the first job I had was in, eh, Spring Valley...you know where that is?

T no

S Not too far. And then I, I was there for one year, and I asked them for a, a decent raise and they didn't want to give it to me, not enough, so then I took a second job in, uh, the second position was in, uh, eh, Glen Cove, New York

T mm hmm  
 S I was there for about seven years, and then, uh, decided to get out of the business, so after that I only sang for the holidays.  
 T uh huh  
 S And during the year I didn't bother with it anymore.  
 T Do you still sing for the High Holy Days?  
 S No. I stopped twenty years ago.  
 T ok  
 S Maybe twenty-one. And while I was on, eh, on the job in eh, in Glenn Cove.  
 T mm hmmm.  
 S The cantor who was there before me, his name was Arnold Rothstein. He's a publisher of, eh, a few books. I don't know if you ever saw them.  
 T no  
 S Choral. Two part choral. Counterpoint style.  
 T uh huh  
 S Anyhow, he taught at the Yeshiva University. And he had it in mind to quit.  
 T uh huh  
 S So, he asked me if I was interested he would tell me how to get the job, and he did. Then, then I followed him, I followed him at the position in the synagogue  
 T (laughs)  
 S and he quit (laughs) and then  
 T (laughs)  
 S and then yeshiva he quit again and I followed him.  
 T wow!  
 S So I was there for twenty-five years  
 T At Yeshiva?  
 S yeah.  
 T wow. When was that?  
 S That was in the 1950's  
 T mm hmm  
 S I started  
 T ok  
 S fifty-what I don't remember. Eh, maybe fifty-eight, fifty-nine, I don't know.  
 T (laughs)  
 S I could check it, if it's important I'll find it  
 T You can find it for me later, maybe,  
 S yeah, yeah right,  
 T if we need it  
 S all the details  
 T yeah. Um...so, before you took your first job as a cantor, did you have real, like, I mean, now we have this formal training.  
 S no, I  
 T Did you ever do that?  
 S I never took cantorial lessons (laughs)  
 T So you learned it all just from teaching the other cantors?  
 S Yeah, and from listening

T uh huh  
 S from listening. I only studied solfeggio, that's all  
 T uh huh  
 S and I sang in a few choirs as a kid.  
 T hmm  
 S yeah  
 T in, in synagogues?  
 S yeah.  
 Track 4  
 S Means I was about, starting with about age 10 or 11, 12, sang till 16. I was, uh, I, I was still able to sing almost till 16, actually.  
 T uh huh  
 S So I, yeah, I was a small kid.  
 T & S (laugh)  
 T um, let's see what else...  
 S No more questions? (laughs)  
 T I have lots more questions, um, so when did you start teaching at HUC?  
 S Not long ago. Maybe five years ago  
 T Oh, that's it?  
 S 'bout it  
 T Oh. How did that happen?  
 S Uh, actually, they called me a long time ago.  
 T mm hmm  
 S er, eh, and the, the one that was in charge was, uh, eh, Avery.  
 T uh huh  
 S He asked me a few times, to teach there, then, uh, er of course I didn't, I was busy during the day, and eh, and I couldn't teach there anyway because I was teaching in the other school  
 T mm hmm  
 S the other school didn't permit me to...  
 T oh  
 S teach anyplace else  
 T ok  
 S that was their policy, they thought I would be pulling away students  
 T mm hmmm  
 S or whatever would...so, uh, uh the one that told me to, eh, eh, Ganchoff, uh strongly encouraged me to come there  
 T mm hmm  
 S I think him, and eh, through maybe, maybe Jackie Mendelson  
 T uh huh  
 S possibly. And, uh, that was it  
 T so...when did you stop teaching at Yeshiva? Just then?  
 S No, I stopped, uh, eh, eh, about, eh, perhaps twelve years already  
 T and what did you do between those...?  
 S eh, when I taught at Yeshiva I was, was working, I worked for the New York, New York State. I was inspector for Kashrus

T huh. The  
 S so that was  
 T the whole time?  
 S eh, I did it for about, about twelve, or fourteen years, I don't know  
 T uh huh  
 S I was doing that, and before that, before that I taught, I taught music in, in, in  
 schools, like, eh, different Yeshivas  
 T uh huh  
 S Talmud Torah and this and that, like, a, a day in each school, something like that  
 T oh, ok  
 S I had some private students, so, altogether...managed.  
 T So that was the twelve years before...?  
 S That was before, yeah.  
 T ok...before HUC, right?  
 S Yeah  
 T ok  
 S something like...it's not exactly.  
 T Yeah. They overlap a little?  
 S eh, I could be off a year or two here  
 T ok (laughs)  
 S it doesn't matter; does it matter?  
 T no  
 S (laughs)  
 T If you remember things, you can tell me...later on  
 S yeah, we can, we can always fill it in  
 T um...so...the thing that you teach  
 S so we're finished  
 T no. The thing that you teach the most to us at HUC is, is the real hazzanus and  
 Track 5  
 T traditional music  
 S yeah, right  
 T is that, would you think, do you think that's your specialty?  
 S if I have a specialty,  
 T (laughs)  
 S then that's it. It's not "Let us Adore," or "May the Words"  
 T & S (laugh)  
 S that you could do yourself  
 T uh huh...and, um...so, what is  
 S you're not reading?  
 T I am, uh, I have, uh, a lot of questions so I'm trying to...pick and choose  
 S yeah  
 T um, so what is it about that music...that...?  
 S What is, what is it about that music that what? That attracted me?  
 T yeah  
 S u, I can't tell you exactly, but since I was a kid I always hear, I heard all, all, all  
 the hazzonim in the neighborhood

T mm hmm  
 S there were plenty. Because, (laughs) if a synagogue wanted to take a cantor for the holidays, they'd start auitio-, auditioning all year, (laughs) every week somebody else  
 T wow!  
 S (laughs) then, then they, so they had a free, a free hazzan every time  
 T uh huh (laughs)  
 S I heard, I heard all, I heard most of hem that were floating around, and I went to all the concerts that were, eh, in New York, or Brooklyn, or, you know, that...  
 T yeah.  
 S so, uh, I was able to hear all the guys, and, eh, (laughs) and those that, many of them sang on the radio  
 T mm hmm  
 S so I followed it, and, sort of got interested.  
 T and...where did, where did you live? Where did you grow up?  
 S Brooklyn  
 T uh huh  
 S at that time it was called Williamsburg. Now they call it Bedford-Sty  
 T uh huh  
 S it's a little further than the bridge, the, close to the Williamsburg Bridge, they call that Williamsburg  
 T mm hmm  
 S but, they used to call, a little further, they also, it was called Williamsburg  
 T ok....And did you live out on Long Island when you were working out there, or you  
 S yeah, I lived there, moved there. Then we felt like...coming back.  
 T uh huh  
 S Then we did, and I got rid of the cantorial angle.  
 T uh huh  
 S (laughs)  
 T (laughs) But it didn't get rid of you  
 S Well, I didn't, I didn't make much money, and...  
 T uh huh...um...so...you've written a lot of music yourself, too.  
 S yeah, well, a lot of, I also took I...did a lot of notations from records  
 T uh huh  
 S and then, uh  
 T just for fun, or to sell them, or?  
 S I'd sell them. I mean, they were ordered first. I made some money on it, at that time  
 T yeah  
 S as a, as a kid, even, young fella  
 T mm hmm  
 S so, uh, like for instance there's certain pieces that everybody wanted, they wanted the music, so for, once I had it written out, I was able to sell it to...a number  
 T right  
 S of people, same thing.

T (laughs)  
 S and, eh, I suppose the earliest, eh, notations were probably not so correct  
 T uh huh  
 S you know, there's a knack to it, so you improve  
 T you get better the more you  
 S all the time, yeah.  
 T do it?  
 Track 6  
 S I had no back-, no formal background of how to do it  
 T mm hmm  
 S I just did it...probably a little bit wrong.  
 T wow.  
 S (laughs)  
 T So there wasn't anyone else that you learned how to do it from, you just figured it out on your own?  
 S I, I, I tried to and, eh, whatever I, if I saw someone else, eh...uh, there were other people also notating, so I would look at theirs  
 T yeah  
 S and I would look at the books to see  
 T right  
 S how the notes, how they lay out  
 T right  
 S so I did whatever I could.  
 T you just got a reputation, people started coming to you?  
 S nah, ah, nah, I didn't have any reputation, at that time I was a kid  
 T yeah  
 S no, a young man  
 T well now you've got a reputation  
 S all right, whatev-, I don't know, whatever it is  
 T (laughs)  
 S it is. Because of the books, I suppose  
 T yeah  
 S whatever it is  
 T yeah. How did that happen?  
 S eh...I was commissioned for the uh, eh, in the, in the days of the Thesaurus with the, the, the eh, I was commissioned to uh, to do a, a Sabbath and sholosh regolim service  
 T mm hmm  
 S not exactly my own  
 T ok  
 S it was supposed to be a combination of all the fellas that were around. Carlebach, and eh, all the fellas that were writing music at that time.  
 T uh huh  
 S we had a meeting. Took a picture with them. And they were all supposed to contribute towards the publication.  
 T uh huh

S Not one person gave me one note  
 T (laughs)  
 S from all of them  
 T (laughs)  
 S I don't know where the picture is. There was picture  
 T (laughs)  
 S taken. Not, no one gave me one note. So they said, when is the book coming out?  
 I said, "Nobody gave me anything!" Said, "write what you want"(laughs)  
 T (laughs)  
 S that was the end.  
 T So when was that?  
 S I think it was around nineteen seventy-nine?  
 T uh huh  
 S maybe. There's a date in there. It was probably, eh, you can look, look at it later.  
 T ok  
 S There's a date, so figure, it was probably finished. . . a year or  
 T right  
 S two before it came out.  
 T Wow. . . so nobody else wrote anything, so you just wrote the whole thing?  
 S yeah  
 T and I guess they liked it, cause they asked you to write more, right?  
 S how could not like it? I don't know if they know how to read it.  
 T oh.  
 T & S (Laugh)  
 S so, uh, they paid for it, actually.  
 T uh huh  
 S not too much. They didn't overpay, but alright. . .  
 T (laughs) um  
 S so that was the book., tha-, that . .first came the High Holiday book. That I did for  
 nothing. The Thesaurus of the High Holiday I did free of charge.  
 T uh huh  
 S and I was commissioned to do the Sabbath. . . with, sort of Festivals.  
 T uh huh  
 S they could. . . they're separate now. Eh, yeah, that's how it worked.  
 T ok. And then after that. . .  
 S after that Pasternak took over the, uh, publication. They had it, they were re-, the  
 books were reprinted.  
 T who was doing it before him?  
 S the first publication was, eh, the Cantorial Council of the Yeshiva University.  
 T oh!  
 S as their, uh, their uh, their label and their their their. . .  
 Track 7  
 T uh huh  
 S insignia (laughs). . . not in the reprint. Not in, not in, not in  
 T the one that I have  
 S not in, not in Pasternak's, no



T yeah  
 S yeah. (pause) I made. . . I made them take it out in the reprint. I didn't want the. .  
 T uh huh  
 S the. . see, the first one has the seal. The seal that's there  
 T oh yeah  
 S see.  
 T wow  
 S uh, oh, 1969.  
 T 1969?  
 S that mean it was, it was, was it finished? probably finished around 19- 1968  
 T uh huh  
 S something like that. . .  
 (pause)  
 S uh, this, this is the Cardozo book that I did. Book 2. Not book 1.  
 T uh huh  
 S see. Fancy cover  
 T very fancy  
 S for the table.  
 T Yeah. (laughs)  
 S actually, I, on, I, I wasn't familiar with, with the style  
 T right  
 S or anything. I just did what, the way it sounded. Sometimes you're familiar with  
 the style, you can, eh, comes out a little better.  
 T yeah. Yeah. . .  
 S but, uh, eh. . the, the style, uh, there's no kvetching there  
 T right  
 S there's not, mm, eh, so it's, eh, sort of simple, it's, eh, pretty straightforward  
 T and that was the only time you ever wrote anything in that style down?  
 S (laughs) well, there are some- always some things that were not complicated.  
 T yeah  
 S plainer things. not everything needs a drey,  
 T right  
 S a kvetch,  
 T right  
 S a colloratura, or a cough (laughs)  
 T are there other people you know of who can. . write those things...?  
 S there are. There's, sure. Other people who can do, who can do it. There's a guy  
 in Israel he does it  
 T mm hmm.  
 S he's, yeah, I think he's over 90 already  
 T wow  
 S his name is, him name is Taub. Samuel Taub. . .  
 T mm hmmm

S and there, he was, oh! there was a teacher who took the, eh, he taught hazzanus, uh, he, he he also wrote a lot, but he, he didn't, he did not, you couldn't tell, he had a bad handwriting, and the details, were not exactly, he wasn't that particular

T uh huh

S but he was very fast. His name was Raizen. His student was Avery.

T oh!

S Avery studied by him

(pause)

T because it seems like you, you really know how to capture those. . . cantorial moves. .

S eh, I don't know if I. . .

T on paper better than, em. . .

S well,

T as well as they can be captured on paper

S maybe somebody else will do it better. I don't know

T (laughs)

S uh, eh, Caleb also knows how to no- notate. Did you ever hear of Caleb?

T no

S he's coming out, shortly with, very, three large volumes, this size

T oh!

S about, eh, he's explaining the styles, and the choral music and, I don't know, whatever he does

T that sounds good.

S yeah, might, might be interesting. (pause) he got a grant , a big grant for it. Before he got the grant, he called me up to

#### Track 8

S endorse him

T mm hmm

S to say that, eh, it's an important work, blah blah blah, and he wrote down that, eh, that, eh, bef- when it would come out, or before it came out, I would look it over

T uh huh

S and get paid for it

T oh!

S it's, I don't know how it, (laughs) he nev-

T never happened?

S he wouldn't, he wouldn't show it to me

T aw!

S I think it was, (laughs) I don't know what

T what?

S maybe he's afraid I'll say something?

T (laughs)

S so, it would be better that I tell him before

T right

S anyhow, he's a, he's a good choral arranger, that's for sure. He does, eh he did a lot of notations which were ok.

T hm

S You wanted to know before who did notations  
T yeah  
S other people did, too, I'm sure  
T yeah (pause) so when you teach, what, what are the most important things that you're trying to get across to your students?  
S eh-hh. . . most important, to stick to the, to tr-, to be, eh, faithful to the notes, the way they were written,  
T mm hmm  
S and to sing with some kind of interpretation! There's not just one way! I show, sometimes, one way, or a way and a half, but it doesn't have to be that way. As long as it. . . cause you can have five people sing the same piece, oh, ya, you have, there was a record with arias, with different opera singers  
T uh huh  
S they all sang a little bit dif- they were all good.  
T yeah  
S cause each one has his style.  
T yeah. . .  
S but if they sing em dead, without, so. . . I think I'm done (laughs)  
T Do you think- do you think there is a particular cantorial style?  
S one style. Nah, it's not one style. It's one school  
T uh huh  
S and each one has their individuality. Rosenblatt didn't sound like Hirschman, who didn't sound like Kwartin, who didn't sound like Roitman. I'm shooting out the names of the.  
T right  
S who were popular. or Pinchik, and a difference between Glanz, altogether different style. Seem to have some originality. It's possible that they're copying people that came before them  
T uh huh  
S but, anyhow, they perfected it. Or Ganchoff, he's sort of the last one from the, eh Golden Era. He's a kind of a combination of various styles all together, but the combination came out right by him.  
T uh huh  
S he figure it out, that it fit, it fit him.  
T right  
S so, uh, not that, see, the others were, seems that they were more original than he was  
T ok. . . and are there people. . . ?  
S and of course we know that, uh, he didn't, he wa- he didn't really compose anything. He, he sang other people's material. He just twisted it here and there.  
T mm hmmm. Is it, do you think it's still. . . evolving?  
S no, I think it's over (laughs)  
T so, if it's over, why, why are you teaching  
S the on- the only, see, the few stars that we have today, if they're stars,  
T uh huh  
S they, they, they only-, they are singing, trying to sing from records

T right  
 S so one does it better, one does it worse, you can't ever sing it as good as the original  
 T right  
 S cause you don't need a xerox  
 T right  
 S so, but I don't hear anything coming out of, from the, eh, anything that they. . .  
 Track 9  
 S produced by themselves. or a real style  
 T hmm  
 S they're trying to imitate something that they heard someone do. So if they have good voices, and, eh, they have good timing and good expression, so it sounds ok, but it's not, it's not really, uh, something.  
 T right  
 S (laughs) you know what I mean.  
 T so. . . so do you think, I mean-  
 S do I think there's a future for it?  
 T yeah!  
 S no! Because in the traditional shul's. . .  
 T uh uh. . .  
 S they don't want to hear, eh, the style with so much repetition. . .  
 T ok. . .  
 S and they don't want to hear too many pieces and they wannna go home and that's all (laughs)  
 T so there's not a way that it could evolve to have less repetition and. . .  
 S yeah, it could, but  
 T and, be more appealing, or would it change the style  
 S if it's that, then it's gonna be so plain, they don't wan- need to hire a cantor  
 T uh huh  
 S they'll have somebody from the audience. . . for a concert, that's all.  
 T yeah  
 S concert here and there  
 T yeah. So why do you think it's important. . . to, to keep teaching it to people like me?  
 S eh, I don't think it's too important. They just want to, uh, eh, it's like you have to learn a little bit of the history of it  
 T right. . .  
 S you go into a certain field, you have to know what happened before. Before you drive a car, you look in the mirror, see what's in back of you.  
 T ok. . .  
 S so we're not going in the same direction, but we gotta have to have an idea, what took place before.  
 T ok.  
 S so, if we can hang onto some of the tradition, something of it, a part of it, so I think it would sound better. . .  
 T mm hmm

S that's it.

T yeah. . . it seems like at HUC they really emphasize that tradition

S they emphasize that tradition because if they di- eh, to sing in Reform style you don't need all these details.

T right. . .

S so if you're gon- if you're gonna go to school for five years

T and S (laugh)

S you want to be a Reform cantor, you may be, it's possible to make it in one year

T yeah?

S just the singing angle

T yeah

S so, you can do it in one year! Why do you have to stay there for five years?

T (laughs)

S so if you're there, they'll give you what to do, study this, study that, do some research,

T uh huh

S try this, you know? Same thing if someone wants to become a traditional Rabbi. Has to know all these big books up there.

T right (laughs)

S but he goes on the job, if he knows, if he reads the newspaper, he'll manage!

T (laughs) And what about, I mean, it seems like in our discussions you always come up with, it seems like you know everything there is to know about. . .

S no I don't

T (laughs)

S no, no, maybe I'm just a page ahead

T a page ahead? Ok.

S (laughs) maybe!

T and S (laugh)

T have you devoted a lot of time to studying and

S what? This business?

T no. eh, um, just, Jewish things in general.

S yeah! I've studied.

T yeah?

S I have a, a degree

T uh uh. . .

S yeah.

T what's your degree?

S I have a Rabbinical degree.

T oh, you do?

S sure.

T oh, I didn't know that.

S yeah, nobody knows about it.

T huh! How come you're keeping it a secret?

S I'll show you. . . see? Maybe I have it.

T (laughs)

S I'm not sure! Maybe, nah, I don't, I forgot where I put it, I think I, nah, I forgot . .  
 . used to keep it. . .

T So you mean you actually

Track 10

T have a rabbinic – you're, eh, you're an ordained Rabbi, then?

S yeah, yeah.

T so you have that, and you don't tell anyone

S it's laying someplace. . .

T and everyone, it seems, everyone really thinks you're like the greatest cantor. .

S it's not true.

T and,

S it's not true.

T you didn't even, are you even officially a cantor, or you just say you're a cantor  
 and

S I don't say it! I never say anything!

T somebody else says it, right?

S I don't say anything.

T the, the more often people say it, the more true it becomes? (laughs)

S I was for a short time, I told you

T yeah

S I was, eh, about eight years worth. (laughs)

T right. Right.

S that's it.

T well, what about these people now, I know, there's like. people get upset when,  
 when someone come- a singer comes out and calls himself a cantor if they're,  
 they haven't been through a school.

S well, eh, years ago there was no school.

T right.

S you studied privately.

T right.

S yeah. And, eh, at least if you went to a school. so you have some, some kind of a  
 basic training, you know, you know something about the prayers. Not too much,  
 but something.

T yeah.

S you have a little background, and you learn the nusach and how, how, how it's  
 made up, you know the parts. you know the motifs, like this, you really don't  
 know it, it's just general knowl- like, if you have a ba'al tefilah, he didn't go to  
 school...

T right

S and he does it right

T right

S cause he heard it so many times

T right

S and he has a good ear and he has a feeling for it. He does it right. He doesn't  
 have to tune up. He doesn't know if it's in magen avot mode or a different mode

T right

S or pie a la mode  
 T (laughs)  
 S (laughs) he does it right, that's all.  
 T I was listening to Howard Stern on Friday morning and he had this  
 S oh  
 T comedian on  
 S I don't listen to him  
 T who used to be a cantor  
 S oh, yeah?  
 T and he had him, he was singing ein keloheinu and (laughs) he was singing  
 S that's funny  
 T Torah blessings (laughs)  
 S uh huh  
 T it was really funny. . . um. . . so. . . do you like teaching?  
 S of course!  
 T what about it is  
 S lots of fun! (laughs)  
 T lots of fun? What's so fun about it?  
 S you get, em, eh, lots of fun, to see, eh, if you work with somebody that has no  
 background, if you get them to imitate certain sound  
 T yeah?  
 S it's like, eh, it's some kind of a talent to be able to pull out from somebody  
 something that they really  
 T yeah!  
 S that's not there  
 T I think so!  
 S something like that.  
 T yeah.  
 S see, like, if you're teaching in a yeshiva, so theyre, they know the pages, they  
 know about the prayers,  
 T right.  
 S they have no voices, but they can- and they can't read music  
 T (laughs)  
 S so that's the problem there.  
 T so this is more satisfying?  
 S eh, musically, yeah.  
 T yeah.  
 S not liturgically, there they know more, I mean, eh  
 T uh huh.  
 S here, here sometimes they don't even know how, they don't know the page.  
 T right  
 S well, can't help it  
 T hopefully we will by the time we're done  
 S yeah. (laughs)  
 T or later! (laughs)

S yeah. you probably won't use anything. yeah, a little bit, maybe, uh, here and there, maybe, in a reform service

T yeah

S you can sing something

Track 11

S traditional if you want, I suppose.

T yeah, you can

S yeah.

T yeah. Especially if you do it without letting them know what it is. And then they like it, you, get's you to do it more.

S or, then you try it again

T (laughs)

S uh, huh, yeah

T umm, so what, when you teach

S yeah, again with the

T um

S teaching

T yeah, I'm really interested

S what do you want to know about teaching (laughs)

T well, because that's how I know you

S alright, ok

T so. . . I don't know, wha- umm. . . what kind of

S I taught in the Seminary, too, a few years

T oh, yeah? Well, ok, I'll ask you something that's not all about teaching

S no, whatever you want

T umm. . . is it, so it's more, well, it's more satisfying with musically

S yeah

T literate students?

S yeah, that's true.

T yeah. Um. . . what are some of the most important things that you think a cantor should know?

S what he should know?

T or be able to do?

S then that's two, then you have two different questions. He, eh, first of all, he should know, eh be, eh, he should be acquainted with the uh, Jewish history and the eh, and the, and the procedures

T mm hmm

S and sound sincere. (laughs)

T ok.

S what else can I tell you?

T be sincere, or just sound sincere? (laughs)

S eh, if he can have both, it's better.

T uh huh

S you know, yeah, yeah. . . there's such a thing as, uh, it says in the neila service that the Lord hears the voice of cr- eh, shomer kol bichiyot, I don't know if you



ever come across those words, you probably skip that paragraph. Hears the voice of crying.

T uh huh

S so, so-, some people though can't, wouldn't, can't cry. They don't cry.

T mm hmm

S they don't cry. it says that he should make his voice crying

T hmm

S intonation, it means, even if he can't cry. (laughs)

T hmmm!

S so, that's what we were talking about before. You said if he doesn't mean it, should he sound like he means it

T yeah

S well, you can answer yourself!

T ok.

S has to sound- has to have a sincere sound.

T yeah.

S and if it is, somehow, eh, has a, it has a better effect. . . it's true. So, how can, if you don't know what the words are, how can you sound sincere?

T right.

S ok.

T right. What about if the congregation doesn't know what the words are?

S well, what are you gonna do? They don't know, so they don't know. Somehow you sense it, if you listen to an opera singer

T yeah?

S they sing in Italian, or French or whatever, you don't know what they're talking about, but you see if, you know if it's right or wrong

T right.

S even if you don't know what it is.

Track 12

T right

S when you see somebody doing it, and they do it right, somehow

T you get the mood at least

S yeah, you feel it, yeah, or, that's right

T the intention. Umm. . . so, what do you see as, the future

S where did you get these questions?

T I made em up

S in the car! (laughs)

T no, I made them up, actually, almost a year ago!

S you did?

T yeah, I've just been a little, uh, procrastinator

S oh, ok. Everybody does it.

T yeah. Um, what do you, what do you think, the future of the cantorate might be?

S there is no future. (laughs) see, I'm pessimistic. Future for the cantor?

T uh huh.

S it depends what kind. If you're talking about a traditional cantor

T uh huh

S or conservative, or reform, or whatever it is. It seems to me, eh, that, eh, I might be wrong, that the students, when they go on the job, they, they're disappointed. Here they're practicing how to sing, for years and years

T mm hmmm. . .

S and in different styles, and when they get on the job, they gotta do other things, there's very little singing.

T right.

S have to teach choirs, or, eh, I don't know, handle children

T uh huh

S bar mitzvahs. other things.

T uh huh.

S so, it hasn't got so much to do with the actual singing.

T so the, it used to be more singing

S it's the personality. Yeah, they'll, it's a lot of jobs in one.

T uh huh.

S I know they would rather just be singers if possible. Or do very little teaching.

T some people, yeah.

S Yeah, most of them.

T yeah. . .so,

S they're, the, uh, the traditional synagogues are not hiring, are very, hiring very few cantors

T really

S they don't bother with it anymore.

T really

S yeah.

T so what are they doing instead?

S they, well, for the holidays they usually take somebody, and

T yeah

S during the year, the laymen get up

T uh huh

S whatever they do. Most of them know how to daven plain.

T right.

S so they don't need it fancy. Satisfied. . . . Conservative need a Cantor faster than the, uh, Orthodox, actually.

T yeah

S there's not too many people in the audience can get up

T mm hmmm

S so. . .so, uh, most of their jobs are also combinations. Teach Bar Mitzvah's,

T right

S maybe some choral work, and, uh

T right

S adult education, uh, whatever they find. Sit in the office.

T uh huh.

S sit in the office and see that the others are working!

T (laughs)

S yeah!

T I'm good at that. (laughs)  
 S ok  
 T (laughs)  
 S the question is if you want to do it.  
 T yeah. . . um. . . so, how do you think you and your students fit into that, the future of the cantorate, and, and also, into the tradition as a whole as it has developed, so far?  
 S look, we're living in a certain time, in a certain era, with certain demands, we do the best we can. I'm only working on the musical angle.  
 T right.  
 S I don't teach liturgy here.  
 T right  
 S in the other school I did.  
 T uh huh  
 S a little bit. And, uh, so I try to do the best I can, and good luck to them! (laughs)  
 That's all. What can I tell you?

Track 13

T do you think what you teach is important to us as cantors?  
 S not too important. Not too important, but a little bit important.  
 T uh huh.  
 T and S (laugh)  
 T ok. . . um. . .  
 S I'm not the only one. You have, uh, you have the others there teaching the same thing. Lefkowitz is teaching the same thing. and, uh, Mendelsohn and, and Goldstein.  
 T Yeah, yeah. . .  
 S and Faith.  
 T but they all kind of defer to you.  
 S alright, the- out of respect, maybe, I'm a little  
 T yeah  
 S older than them.  
 T yeah  
 S that's the answer.  
 T and S (laugh)  
 T I think it's more than your age. (laughs)  
 S alright. . . whatever it is. More experience.  
 T yeah! Yeah. . .  
 S yeah.  
 T and. . . maybe a link from  
 S yeah, sort of a  
 T the generation before them.  
 S yeah, sort of a link. My link was probably Ganchoff. He was  
 T yeah  
 S my main link, probably, with that generation.  
 T yeah.  
 S I worked with him for, uh, about forty years, so

T     wow!  
 S     I heard all the the stories (laughs), and all his imitations,  
 T     uh huh  
 S     of the fellas that were around,  
 T     yep  
 S     So, uh, that sort of connected me. And of course, it was a connection for him. He  
       had nobody to talk to!  
 T     (laughs)  
 S     (laughs) so, uh, it was a good connection.  
 T     how did you meet him?  
 S     oh! That's a long story! Uh. . . it came out, eh, I uh, I, you know, I used, I used,  
       if he was the first cantor I heard, I think. He wa-, was the yearly cantor in my  
       neighborhood  
 T     oh  
 S     I was about ten years old. That's how. . . so, I used to follow him, he sang on the  
       radio every week. So I heard him a lot of times. Later on, after, uh, when I, when  
       was able, when I knew some music already, I used to. . . I used to write over his  
       radio programs.  
 T     uh huh.  
 S     I got, I wrote em out, and uh, sometimes, if he davened in a weekday ma'ariv  
       service, so I wrote it out, and, uh. . . (laughs) it a, a funny story, it's one of the,  
       he, he davened a, a ma'ariv, weekday ma'ariv someplace, I think it was in  
       Brooklyn,  
 T     mm hmm. . .  
 S     and I wrote out one of the, one of his numbers. And I think it was the, maybe the  
       first time he sang it.  
 T     uh huh. . .  
 S     and then there was, they had, there was a conservative convention, in the  
       mountains, in Grossinger's.  
 T     yeah  
 S     so there was a fellow, his name Danto, he's just retired, already, too. So for the  
       fun of it, so I told Danto, or I sh- or I showed him what I wrote out, and he  
       memorized the first line, he ran over to Ganchoff. he says, that number that you  
       sing there, then he says, he, he says, I, he can sing it. Says, what are you talking  
       about? (laughs) He sang for him the first line. he says, Where'd you get that?  
       Then he said, there's a fellow here, he has all the music, blah, blah, blah. He says,  
       uh, he wants to see it. So, uh,  
 T     so that's how you met?  
 S     so I met him officially, sort of.  
 T     (laughs)  
 Track 14  
 S     yeah.  
 T     wow!  
 S     then, eh, he invited me to his house, and eh, and then he wanted to see all the  
       music that I wrote. . . of, that he sang.  
 T     yeah.

S which was stacks, naturally.  
T (laughs)  
S then, he offered to buy 'em  
T wow!  
S he wants to buy 'em. Why did he need to buy 'em? Yeah! He's gonna fix it, he's gonna change it, listen blah blah blah. So, from then on, we became friendly and uh, that was it.  
T hmm. . . That's great.  
S and he would ask- he would ask me an opinion. Should he sing it this way, should he do it that way, eh, whatever it was.  
T hmm  
S eh. . . that's it.  
T wow.  
S in a nutshell  
S and T (laugh)  
S yeah.  
T so, um. . . when you, when you wrote about the Golden Age of the Cantorate,  
S yeah  
T do you think. . . do you think that's, like an era that was just unique to that time and place, or. . .  
S yeah. It seems so. It seems so. That was the era, era where, uh, where we had a, a certain development. . . of recitatives  
T mmm hmm  
S at the time. Why? Because, eh, people were making records, and if a cantor made a record, he, if, if he could make a certain coloratura that someone else couldn't make it, he'd put it on there.  
T uh huh.  
S or he had a, a voice that certain tones were beautiful, make sure that, that ingredient when, whatever he could do, or do a little better than somebody else, he put- he'd put it on there, and the competition tried to make everybody bring out a little bit, you know, something fancier, or, eh, more virtuoso, so, eh, it developed in that era.  
T why do you think it stopped or slowed down?  
S oh, the, the big talents died, and the audience also, this audience wasn't so interested. At that time, you didn't have television.  
T right.  
S not too much doing on the radio, so the entertainment was they would go to shul, they'd hear a hazzan, a choir, a good soloist, they liked it!  
T yeah.  
S so, it was an attraction.  
T yeah. It's interesting, because now that I've started learning this stuff a little bit, in the last few years, people, people are, are much more interested in it than you'd think. I remember the first traditional practicum I did, my mom came, and she said that was her favorite kind of music, and she remembered, and she wished I'd sing that more, and  
S is that so?

T I'd never it heard it before in my life!  
 S uh huh  
 T and people, when, every time I've done it or, or, you know, the rabbi I work with is a Cantor, and so he sneaks stuff in on Saturday mornings sometimes. He'll do like a modim, a  
 S oh, yeah?  
 T or a Hashkiveynu on a Friday night, or something.  
 S oh.  
 T and, uh, and they love it.  
 S ok  
 T And they always say they want more of it.  
 S ok. That's only  
 T so. . .  
 S one case.  
 T yeah  
 S because you, because you caught onto a certain knack in there  
 T right  
 S others don't, don't have it and it becomes very boring.  
 T right, right.  
 S you sing it cold,  
 Track 15  
 S without any expression, you're better off without it. (laughs)  
 T yeah. Yeah. . . and people keep asking us to do recordings, too.  
 S cantorial recordings?  
 T yeah. So I wonder if it could come back.  
 S Ehhh. . . there are a lot of recordings out, that the hazzonim put out themselves, they don't sell.  
 T yeah. Yeah.  
 S they don't sell. . . Here you have Ben Shushan, he invested in one recording between thirty and forty thousand dollars.  
 T uh huh.  
 S it didn't sell. Not a bad recording. The one that- that recording that you were practicing the sheva brachot, or that you heard it. Remember you were doing the sheva brachot?  
 T yeah  
 S it's on, you know, it's on the record, his tape. He did, it didn't sell.  
 T huh  
 S and it's a decent, a decent tape.  
 T yeah, hmm  
 S no customers.  
 T all right. . . um. . . so. . . let's see. . . when you're  
 S don't skip too many lines  
 T all right.  
 S (laughs)  
 T um, let's see if I skipped anything in the beginning, then. I don't think so.  
 S if it's important, so, you'll ask me a different time..

T ok, well, tell me more about  
 S or, you'll ask me the same question, I'll give you different answers.  
 T yeah, exactly!  
 S (laughs)  
 T tell me more about the music that you've transcribed.  
 S I, there's not too much to talk about, the, the, the early transcriptions were the pieces that hazzonim wanted to imitate  
 T mm hmm  
 S like Modim on the record  
 T right?  
 S Hirschman, or Tikanta Shabb- most pieces, most of the pieces were by Hirschman, because he, he sang nicely, and they're not, the pieces are not complicated.  
 T uh huh  
 S he has enough ingredients, like, he wouldn't do more than two colloratura's in a piece.  
 T uh huh (laughs)  
 S but it's enough!  
 T uh huh  
 S he gave you the  
 T the flavor?  
 S the, yeah, he gave you, he didn't overload it. So, uh, there were a lot of calls for the pieces that he recorded, and, a lot, a lot wanted too, uh, Rosenblatt's records. They're more difficult.  
 T mm hmm  
 S they are difficult. But he was the king, you know.  
 T yeah.  
 S so they say.  
 T yeah.  
 S And, uh, eh, Roitman's material was very good, but it wa, he was, he was a little bit, it was a little bit difficult to, uh, to imitate him. Quite intricate.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S he, he sang with a lot of details. More than Rosenblatt. More than Hirschman. He the the crescendo's, decrescendo's and a good colloratura and a, eh, and a, eh, I don't know, he had a lot of details.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S More than the others. The others had nicer voices.  
 T hmm.  
 S so they didn't need that many details.  
 T hmm.  
 S so, uh, those were the records. There were other hazzonim, too, you know, uh  
 T hmm  
 S if they felt they could copy it, but they wanted to learn it better with the notes, or play it on the piano, cause it's hard to.  
 T right.  
 S by the way, the old notations, eh, of the, the colloratura, you could not make out.

Track 16

S They wrote, they didn't group them.  
T uh huh  
S I don't even know if the notes were right. Let's say the notes were right,  
T (laughs)  
S you didn't know how to make it.  
T uh huh.  
S you didn't know how- to make a colloratura you have to first break it up into  
parts.  
T right.  
S you do each part, then you try to put it together. But if you don't know where to  
stop, it doesn't come out.  
T right.  
S and I remember, I saw Weiser, the, he was a big composer, he wrote many books.  
I saw him give a lesson once, eh, when the students, g- eh, didn't sing all the runs  
clearly, they didn't correct them.  
T hmm.  
S they let him do, they just, "ahheheh", any drey.  
T uh huh  
S okay! That was it  
T hmm  
S doing fine. And when they wa- they wanted to- you know, they made a living  
from teaching.  
T right.  
S so, if someone had a very small voice, he would encourage them, he would say,  
"You're going to be a Pinchik."  
T (laughs)  
S cause Pinchik, he didn't have a very lou- loud voice.  
T uh huh  
S It was sweet, of course  
T uh huh  
S but, if it was a tiny voice, you'd be a Pinchik.  
T wow!  
S yeah, if you were a screamer, you'd be a Sirota  
T (laughs)  
S (laughs) whatever it was. They lied. They needed compliments.  
T yeah.  
S of course you have to encourage your students sometimes, but you can't be a liar!  
T right! (laughs)  
S (laughs)  
T um  
S voice teachers do that sometimes, too. They tell you  
T sure.  
S you're gonna be this and that and nothing happens.  
T right. . . So, are those some of the people that you think were the greatest  
Cantors?



S the ones I mentioned  
 T yeah  
 S and from my era. I missed the real, the better ones.  
 T yeah.  
 S the top line, I missed. I missed Rosenblatt.  
 T mm hmm  
 S and, uh, I remember, I didn't hear Hirschman, either. I remember when he died,  
 L.I, I must have been ten, or eleven.  
 T hmm  
 S I remember it was in the newspaper, in the Yiddish paper. Headlines. And I  
 never heard Roitman. Kwartin I heard one time. Only one time.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S and he was already an old man. So, uh, I didn't hear, I heard, like, the second,  
 second group, the second best.  
 T yeah.  
 S like, uh, I don't know if you'll know the names. There was a Chagy, Berele  
 Chagy, there was a Kapov-Kagan, very big voice. And Vigoda, Leibele  
 Waldman,  
 T mm hmm  
 S uh, Pinchik I heard a lot, Glanz I heard. That was like, next to the top row.  
 T yeah.  
 S so, we don't have that either, today.  
 T hmm. Do you think they have it in Israel, more?  
 S eh, they're more interested in Israel.  
 T yeah  
 S yeah. For davening, or choirs.  
 T yeah.  
 S uh, more than here. I don't know to what degree, but  
 T yeah  
 S I'm sure it's more.  
 T cause I remember I went to one concert, and it was all, the great Cantors, coming  
 in and doing, out-doing each other.  
 S yeah, that sounds right.  
 T yeah.  
 S yeah. There are a few, uh, a few good Cantors there. Like I said before, most of  
 them are not innovative. They're only trying to imitate records.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S not everyone, most of them.  
 T I'm innovative without even trying.  
 S ok, that's good.  
 T what do you think about women being Cantors? (laughs)  
 Track 17  
 S eh, for, for some- for the places where they're gonna be Cantors,  
 T uh huh?  
 S it's ok.  
 T uh huh.

S (laughs) And they wouldn't take 'em in the other places.  
T right!  
S so, what's, there's no question! (laughs) For a concert, it's a different story. If a  
g- uh, if a, if a lady can go up, and, uh, and really show a li- we had that! We had  
Lady Cantors,  
T yeah.  
S but they didn't daven!  
T right.  
S they only sang at concerts and  
T right.  
S on the radio. They did not daven.  
T but people liked to hear 'em?  
S technically, you could have a ladies' minyan!  
T yeah.  
S a lady could fill an- you could, you could read the Torah, you could daven.  
Everything.  
T yeah.  
S I suppose there are a few minyonim like that. Not too many.  
T yeah, I know there are a couple.  
S not too many.  
T hmm  
S You could have a regular service.  
T yeah.  
S and it's legit! (laughs)  
T uh huh (laughs) um, so, is it different teaching. . . female students, than male  
students?  
S eh, ya, I think you're better, you're better off with, better off with a female  
teacher, because the fe-, because she understands the voice better.  
T uh huh  
S I don't, I don't have that, eh, much of a background for it.  
T right.  
S I know how to show, show, uh, more or less the timing or the intonation.  
T right  
S but how to make it; to aim the voice in the nose or in the foot, or, uh,  
T (laughs)  
S I, I don't have that angle.  
T do you have it more than when you started?  
S eh, I suppose so. Cause any, if you do something, you.  
T you get better?  
S usually improve a little bit.  
T you hope so!  
S yeah!  
(T and S laugh)  
S I see they gave me all, only males next term.  
T oh, yeah?  
S the thing I got sent.

T really?  
 S That's interesting.  
 T huh! well, you've still got me, because you're my advisor.  
 S that's later. The second half.  
 T yeah.  
 S not in the first ha-, I think there are, all, all males. All right!  
 T I'll keep bugging you, anyway. (laughs)  
 S why not?  
 T um, so this is totally unrelated, though.  
 S good! (laughs)  
 T um, what do you think the balance is between text and music, or what it should be, in Cantorial music?  
 S the balance?  
 T yeah.  
 S eh, you have, you have different approaches here. You heard what it should be, let's see what it was.  
 T okay  
 S first of all, eh, all the arrangement- the, the, there's a big change in style in the Cantorial music. Uh, did you learn Alter's l'keil baruch, maybe? You know the words?  
 T yeah.  
 S so an old time chazzan will sing, eh, every word would, would be like, would stand by itself, would have a motive. Like "L'keil. . .", one word. then Baruch, another figure, then Imot, and, so by the time you finish five words, you have five different stories.  
 T uh huh  
 S that, the style changed. You have a phrase, that goes together.  
 T mm hmm  
 S you know what I mean? Without stops.  
 T yeah  
 S that's number one. Eh, eh, so, som- sometimes  
 Track 18  
 S uh, you, eh, you would have a melody, you're looking, a hazzonishe style melody, type of a melody, or recitative, and then you're looking for the words after  
 T uh huh  
 S to match, to figure, to match what you got, there, that's not the best way to do it.  
 T right  
 S eh, the best way, of course, is to recite, and then you have the, you have the rhythm of the words.  
 T mm hmm  
 S that, we didn't have, that wasn't in the style. Now, those that wrote later, tried to do it, like Katchko, Alto- eh, Alter,  
 T mm hmm  
 S they're trying to think of the words. See, Alter, you have very little melody by Alter.  
 T yeah.

S why? He didn't know any melodies?  
T (laughs)  
S he couldn't fi- no, he, cause he's writing with dikduk, don't forget.  
T uh huh  
S so it doesn't co- it doesn't jive. The old-timers didn't care about the dikduk, they didn't know about it, it didn't bother anybody. So, it's very hard to, to, to, to, uh, to bring out the melody right. And now, if you take, eh, say, for instance, a phrase that was done. . . like, eh, (coughs) Rosenblatt, in, in other words, in, in, you hear from Rosh Hodesh benchen, "chayim shel chilutz atzamos" so, I'm probably hoarse by now (plays piano, sings) Rosenblatt sings something like this. Oy. (sings) "oy, chayim shel chilutz atzamois, atzamois." That's the phrase. That's what he sings. So, he said, "oy," and then he "chayim", he said chayim,  
T (laughs)  
S and "atzamot" he said "atzomos".  
T uh huh  
S atzomos means bones. (laughs) It doesn't make any sense. Now, if you sing "cha-" with the dik- "chayim shel chilutz atzamot, atzamot" it sounds, it comes out, it sounds stupid.  
T right. (laughs)  
S you understand?  
T yeah.  
S so, a lot of the things, even if you want to redo them, and you wanted to make the dikduk correct, it doesn't sound good.  
T uh huh. So, if you want to sing those, you have to use the old  
S if you want to sing, so you have to, you have to readjust them somehow. You got to change them a little bit.  
T yeah.  
S so, the books that I, the books that I copied. eh, that I wrote for the Canadian cantors, they all, they wanted the records, to be, you know, to write out the music as sung on the records.  
T mm hmm.  
S they cannot be written correctly, cause that wasn't sung correctly.  
T (laughs)  
S and you can't, eh, eh, um, eh, without editing it, all the words are wrong,  
T mm hmm  
S and of course the accents are g-, are falling wrong in each bar.  
T mm hmm.  
S but that was the style of the music, so I have it done that way.  
T uh huh.  
S so the, the stuff that I did later on, so, I tried to keep it as correct as possible.  
T mm hmm.  
S so, uh, I mean, somebody who's in the line will understand. Here, it's written like a Chinaman, and here, and how come in the other book it's right,  
T right.  
S and here it's cockeyed?  
T right.

S that's the answer.  
T okay.  
S cause it was sung cockeyed. Eh, eh, eh  
Track 19  
T (laughs)  
S eh, eh, if you're, if you're a secretary, and you've got to write down exactly what the boss says, even if he says it wrong,  
T right  
S or the dikduk is wrong, you got, you should write it the way he said it.  
T right.  
S or type it the way he said it.  
T right.  
S so the, eh, if you line up all the books, they're not consistent, in that way.  
T ok  
S some are correct, some are cockeyed.  
T so those Cantors who sang it wrong,  
S yeah, but those who we- uh, uh  
T were they right in their time?  
S that was the style  
T It was the style.  
S it was accepted. Now we have Israel, people know Hebrew, eh,  
T mm hmm  
S you have a, (laughs) you have a guy from Israel, he goes to shul, he hears the, he hears old time cantors, he says, "is he davening in Hebrew?" (laughs)  
T right.  
T and S (laugh)  
T and when you write your own music, how do you...?  
S I try to write it, eh, uh, more up to date.  
T uh huh. More, like, reciting?  
S Yeah. Like, yeah, it, more correct, the dikduk should be right, and it should fall right in the bar.  
T ok?  
S you know, as far as the accents, you know, and certain beats, whatever it is.  
T mm hmm.  
S so, how do you find out how to do that? I, I looked uh, at the, uh, the Israeli publications, which were better  
T oh!  
S than the Americans. I see how they did it.  
T ok?  
S I see, I know what's wrong with it, too, wh- (laughs)  
T (laughs)  
S so I was able to, eh, to copy from those that wrote correctly, which we have nobody.  
T uh huh  
S even Katchko's is not correct. But it's Better, tha- I, eh, I think it was edited already. I have old manuscripts from Katchko.

T mm hmm  
 S they're also, uh, not right.  
 T uh huh  
 S so, least I got the idea. And, uh, so I do the best I can.  
 T okay.  
 S (laughs)  
 T (laughs)  
 S what can I tell you?  
 T um, this isn't one of my questions, but I was just  
 S yeah  
 T thinking about it.  
 S you can improvise!  
 T when I'm, uh, starting to think about my recital for next year,  
 S it's, eh, wha- a year from now?  
 T it's April, next year.  
 S oh, you got time  
 T right before Pesach.  
 S still, that time, eh. . .  
 T and, um. . . I wonder what kind of music I should look at. I, I mean, if my thesis  
 is about YOU,  
 S yeah?  
 T it should be some of the music you wrote, maybe some of the music you've  
 transcribed, or  
 S yeah. Transcribed, there you have nothing to present. So what ar- what are you  
 going to present? If I transcribed Yosele Rosenblatt, so you're singing Rosenblatt.  
 T right. Right.  
 S If it's Pinchik, it's Pinchik.  
 T Or maybe what you edited  
 S aw, if it's edited,  
 T things that you, you contributed to  
 S oh, aw, eh, if it's edited, so at least it's in the form, that the Hebrew is good.  
 T right. Right.  
 S alright.  
 T but even the things that you just transcribed, that was a contribution that you  
 made, because they wouldn't, maybe, be written down otherwise.  
 S alright,  
 T right?  
 S you might say that, yeah.  
 T ...or it could be as something that was an influence on you, maybe  
 S yeah. I ha- I have here a piece. See this piece of paper here?  
 T mm hmm. . . wow!  
 S a fella was here, a few months ago. He offered me a thousand dollars for this  
 sheet.  
 T (laughs)  
 S so, I didn't answer him, he says, "I'll even make it twelve hundred."  
 T wow!

S this is a r- this is a  
Track 20  
S Rosenblatt original!  
T wow!  
S and the ke- question is, how did I got it  
T yeah, how did you get it?  
S that's a different story. It seems that, eh, eh, there was a big Cantor, all the way back, his name was Steinberg, and he was probably pals with Rosenblatt, so for some reason he gave it to him, I think.  
T uh huh  
S and when he died, eh, this Cantor's grandson says he has a pack of notes, (laughs)  
T (laughs)  
S a pack of notes, he has no use for 'em.  
T mm hmm  
S So he gave me a bunch of notes. His grandfather didn't even know how to write music well, he was a very big improviser.  
T wow  
S One of the best. Em, Steinberg was the name. So, I found this there, I was a-, I recognized, I knew the handwriting.  
T Yeah.  
S so that was it, so it's an original.  
T wow!  
S oh, so some fella, he, he, I, who offered me that money, he said why don't, he says he loves Rosenblatt, and he would feel like, just like someone who collects stamps or something,  
T uh huh  
S he feels something there.  
T wow.  
S so, uh, I saw he was very anxious, so I said not now. (laughs)  
T wow! (laughs)  
S I'd sell it to him. What do I need it for?  
T right! (laughs)  
S I don't care.  
T That's great. um,. . let's see. . . so, I probably already asked you this question  
S oh, you, the question, you what, what are you gonna sing? You'll give us  
T oh, yeah.  
S you'll, you give us sh-, uh, uh, some, maybe some, some samples of sh- short pieces of nusach variations. Maybe.  
T ok?  
S a few, not very long, like, like a piece that takes, like five lines or something like, or a few versions.  
T mm hmm.  
S or, maybe. And then, uh, something that has a melody. Maybe something choral. The choral are not, are two part choral, I don't write heavy choral. I don't know how to do that.  
T uh huh.

S Not interested.

T and S (laugh)

S and, uh, and maybe, uh, maybe some, eh, maybe some, a piece or two, in the heavier style.

T yeah.

S with kvetches,

T ok?

S coloratura, dreydlach.

T yeah. something to show off?

S yeah. Why not? (laughs)

T ok. Good. . . um,

S it doesn't have to be from books. If it's not from a book, I'll give it to you, uh, you know, manuscript.

T yeah.

S or, from, you want a book, here's a book. Whatever it is. Okay, we'll see.

T maybe I can even get you to write something for me.

S alright, maybe.

T when you get to know my voice.

S and T (laugh)

S alright, we'll see.

T um, let's see. So, how do you feel about teaching Reform Cantors?

S again with that? (laughs)

T yeah! Well that's. . . I think people who are reading this would be interested to know.

S I, I'm actually not teaching the art of Reform

T right.

S Cantors.

T right.

S I'm teaching the, the traditional art.

T uh huh

S and if someone is interested, I'd be glad to tell them whatever I know.

T ok.

S they want to know. So, that's it. What's gonna be the difference? He's gonna wear a yarmulke or he's not gonna wear a yarmulke.

T uh huh.

S same thing! (laughs)

T ok. !

S (laughs)

Track 21

T um. . . you've already kind of told me, but I'll ask you again so

S go ahead.

T what do you try to communicate to your students and what do you hope to pass on to them?

S uh. . . what do I want to communicate with them? I want. . . I just, what I said before.

T yeah?



S I ju- I want to give them, eh, uh, pass on some kind of style,  
 T mm hmm?  
 S expression, and some dynamics, and timing.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S and. . . and it should sound like davening, not more than, unless it's a pure  
 concert,  
 T mm hmm?  
 S it should have that element of tefilah in it.  
 T yeah.  
 S as much as possible. Y- ah- there's no room for it in the Reform. In the service.  
 Very little. I don't think you could do it.  
 T would you ever go to a Reform service?  
 S I saw a service once. I was, I was once in the, uh, there were, the Cantor was  
 Weinflash. You know him?  
 T mm mm.  
 S he graduated from the school, the year zero.  
 T (laughs)  
 S how did I go there? At my first job. eh, she's the Ca- She was the Cantor there.  
 Uh, what's her? Faith!  
 T uh huh.  
 S in that, that, she's in Spring Valley. When I was the Cantor, in there, I went to, to  
 the Liberal Synagogue.  
 T uh huh.  
 S Friday night. Just to see, I don't know, maybe not what to do, just take a look.  
 So, uh, so I saw a service, yeah. They made me take my hat off. (laughs) I  
 remember!  
 T (laughs) they wouldn't do that now.  
 S they'd be glad if someone comes there!  
 T right. (laughs)  
 S yeah. she's the cantor there. I, she still there? I think she is!  
 T I don't know,  
 S that's the shul I was in.  
 T yeah?  
 S yeah. That was such a long time ago.  
 T wow. So,  
 S the, the, the uh, the Cantor there was a graduate from the Hebrew Union.  
 T hmm.  
 S yeah. I think he wrote a Mole. They sing it in the school.  
 T oh yeah?  
 S Weinflash. I think he wrote a Keyl Male Rachamim.  
 T yeah, that sounds familiar!  
 S yeah, he was the Cantor there.  
 T oh.  
 S for that era.  
 T wow.  
 S if he's alive, he's surely, uh, retired by now.

T uh huh. Um, so, let's see. . . I think you've answered most of my questions.  
 S oh! Good, you'll get new ones.  
 T I'll have to! Um, anything else you can think of that I should know?  
 S no, you'll, uh, get the eh, get the biography from, from that girl, and  
 T yeah, I got it.  
 S probably cockeyed. So we'll go over it, maybe.  
 T ok!  
 S Change it a little bit.  
 T alright! That's a good idea.  
 S yeah. I suppose a lot, why? They weren't happy with it. I never looked at it.  
 T really?  
 S I never saw it.  
 T you mean the one from a long time ago, right?  
 S it's not so long.  
 T but, the, Galina, who just did it last year,  
 S not her. The au- there was a girl, Cohen.  
 T yeah, I read her's. yeah.  
 S yeah.  
 T yeah.  
 S I think they didn't like it.  
 T yeah. I think so.  
 S it was so terrible?  
 T uh, it was, um,  
 S if it was not accurate, then  
 T it was not  
 Track 22  
 T academic, I guess.  
 S oh, is that what it is?  
 T yeah.  
 S and yours is going to be better?  
 T I hope so!  
 S alright.  
 T I'm going to try! (laughs) with your help!  
 S yeah, alright.  
 T um,  
 S eh, it's up to you, how you're going to make it look on the paper, you know.  
 T yeah. Oh, I know what I wanted to ask you.  
 S yeah  
 T a few more things. Um, one of them is, who else should I talk to, to find out the  
 s-, the, the important things about you.  
 S who you want to talk to? There's nobo-, Barry Sirota.  
 T Barry Sirota.  
 S yeah. How are you gonna get to him, is the question.  
 T I think I met him in Israel.  
 S yeah?  
 T he does recordings and stuff?

S he did a lot of recordings. He's, uh, I know him for a very long time. He's, uh, he knows, he knows a lot of angles about recordings, and, he knows the dates, and how many takes there were, and uh,

T mm hmm?

S a lot a details. And the addresses. (laughs)

T ok.

S yeah. He could give you a lot of information.

T ok. Um, so, and the other thing

S Pasternak also knows certain things.

T ok?

S you know him?

T I know of him.

S yeah.

T yeah. I don't know if I've ever talked to him. I know who he is.

S allright! Maybe he has no time. The other one will probably be happy to talk.

T ok.

S he put out a lot of recordings.

T yeah.

S he works for the Milken Foundation. You heard of them?

T yeah. . . Did you ever do any recordings?

S no.

T no?

S Not really. Except if a student

T right.

S recorded while we were practicing.

T right.

S not, not, not professional. Junky ones! (laughs)

T (laughs)

S This is from a documentary. This is Barry. Barry.

T oh, yeah!

S And that's me, and

T when was that done?

S this is Ganchoff. Not too long ago. A few years before he, about two or three years before he died. He's been dead five years already.

T is it around? Can I see it?

S it never came out, though. It had to be edited.

T uh huh.

S He sent, Barry sent it to me. Cause he's work- was working for the Milken Foundation.

T oh!

S this picture you saw, here's Alter. That's him. There's Ganchoff.

T huh!

S This must be twen-, it was probably twenty years ago.

T uh huh.

S yeah. That's that.

T hmm. So,

S this. . .yeah, go ahead  
 T oh, go ahead  
 S this is Rosenblatt's signature. I pasted it on.  
 T (laughs)  
 S no, because I had it, I had it in, oh, here, see, I took it from here.  
 T ok?  
 S I had an autograph book. It wasn't to me.  
 T oh, okay.  
 S so I, I xeroxed it and put it on.  
 T (laughs)  
 S it's probably worth something if, to the guy who was interested in the  
 T yeah, probably.  
 S throw it in for another  
 T right  
 S zillion dollars, there.  
 T (laughs) Wow!  
 S yeah.  
 T um, so since there already are a couple of people who wrote about you, just your  
 biography,  
 S yeah?  
 T I wanted to  
 S you wanted to make it different?  
 T well, to, to  
 S there are questions  
 T I mean, of course I'll include  
 Track 23  
 T your biography, but  
 S there are questions, when were you born. Yeah,  
 T yeah  
 S you'll have the dates there  
 T yeah, those are, that's like the background.  
 S and, I have no brothers or sisters, and I sang, at this age I sang in this choir  
 T right  
 S then I sang in that choir  
 T right.  
 S and I took lessons by Rovner.  
 T yeah?  
 S yeah. He taught me solfeggio. His father was the, the mai-, the leading composer  
 of the, uh, East European. East European Cantors. This is him.  
 T huh.  
 S see, he wrote only with a feather.  
 T wow!  
 S see, there's a European picture. Was in America maybe  
 T huh. So,  
 S ok.

T what, what kind of things, if, if you had a choice of, you know, what was written about you,  
S yeah?  
T what, what do you think are the important things about you?  
S aw, not too important! Oh, you could sa-, eh, eh, I think, uh, probably, nah, not, uh, eh, eh, until recently (laughs)  
T (laughs)  
S you probably could have said, that from, there were no American born, eh, people, Cantors,  
T mm hrm  
S people, whatever you want to say, that, eh, that, eh had the, eh, had liturgical music of this type printed, or, at so m- in, eh, eh so much volume at least.  
T yeah?  
S I think so.  
T so were you the first one, or one of the first ones to do that?  
S I think so. Or, or the may-, or it's an, maybe an important kind of a work.  
T yeah!  
S and all the, eh, all the Ganchoff books I wrote, you know that.  
T yeah.  
S so that's a big contribution. Oh! You see, none of the books have, eh, uh had all these, the-, the-, these, eh, the details written out.  
T yeah.  
S you fo- you, you, you get a book, you don't, you don't have that. I captured the, uh, at least on paper, some of the, eh, some of the style and the, uh, what do, well, style. It depends how you do it.  
T right.  
S If you, you play it on a piano, you have no style.  
T right.  
S so you have to actually listen, besides bes-, besides having the notes. Cause, eh, there's no style from the paper, even though it tells you  
T right.  
S heh! Allargo, whatever you want,  
T right.  
S con brio. (laughs) doesn't mean anything. You have to hear it. Eh, uh, Glanz wrote, uh, he wrote in his book, quarter tones.  
T wow.  
S that you sing it in quarter tones. You ne-, you never saw that?  
T no.  
S he has marks, like, eh, some kind of x's. I think that's fake.  
T (laughs)  
S I think when he recorded, or he sang, he sang slightly off pitch.  
T uh huh.  
S that means, I wanted it that way.  
T uh huh! (laughs)  
S (laughs) Yeah. Uh, Pinchik sang flat on purpose, too.  
T uh huh?

S flat, yeah.  
T it's an effect?  
S yeah. I'll give you an example. I'm not in condition, but here, (plays piano and hums)

Track 24

S (humms and plays piano) Let's say the mel-, eh, if he had a choir holding a tone, let's say the mel-, the melody went (sings) "ah, ah, da da da da da", let's say he went, "ah, ah, da da da da da" (a little under pitch) a little bit under, you know?

T uh huh.  
S to give it, for certain effects.  
T hmm.  
S yeah. Later on, he sang, he sang flat. Maybe he didn't have enough support.  
T yeah?  
S and that's why he's full of modulations.  
T oh!  
S he always fou-, he, he, he would find himself down a tone all the time.  
T so he'd just start there and  
S so, so he, he made a million modula-, eh, modulations. Eh, eh let's say he would, let's say if he fell, let's say he fell, eh, fell down, let's say he was supposed to be in this key, and he fell down, (plays piano) he's a tone lower, he would go, (sings modulation). things like that.

T wow!  
S I followed him, orally. I use to pi-, I picked up a lot, a lot of his maneuvers  
T uh huh  
S how he operated. When I heard him as a kid, I used to, I used to picture, I couldn't remember the pieces, what he was doing. At that time, when I used to listen to a Cantor, I'd listen to see where he is, and where he's going, what he did.  
T uh huh?  
S I was able to follow mentally.  
T yeah.  
S so, I, I used to follow along what he's doing, and uh, he had a tremendous amount of key changes,  
T (laughs)  
S and when he got stuck altogether, he would recite. He would stop the piece and go, (speaking in an affected voice) "Tov l'hodot, tov l'zamer, da da da, ee, ah", see, then he would start in the key that he wanted.  
T (laughs)  
S so he had talking in his act.  
T uh huh  
S and he was able to maneuver the change in the key.  
T wow! I'll have to try that if I get lost.  
S yeah, you could do that. You can recite once in awhile.  
T yeah. . .  
S Not a bad idea. (laughs)  
T (laughs)  
S not everybody needed, those that had big voices, they never got stuck.

T yeah. Yeah.  
 S (laughs) if you are limited, and you can go only this much,  
 T oh, yeah  
 S yeah, you gotta go down.  
 S and T (laugh)  
 T so, what else do you think are your contributions?  
 S did I contribute anything?  
 T sure! Or what did you do,  
 S I helped a lot of  
 T even if it's not a contribution?  
 S I helped a lot of hazzonim out with , with their records,  
 T uh huh?  
 S a lot of them, I have. . . And, uh, I wrote things for certain people, eh, eh, without my name on it. (laughs)  
 T uh huh  
 S and I'm, I'm quoted some, some things even in a, in the, there's an ency-encyclopedia, there's some of my atte- notation there, that were put down, my name is not mentioned there. Lot of, a lot of stuff like that.  
 T yeah.  
 S I can show you in detail,  
 T yeah, show me!  
 S if you need it,  
 T yeah!  
 S and, then, uh,  
 T maybe I'll sing some of those.  
 S nah, it's, they're not to sing. They're, uh. . . they're, uh, like, for instance, they have,  
 Track 25  
 S they have one, they, eh, they have there the, uh, the shirah, from the Spanish-Portuguese,  
 T uh huh  
 S they have a different shirah for Shabbat Shirah, and regular shirah.  
 T uh huh  
 S it's a different one, and what, and, uh, there's a notation in there, eh, eh, it was my notation, actually. Alright, I didn't make the tune, because it's not my nusach.  
 T right. Right  
 S but there are things like that appeared, and uh, there was no credit given.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S I don't care about that!  
 T (laughs)  
 S that's it! No big deal.  
 T ok.  
 S I had a lot of students, though.  
 T yeah.  
 S in all these years, from the year zero, all the way down, with between all the schools

T uh huh?

S don't forget, if I taught the-, in the Yeshiva alone, if I taught there twenty-five years, I did four classes, four classes an evening,

T mm hmm

S let's say. So you can imagine, from all the years, how many students, they had a lot of students there. Nobody graduates there, from there.

T really?

S hardly. No way. They never make it. They took in everybody, see, if wanted to, let's say people went to the Rabbinical school, they just wanted to know, maybe how to read the Torah, or just to daven plain,

T mm hmm

S it was in a, a different level.

T yeah.

S so there were a lot of, a lot of students. A lot!

T yeah.

S and no one ever graduates, cause they,

T (laughs)

S they, they don't know the material, or they're not interested, or whatever it is.

T hmm. . . . did you get your Rabbinic Ordination from them?

S no. I got it after that. After that.

T so recently?

S No!!! Not recently! Not recently, it was about, uh, eh, uh, about, uh, about two years later. After, after uh, after I graduated college.

T oh! So a long time.

S yeah.

T before you started

S I wa- I wasn't even interested in that angle.

T mm hmm. How come you did it?

S that, the que- I did it because, I was gonna go to the army

T oh.

S I was, I got, I got a notice (laughs)

T (laughs)

S a notice. So, I was on already, my fir- my first position. So I told the Rabbi, tha-, tha-, that he should list me as an assistant Rabbi,

T mm hmm

S and that, and then I went to, uh, to be tested, to get, uh, to get a degree.

T uh huh.

S and I got it then. I never practiced!

T (laughs) So, it was just a convenience?

S so that was, if, if not for that I probably would never be interested.

T yeah.

S worked out like that, uh, you know.

T ok.

S and T (laugh)

S I don't know if, I don't think you should write that. (laughs)

T (laughs) I'll let you check everything before I



S no, you write whatever you want  
 T print it.  
 S you see, I didn't even read the other one.  
 T I know.  
 S I never read it. Never looked at it.  
 T well, at least I'll get, I'll get my facts straight, if you check it.  
 S alright. That I'll, yeah. she didn't let, they didn't show it to me.  
 T yeah.  
 S once it was finished, it was finished.  
 T yeah.  
 S does anyone look at it? Nah!  
 T who knows.  
 S maybe you'll because you're, you're  
 Track 26  
 S interested, you ha-,  
 T yeah  
 S you need some information.  
 T yeah. But I don't know. I think  
 S I'm sure some things were wrong.  
 T you've taught so many people, I'll bet there'd be a lot of people who'd just be  
 interested in reading about you.  
 S oh, for fun.  
 T yeah.  
 S alright. For fun, I'd read it myself.  
 T yeah.  
 S ok.  
 T yeah. . . Anything else?  
 S I don't know. It's up to you. (laughs)  
 T I think I've asked all the questions I could think of tonight.  
 S you'll think of different ones!  
 T I'll think of some more.  
 S yeah. Ok. How long does this have to be? This. uh.  
 T I think about forty-five pages.  
 S forty-five pages? Typed pages?  
 T yeah.  
 S that's a lot of pages!  
 T yeah.  
 S the other ones had such, so, so much on paper?  
 T yeah. Yeah.  
 S can't imagine.  
 T some of them have more. Some of them have, like, a hundred pages. Depends on  
 how into it you get.  
 S yeah?  
 T yeah.  
 S oh. Aah.  
 T are there any books I should look at?

S books? Like what?  
 T I don't know. Like, history, or, or  
 S you mean, for, for general knowledge, or what?  
 T for, I don't know.  
 S the main thing, eh, the main book is Idelson, that's all. *Jewish Music*.  
 T yeah. yeah, I have that.  
 S that's it.  
 T ok.  
 S that sort of, sort of the Bible.  
 T ok.  
 S he was criticized sometimes, for certain things. eh, you can't, he, he, he too-, he took on a job that included such a wide range of thing, he took in Sephardim,  
 T right.  
 S Ashkenazim  
 T everything.  
 S and all the br- . . . It can-, he can't be a, a specialist in every detail!  
 T right!  
 S You know something has to be a little bit cockeyed!  
 T right.  
 S A fly got in.  
 T yeah!  
 S How did a fly get in there?  
 T I don't know.  
 S I have a screen there. . . Alright.  
 T alright.  
 S and T (laugh)  
 S yeah. . . I, I used to talk to Dr. Werner sometimes.  
 T uh huh?  
 S yeah, you heard of him?  
 T yeah.  
 S he was a funny guy! He was funny. I w- asked him to, to, eh, I asked him for permission to sit in on the class.  
 T oh, yeah?  
 S he didn't let me.  
 T how come?  
 S he didn't want to, he figured I, he said I wouldn't understand it. I wasn't a student there! Er, so, uh, I don't know, after awhi-, finally let, he, he let me listen to one class.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S he was under the impression that I read his books. Cause I was talking to him and he mentioned, he mentioned something and I sort of went along  
 T (laughs)  
 S so he thought I was familiar. I didn't know what he was talking about.  
 T (laughs)  
 S yeah.  
 T but you won him over?

S and, and, yeah, he was friendly with, with the, Dr. Adler. He was the head of the music department at Yeshiva University.

T oh!

S he knew of, he would, he led a orchestra in Stuttegarte

T wow.

S he says, "how's my friend Carl?"

T (laughs)

S So that was it. So we, (laughs) so he used to ask, for Dr Ad-

Track 27

S Adler was a, I, eh, he, he was very, very brilliant in certain ways, I think. I was once in the library, and I had a book in my hand, it was Goethe

T yeah?

S He says, "what are you reading?" I said, "I'm not reading. I'm just looking at." I just happened to grab that

T uh huh

S book by accident. He stood at the other end of the room, he says, "read where you're reading." I didn't even know what I'm reading, so I read, and he said, he continued. Knew it by heart.

T wow!

S (laughs) and he, eh, if you came to audition as a student in the school,

T mm hmm

S he always a- he asked a crazy question. He said, "what can you memorize?" So I understood the question, he wants to ask somebody, "what did you memorize?" In other words, you, wha- you memorized it, let's, let's hear it.

T uh huh. (laughs)

S is, wouldn't you understand that?

T right!

S he said, "what can you memorize?" The question was, what's your capabilities of memorizing something, what can you memorize.

T right!

S oh, it was nuts!

T (laugh)

S yeah, that's what he did. He wanted to know if you c-, and he, he was practic-, until he, before he died, he start-, he decided to study Spanish.

T hmm!

S He always had his mind working.

T wow!

S wanted to learn something all the time.

T hmm.

S yeah. . . . So that's the story.

T ok. What about your family?

S what about? I have no brothers or sisters.

T uh huh?

S My father sang, eh, by Rovner in America, uh, uh, approximately 1929, 1930. Sang tenor.

T hmm

S why did he sing? I think, because they didn't- that's the time of the crash. They didn't have what to eat. People were, so, could sing a little bit,

T uh huh?

S join a choir, make a few dollars. That's what I guess.

T hmm. He must have been a good singer.

S I don't know how good he was. I know he had a small voice, that I know, I wa- I was told later.

T uh huh

S He said it was sweet, but small. It was a tenor.

T uh huh

S and later he didn't sing anywhere, lost his voice.

T huh!

S I heard him daven once from the amud. Once, he was already, uh, not in the, not singing anymore. You know, if you have yartzeit, the custom is to daven from the amud.

T uh huh.

S so I remember one time when he davened, he davened plain. It was alright.

T hmm.

S He taught me the solfeggio in the beginning. Uh, how to, he, the first few pages of solfeggio.

T uh huh.

S I must have been nine, ten, maybe. You know, the scales and the intervals. (sings) Do mi re fa mi sol. Do fa re sol mi la fa. Whatever it is, yeah. That he taught me. A few pages, maybe.

T uh huh.

S I don't know if he knew more. He knew a little more.

T and S (laugh)

S that's it. Then. . . the rest, I told you, I learnt by, the

T yeah.

S the s-, Zeidle Rovner's son. How did

T yeah.

S How did I come to him? When I was, I think it was fourteen or fifteen, I don't remember, maybe, probably fourteen and a half, fifteen, uh, I sang in his choir

Track 28

S for the holidays, he says, I'll pay you, I don't- I think it was \$25, maybe \$35, which was considered alright.

T mm hmm.

S he says, but I'll teach you music, too. Whenever you want to come for a lesson, I will teach you.

T wow!

S and he taught me. And, the problem was, he didn't speak English

T uh huh

S and when he spoke to me, he, uh, his, he had a certain, the terminology, I didn't know what he was talking about. Like, for instance, take, I'll say, bass clef.

(End of minidisk - rest of interview cut off - see Interview 2 for follow-up)

**Appendix 2:**

**Interview 2 by Tanya Tamarkin with Noah Schall  
November 2002.**

Track 9 (tracks 1 – 8 coaching)

T The first thing I want to do is make sure I have all the basic facts straight.  
S alright  
T um, because I feel like when I looked at the other things that were written about you,  
S yeah?  
T they had different  
S the dates are wrong?  
T different dates and stuff.  
S oh, ok  
T so, if I get 'em right from you, then at least, even if they're not true, at least I have a r-  
S alright,  
T (laughs) some authority.  
S alright.  
T so, so when were you born?  
S that date was right, that I told you.  
T I don't think you told  
S August 30<sup>th</sup>.  
T August 30<sup>th</sup>.  
S 1929.  
T 1929.  
S yeah. That's the only thing that's correct.  
T ok.  
S (laughs)  
T in. . . Brooklyn?  
S Brooklyn, yeah. In the house.  
T really?  
S yeah.  
T wow!  
S not a hospital.  
T oh.  
S yeah. Uh, yeah, um, the, eh, the, the first born from my mother was a stillborn.  
T mm hmm.  
S they think the, maybe the doctors damaged it when they took him out, so she didn't- they didn't go, she didn't go to the hospital. She had it at the house.  
T wow  
S that's where I lived  
T wow  
S I don't have any brothers or sisters.  
T hmm. . . is that unusual?  
S what?  
T do you think?  
S um, not having brothers or sisters?  
T yeah.  
S usually they, (laughs)

T (laughs)  
 S usually the families are larger than that  
 T yeah!  
 S yeah.  
 T that's what I thought.  
 S yeah. You have brothers or sisters?  
 T yeah.  
 S so, there you are.  
 T (laughs) So, when you, did you have other extended family living nearby?  
 S In the same house, my grandparents lived there.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S It was a two family house. They lived downstairs, I lived upstairs.  
 T oh.  
 S that's the connection.  
 T uh huh. Did you-? So you, I guess you saw them a lot.  
 S yeah! Yeah. They spoke Yiddish. I spoke  
 T uh huh.  
 S that's how I learnt. . . how to speak Yiddish.  
 T ok. . .um. . .let's see, I know about how you learned music a little bit,  
 S you know, before the music, I went to public school first.  
 T yeah.  
 S the other girl, did she have that? Went to public school.  
 T ok  
 S PS 25  
 T (laughs)  
 S annex. Koskiosko Street. Pronounced, "kush-kushkeh", I think.  
 T (laughs)  
 S you know, that story, (laughs) There, there. there was a horse, there was an accident or something, a horse dropped dead on Koskiosko Street. So the policeman came, had to fill out the report. . . s- (laughs) he didn't know how to spell Koskiosko  
 T (laughs)  
 S he says, could you please pull over to Gates Avenue? (laughs) He knew how to spell Gates.  
 T (laughs)  
 S knew how to fill out the paper. Ok.  
 T um, so when did you s-, you started learning music, what, when you were about fourteen?  
 S oh, you mean  
 T or. . .?  
 S official lessons?  
 T yeah.  
 S uh, actually, when I was about, eh, was about ten, my father sh-, uh, showed me the first few pages of solfeggio.  
 T ok  
 S because he,

Track 10

S he was able to, uh, he knew som-, he sang by, by Rovner, the one on  
T yeah.  
S the picture.  
T yeah.  
S Zeidle Rovner, yeah. In America.  
T uh huh.  
S not in Europe. Oh, by the way, in that era, there was a, this one, this hazzan was  
called Yonkl The Haizerker, Jacob the Hoarse One, he went, because he, he was  
hoarse.  
T (laughs)  
S This is his picture, and you s-, noti- all the men in the choir wear beards.  
T uh huh.  
S if y-, in Europe, if you sang by, you, by Rovner, they hav-, the, if the men, if the  
men were shaven, they wouldn't take 'em in the, into the choir.  
T really?  
S yeah.  
T wow!  
S In America he took whatever he could.  
T huh!  
S nothing to get. Anyhow, that's the story. So, uh, I told you, uh, his, his so-, my  
father sang by Zeidle Rovner, and , eh, the son, Zeidle Rovner's son taught me  
music, when I, I was about, eh, he taught me for two years, I guess  
T mm hmm.  
S about 14, 15, 16. . . A lesson (clears throat) was about ten minutes, and uh, he  
wrote out the lessons, didn't use any books. No solfeggio books.  
T uh huh.  
S he wrote 'em by hand, and that was it.  
T ok  
S ok. After public school, I went to, I switched to Yeshiva. I must have been ten  
years old.  
T ok  
S that was in Brooklyn. That was called Yeshiva Torah Avoda'as, Avoda'at.  
T Torah  
S I stay there for two and half years, then I switched out to a different one. It was in  
Manhattan. Uh, there was a big newspaper, The Forward. It's still, uh  
T yeah!  
S exists. In back of the Forward building, fo- (clears throat) was a street, Henry  
Street. And Yeshiva Rabbi Jacob Joseph. That's where I went, finished the  
public school part, you know, then, uh, high school, I also graduated from there,  
T mm hmm.  
S then, uh, then I went to Yeshiva University.  
T mm hmm.  
S ok, that's not important.  
T so at, at the Yeshivas they did regular public school s-, I m-, regular subjects, too.  
S yeah, fir-, yeah, but they did that in the afternoon. First was the Hebrew studies,



T mm hmm  
 S then about, eh, three o'clock, after three o'clock the teachers came from public school, they had their extra job, and they taught English  
 T oh  
 S in the Yeshivas.  
 T ok.  
 S when they finished, they, they came.  
 T ok.  
 S Yeah.  
 T so, was it unusual for people from, that you went to school with, to go into  
 S what, to music?  
 T yeah, to music?  
 S no, a lot of kids sang in choirs  
 T yeah.  
 S in that era. It was popular in the ge-, a lot of, there were a lot of choirs in Manhattan, Bronx, in Brooklyn, Queens, I don't know, maybe,  
 T mm hmm.  
 S maybe still. There were a lot of hazzonim, they davened with choirs. It u-, it was usually for holidays, they would take a kid  
 T mm hmm  
 S if he was a soloist, he got more money, but that was it.  
 T were you a soloist?  
 S yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that, that was the deal with when I sang in the choir by, uh, Rovner's son. That was our, he says, I'll teach you music, I think he said, "I'll give you thirty-five dollars," it was not a bad price.  
 T that's pretty good!  
 S and he says, "and I will teach you music, as much as you want, you come around for nothing." And I did.  
 T wow.  
 Track 11  
 S That's what I learned.  
 T wow.  
 S but he didn't speak English, that's why I didn't understand anything he said.  
 T (laughs)  
 S (laughs)  
 T so, you didn't learn enough Yiddish at home to  
 S yeah, but I didn't understand the terminology  
 T yeah.  
 S of the, the music terminology, the, eh,  
 T yeah.  
 S and if I'd ask him a question, I didn't understand the answer.  
 T when-  
 S Now I think, maybe he didn't understand the question. That's also part of it.  
 T (laughs)  
 S alright! Anyhow, straightened out later.  
 T He just taught you solfeg?

S that's all. Period.  
T ok.  
S hazzonus I didn't study. He didn't teach me.  
T ok. Never?  
S no.  
T just from listening.  
S yeah, but, yeah, from listening to the, well, I, in the, there were, there was a lot of, uh, singing on the radio at that time.  
T yeah.  
S a lot. Eh, eh, and then you had, the, uh, there, in my neighborhood they always had hazzonim trying out for the holidays  
T right.  
S so every week there was a different hazzan davening.  
T right.  
S so I heard everybody  
T (laughs)  
S who auditioned. And, eh, yeah, so I heard plenty of guys.  
T yeah.  
S and then there were a lot of concerts. The good hazzonim sang in concerts.  
T mm hmm  
S concerts usually were on the East Side, Romanishe Shul, that's Rivington Street, and there's another one, Beis Emenash Hagadol, that still exists, that building, it's on Norfolk Street.  
T hmm  
S same area. Those were the big concerts.  
T ok. . . um. . . so you had this kind of cantorial music in your head  
S in the head?  
T your whole life, right?  
S eh, in the head  
T I mean, it was always around you, you heard it.  
S well I heard it on the radio, and I heard it on records.  
T yeah.  
S The first, eh, the first records that I had, I don't know if we talked about it ever  
T no.  
S on my block where I lived, there was a tiny music store. And this music store, eh, obviously, besides the regular stuff that they were selling, they had, eh, some cantorial, second hand records.  
T mm hmm.  
S so, I passed by once, and in the garbage there were two cantorial records, and they were from Karniol. Karniol  
T uh huh  
S is the hazzan that's, wh-, everything is coloratura.  
T ok  
S from beginning to end. So I, so I got these two records from the garbage. And didn't, eh, didn't have where to play 'em, so my family bought for me, it cost that time five dollars, it was a Victrola. You had to wind it this, eh, like this,

T (laughs)  
 S for every time you played the record, you had to wind it. Once in awhile change the needle.  
 T uh huh.  
 S so they bought me for a present Victrola five dollars, and I played these two records constantly. I had no others, I didn't buy any records,  
 T uh huh  
 S and that's what I had, so I was brought up on these two records.  
 T wow.  
 S so, that sound went into my head. Not that I was able to copy it.  
 T no.  
 S it's very complicated. I don't know if you ever heard his songs.  
 T a little bit.  
 S it's very difficult to cop-, but, I was brought up on these two records.  
 T (laughs)  
 S that was it.  
 T so, I guess Karniol was one, was your earliest influence.  
 S he, yeah, well, yeah. You might say that.  
 T yeah.  
 S then later on, then later on I picked up some records, I think so-, probably some relatives, eh, then they had a few records from Rosenblatt, and some from Kwartin, and this one and that one. Later on I

Track 12  
 S even bought a few records.  
 T uh huh.  
 S there was a store on the East Side, Essex Street, they charged, for a large, the large record was, was, eh, I think it was twenty-five cents  
 T mm hmm  
 S a record. . . maybe thirty-five, I think twenty-five, and the small ones were about fifteen cents or ten cents.  
 T mm hmm  
 S ten inch record  
 T yeah.  
 S so I used to buy some sometimes.  
 T yeah.  
 S (laughs)  
 T um  
 S a regular record cost at least a dollar that time.  
 T wow  
 S that was a lot of money.  
 T wow. yeah. . . so you went straight to Yeshiva University,  
 S after the High School.  
 T after the high school.  
 S yeah, yeah. Yeshiva University, and I graduated from there. Then I even took (clears throat) so-, I even took some credits towards, uh, a Masters degree, which I wasn't interested in, but I was there, anyway,

T uh huh  
 S so I, I think it was in education.  
 T ok  
 S never used it.  
 T ok. well, you  
 S whatever it is. Ok.  
 T um, and you said you, what, Philosophy, you said?  
 S I majored in Philosophy by accident, because  
 T (laughs)  
 S it just happened I had more credits  
 T yeah  
 S towards that, so I,  
 T ok  
 S worked out that way.  
 T ok.  
 S didn't mean anything  
 T and then, how old were you when you met your wife?  
 S eh. . (clears throat), eh, you got, you want to get into that story? Let's see  
 T (laughs)  
 S uh, I would say twenty.  
 T ok  
 S I could be off a year. Two the most. (laughs)  
 T (laughs)  
 S yeah, right.  
 T and how old were you when you got married?  
 S eh, twenty-five or twenty-four. . 24, 25.  
 T ok  
 S be 24, maybe. 24 or 25.  
 T ok  
 S ok. . . that has nothing to do with the subject!  
 T just interesting.  
 S she's not tha-, she's very unmusical, by the way.  
 T yeah?  
 S I never told her I knew anything about music.  
 T really?  
 S never spoke about the subject.  
 T (laughs) How did she find out?  
 S later on, naturally,  
 T (laughs)  
 S she found out. I think I once took, I took her to a concert.  
 T uh huh  
 S one of my students. His picture's on the wall. He's now, he's now probably over  
 80. He had a terrific voice. Here's his picture.  
 T uh huh  
 S name is Koningsburg.  
 T huh

S he just retired recently. He's about, about, probably early eighties. So, he, there was in a big concert in Newark. I think I took her

T uh huh

S at the time, and he sang, I wrote a song for him, and

T oh, really?

S he asked me to stand up, so

T wow!

S there you go, big deal.

T that's what I wanted to ask you. When did you start writing your own music?

S oh! I wasn't really a writer. It just happened. He, he took lessons by me. He was learning basically solfeggio.

T mm hmm.

S so, I used a lot of times, the lessons that I had learned solfeggio, I used to use it with him, just for practice.

T yeah?

S and, uh. . .and he sang on, eh, before Pesach s-, before the Pesach, eh, eh, before Pesach holiday, there was a special program on the Jewish Station, WEBD. They were advertising, I think, Hersch's Wine,

Track 13

S wine for Pesach.

T uh huh

S so he would, for a few months before, he would sing on the program

T uh huh

S so c-, he used to come out for about three lessons a week at that time, uh, to go, coach the, the selections that he's going to sing on the radio.

T yeah.

S so, I think two lessons were probably, uh, in some, some studio, and then the, the oth-, the third one be-, was at the station, at WEBD, just before he went on.

T uh huh.

S just to go over it. Yeah.

T ok. . .and, I know about how you were, you know, you would transcribe music. Was that just something you. . . why did you start doing that?

S uh,

T just to practice, or

S no

T you knew you could sell it?

S I have laying here the first piece I copied.

T wow!

S just happened to hit it by accident. I think it was laying here. Yeah. Isn't that funny?

T it's amazing!

S wait a min-, wait a, I think I laid it down right here. Anyhow, it's in this pile.

T uh huh

S it was a piece, a, I copied it from a so-, somebody sang it on the radio.

T yeah?

S and there was a part that I, I didn't know how to put down on paper. It was, was hard to catch it. It was a long, a long coloratura. It took a, took up about two lines.

T mm hmmm

S so, at that time, I had a friend, eh, eh, who, who was close to Wieser. Wieser's this, he, he wrote the most music in Ame-, in America. That's this guy. He lived two blocks away from me. I'll show you his picture. . .here. He wrote a lot of books, nobody wrote as many books as him.

T uh huh.

S see him?

T ok

S Joshua Wieser. His real name was Pilder Wasser. From the Wasser

T (laughs)

S they made Wieser, so on and so forth.

T huh.

S he lived near me. He was, uh, see all the music he wrote?

T yeah.

S he wrote tons of music. Choir, cantorial, blah blah blah blah,

T uh huh

S so my friend, I went up with my friend, (clears throat) he, he says, "let's show it to Wieser." What-

T oh!

S I was embarrassed,

T yeah

S so, showed him the piece. I knew it was, cou-, couldn't have been right, I didn't

T right

S so he says, uh, he says, "not bad," he sa-, he probably didn't want to make me feel bad, then he, he told me, "when you write out the cantorial pieces, you have to beat." I didn't know, "as if it's a song,"

T uh huh

S He s-, I didn't know about beats

T right

S you write whatever you hear!

T you're just writing notes,

S yeah!

T in a rhythm, right?

S he's talking about beats, and then the coloratura. eh, he, he wrote it out. I, he wrote it out, just to give me an idea how to make it. I had no idea! And, uh, that was it.

T hmm!

S that's a very interesting sto-. Eh, but, actually, I sang by Wieser when I was ten. W- for one shabbas, I sang in the choir,

T ok?

S then I quit.

T how come?

S because

Track 14

S I had a better offer. Somebody offered me more money  
T oh  
S to sing in a different choir. And he had a lot of kids. He had about eight altos, maybe ten  
T uh huh  
S even.  
T uh huh  
S there was a style, you would put up a very large choir, even half of them didn't sing.  
T yeah.  
S big choir!  
T (laughs)  
S they're not singing! It's like in that picture, there's a guy in the picture, uh, where's that pink sheet I had?  
T there it is.  
S oh. You see you have a picture here. This is funny. . . this is the choir.  
T yeah?  
S over here, you see a guy with a beard?  
T yeah.  
S he's not in the choir. He's next to the choir.  
T yeah.  
S they, they used to take these guys, when they. they were the drivers.  
T (laughs)  
S the coachmen!  
T uh huh  
S so, Friday night, when the choir had to sing. e-. so everybody in the shul, one would take this kid, one would take a man home. and he would have where to go.  
T uh huh.  
S so he made believe  
T (laughs)  
S that he's in the choir! So they used to stand, so someone should take him for shabbas,  
T right.  
S so he should have where to eat!  
T (laughs) (sighs)  
S yeah. That was it. He was, oh! So, the fu-, the standard story, he told the same story with, about Rovner, the same as him, with, with the, with the coachmen. Eh, that they, the choir was singing, and the coachman was also si-, standing with the choir,  
T rmm hmm?  
S and, uh, you know, so someone should take him home. (laughs) So, at the end of the davening, someone came over to, to the hazzan, he says, "Cantor, I noticed that over there, there's a guy there who's in the choir, he's not singing!"  
T (laughs)  
S "I watched him. He's not singing."

T yeah?  
 S so he says, "Oh, of course he doesn't sing. He's the leader!" He meant he led them around.  
 T (laughs)  
 S he was the driver. That's what, in Yiddish it comes out funny.  
 T uh huh  
 S (laughs) it meant, he's the driver.  
 T right.  
 S the driver, the leader, it was the same thing.  
 T right. (laughs)  
 S he said, "ephir the choir," that means, like, he's leading the choir.  
 T yep, yep.  
 S that's what that, ephir. . . that was a standard story.  
 T yeah.  
 S ok.  
 T I wanted to ask you about Cantorial music, as opposed to other kinds of music.  
 S yeah, what about it? Oh, then you asked me, wh-, wh-, why did I write it out, I suppose  
 T oh, yeah!  
 S I did it for fun.  
 T ok.  
 S and then, then, I, eh, I, I started to, eh, I tried to copy eh, eh, some records, eh, from Hirschman. Why? Because there were a lot of people that wanted to have those notes.  
 T yeah  
 S a lot of hazzonim used to sing it. Eh, because he's li-, little, less difficult than, let's say, Rosenblatt.  
 T yeah?  
 S Rosenblatt is a little more intricate. For me, for a hazzan who wants to be, eh, sort of, who, to sing a fancy piece, he would copy Hirschman. It's not too overloaded with kvetches and dreidlach. There's just enough.  
 T mm hmm  
 S So, I figured, if I write it out, I could sell it, and that's what I did.  
 T right.  
 S I would write it out, and then I had customers for it.  
 T right.  
 S one of my main customers was the father of that s-, eh, he sings in the Metropolitan Opera. His name is Shichof.  
 Track 15  
 S Neil Shichof, you heard of him?  
 T uh huh  
 S his father was one of my main customers. In fact, he used to run after me, "copy this record, copy that,"  
 T huh!  
 S so on and so forth. So I used to write 'em. Now that, after, when I saw them later, I saw they're not written right.



T yeah.  
 S I mean, later on I got more of a knack to it,  
 T right.  
 S or I, or I, it became clearer, whatever it was. So, uh, I used to write some songs for him, and then others bought it, even the way I had it written.  
 T yeah. Yeah.  
 S Had customers. So, I made a few dollars. And then, and then, the fact that, w-, as soon as I was able to read the music, uh, I became instant teacher. Why? Because the hazzonim that were around, uh, there was a style, eh, eh, it was, eh, this idea was around. If the book, if you buy a hazzonishe book, the pieces are not good in there.  
 T hmm.  
 S not really good.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S why? If someone can write a good piece, he's not gonna put it in a book. He's gonna sell it to you privately for five dollars. So, the,  
 T (laughs)  
 S like this, you have to pay, you got a whole book for five dollars.  
 T right  
 S so, why would a guy want to give you fifty pieces for five dollars? They're not good, obviously!  
 T (laughs)  
 S so, you pay five dollars, you get one good piece.  
 T ok?  
 S so they used to buy from s-, there were special writers, that specialized in this. They would write out some numbers and sell 'em.  
 T yeah.  
 S so, uh, now, if you bought a piece for five dollars, you have the notes, but you don't know how to sing it.  
 T yeah.  
 S why did you buy it? 'Cause the, the, the author saw you either in a hazzonim farbadden, that's, eh, where the, the, the club where they got together. And he'd say, "hey, listen to this piece that I wrote." He'd sing "eheheheh"  
 T mmm  
 S and if you liked it, you'd say, "oh, yeah. I'd like to buy it." So you'd give him five dollars, he'd ma-, gives you, writes out a copy. There were no Xerox machines, by the way.  
 T right. Right.  
 S so, you heard it, you thought you liked it, you bought it. Now you didn't know what to do with it. You can't read music. (laughs)  
 T (laughs)  
 S so that was it. They had the notes, they tried with one finger. Now, f-, f-, eh, eh, imagine, if you're singing that Yismach Moshe with that coloratura.  
 T right.  
 S you're playing it lousy at the piano  
 T right.

S with one finger.  
 T right.  
 S (sings) "ha ha ha"  
 T about how I play.  
 S yeah, yeah, but, eh,  
 T (laughs)  
 S so nothing comes out!  
 T yeah.  
 S you're thinking, ah, the heck with it! So, here, they found a kid, he was, I was able to dope out the music. I w-, read already.  
 T right.  
 S When I was about sixteen, already. So I started to give lessons. So, uh,  
 T so, did you have to look at it and learn it before you could teach it?  
 S no, I  
 T you just could do it?  
 S went right away. I was able to read it.  
 T wow!  
 S but they all, all, they're all the same, after awhile all the, all pieces  
 T yeah.  
 S sound the same.  
 T yeah.  
 S so, once you're in the style. And then, oh, so they bought pieces for money, a, a, a guy g-, would have ten pieces there. He spent, uh, fifty dollars on it.  
 T yeah, wow!  
 S lot of money. So, for teaching him, for going over, I didn-, d-, I didn't get a penny from the first customers. He said, "I'm going to let you have a copy of the notes."  
 T uh huh.  
 S and anyway, I needed a copy, I said, next, if I, if you give me a copy, next time I'll do it a little better. I'll, I'll look it over.  
 T yeah.  
 S yeah.  
 T yeah.  
 S You know. "Oh, here, take the notes. I don't need," They didn't lose anything.  
 T right.  
 Track 16  
 S the o-, on the other hand, the, the, the, uh, the sellers of the pieces, some of them, when they sold you the piece for five dollars,  
 T uh huh?  
 S they made you promise that you're not gonna give it to anybody.  
 T right.  
 S 'cause you're spoiling their business.  
 T right.  
 S and if they found out, and if they found out that you gave it to somebody, or later, maybe you sold it to somebody  
 T yeah

S or you traded with somebody. Say a guy couldn't afford to buy ten pieces, so he bought two, and a different guy bought two others,

T right.

S and they would exchange. They all did that.

T uh huh.

S they couldn't, they couldn't afford to buy them, they. . . "so, if you're going to exchange my pieces, or you're gonna sell 'em, you'll sell 'em, uh, to someone for two dollars, I won't, you can't buy any more from me. I wouldn't sell it to you."

T wow!

S that's why, you see, Rapaport's pieces were not, you couldn't get them. Very few people had them. First of all, he charged more than everybody on the map.

T uh huh.

S and he made you, eh, by, eh, you know, like in the diamond business,

T (laughs)

S when they say, "Mazal bruchah," they say, or they give you a handshake, that's as if it was written.

T yeah?

S as if it's a signed contract.

T huh!

S You give your hand, you're not gonna give it out to anybody.

T wow!

S that's what they did. Later on, they ha-, they did anyway!

T yeah.

S but, that was the agreement. (laughs)

T yeah. Huh!

S so that's how it worked. Now, that's how I got all the pieces in the beginning!

T yeah

S 'cause they bou-, they bought them, and then I was able to copy 'em, and I was allowed to exchange them, because I never agreed to

T right!

S and T (laugh)

S whatever the case may be. In fact, if I wanted, I could even sell them. I don't think I did,

T yeah?

S but, uh, that was it.

T ok. So you learned a lot of music that way,

S so that's where I learned all, oh! So, I didn't, I didn't kn-, what did I know about the nusach wr-, or, or, or, or, or pieces or what? They had the pieces,

T yeah.

S they had everything written.

T yeah.

S th-, so, uh, by teaching the, each one, that's how I picked it up.

T so you saw how other people wrote it

S yeah, this one, and then I got a different version, then, I, then I went to the music store, I bought up all the cantorial books that were around, they weren't expensive.

T uh huh.

S I remember the first book I bought w-, bought was from Wassilkovsky. Did you hear of that name?

T mm mm.

S no. alright. He, eh, alright. He wrote nicely. Eh, the, the first book I bought, it was marked, eh, I have it yet here. Marked \$3. I think they sold it for a dollar fifty.

S they marked up

T uh huh

S the prices. I was afraid at my house they'll yell at me for spending money.

T uh huh

S you know? Ok, you know.

T yeah.

S (laughs) so, then I brought it home, I think I told my father, blah blah, he didn't mind, they, they didn't, they didn't say anything. Yeah, okay,

T yeah.

S you like it?

T ok.

S (laughs) no opposition. Then, eh, I went over the pieces, I learnt them, and, uh, I caught on. I was able to figure out the style. Then I bought Semachson. I don't know if you heard of

T yeah.

S Semachson. Eh, Ganchoff learned by Semachson. He sang by him when he was about nine. I, I was able to go through the notes. I couldn't figure out any style in him. His, his was more difficult. I couldn't figure it out.

T hmm.

S they told me, this piece is good, and Al Rishonim is good, and this is good. I couldn't

Track 17

S dope it out.

T hmm.

S I couldn't, I c-, didn't understand the style.

T ok.

S the others were simpler. Wassilkovsky, eh, was sort of straightforward. But Semachson was very difficult for me. And, I went through all the books. Then I had student, and, and the students that I had, they already studied with others. They studied with, there was a guy Schnipolitsky, I don't know if you know these names, do you?

T yeah. Some of them.

S yeah, yeah, it doesn't matter. They learned by the, by th-, by, by these hazzonim or teachers, but they needed to review the material. They didn't learn it so well.

T yeah.

S so, that's how I picked up all the music, and, uh, that's it.

T ok. And all along, you were, you were writing

S didn't write too mu , I just, at, at first

T the, well, you were writing down, copying, right?

S first writings were, I tried to write out the records. A lot,  
T yeah.  
S most of them, probably from Hirschman. oh! Uh, s-, this fellow, this friend of mine, who lived near, who was friendly with Wieser, uh, also was interested in collect-, he didn't, he didn't beco-, he became a Rabbi.  
T uh huh.  
S he be-, he liked to collect manuscripts, too, for some reason.  
T ok  
S so, he used to call me to his house, every time, he would say, let's go over the music. Let's read it.  
T huh!  
S so, we read it to-, so, he would put a stack of sh-, sheets on the de-, on the piano, and we'd go through them. So, uh, after we did 'em, he, I, I said to him, I said, I said I, I th-, I think I can make up these such song myself.  
T ok.  
S (laughs)  
T so, how old were you when that happened?  
S this is, this is already about seventeen.  
T uh huh  
S seventeen and a half? Something about that, seventeen. Seventeen and a  
T you got the idea.  
S I saw what it was, and I saw the books and I saw the pages. So I said, I, I said I think you can make up one just as good.  
T ok?  
S so he says he dares me!  
T (laughs)  
S so, then, then I wrote, uh, I think he gave me a week.  
T ok (laughs)  
S so then I wrote the first piece that I remember.  
T wow!  
S yeah.  
T Do you remember what it was?  
S I certainly do! I, it was even printed. I took it off the market later, I was sort of embarrassed from it, wasn't that bad, but I, there, there weren't too many around,  
T uh huh?  
S and, uh, I took it off.  
T what was it?  
S eh, eh, it was a mishebeirach. For Shabbat.  
T ok.  
S I m-, I think I have one copy laying someplace.  
T Can I do it in my recital?  
S don't do it! It's not a piece to do.  
T just to show people your first piece.  
S nah, it's not  
T just to see how far you've come.  
S no.

T no?  
 S they'll say, got worse. (laughs)  
 T (laughs)  
 S they'll say, "Oh! That wasn't bad!" It's like Wieser, the earliest books, to me,  
 T yeah?  
 S (clears throat) sound, seem better than the later ones.  
 T yeah?  
 S (clears throat) I think so.  
 T ok?  
 S So, anyway, that's the story.  
 T alright  
 S so that started with the pieces. Then, uh, and, then like, with students sometimes who were missing some lines, here and there, so I would, uh, fill them in.  
 T uh huh  
 S oh! Eh, eh, th-, later on, when  
 Track 18  
 S Koningsburg took lessons, the guy from the picture, that is already, uh, that's about 1949, 1950, nine- fi-, nine-, late-, 1951. Uh, I wrote, I wrote a few pieces for him, I think, and he, he sang them in a concert.  
 T ok  
 S so, that's the pieces.  
 T alright.  
 S doesn't mean anything.  
 T and then, y-, as far as your, your transcribing other people's music, the more you did it, the better you got, right?  
 S yeah. Yeah, I got more of a knack to it, or  
 T yeah?  
 S or, or it went a little faster. Uh, I got, I got the idea of. of trying to group the, the runs clearer, in order to learn them.  
 T yeah?  
 S I think mine is clearer than some of the others.  
 T yeah?  
 S 'cause they didn't group 'em.  
 T ok  
 S maybe they can't catch it, I don't know.  
 T so, when do you think you really kind of figured out how to write?  
 S how, how I figured it out? I figured it out! It's that. there's no one, maybe, maybe, eh, someone will do it better. I don't know. Eh. eh. it got clearer, I'll pa-, say.  
 T uh huh?  
 S slightly clearer as I got older.  
 T yeah?  
 S least, I imagine so.  
 T yeah.  
 S ok. What else can I tell you? What I used to do, I, I used to take down, later on I took down, every, from Ganchoff,  
 T mm hmm.

S every week. He sang on the radio one number.  
 T right.  
 S I took down most of them.  
 T right.  
 S and then I worked with him, sort of assisted him,  
 T mm hmm?  
 S for about forty years!  
 T wow  
 S I mu-, I must have notated for him a few hundred selections  
 T wow.  
 S a few hundred.  
 T wow.  
 S a lot of them are still (phone rings) in, in pencil.  
 T ok. Here, I'll stop this. (phone rings. . . schall talks on phone. . .)

Track 19

(phone call – recorded by accident – stopped recording by accident when interview resumed – picked up and asked missed questions on Track 20)

Track 20

S In the old style, eh, eh, uh, you could have a piece, and every word would have different motifs and different dreidlach.  
 T uh huh?  
 S the example was, like "I'keyl baruch l'imo she'iteinu, l'melech keyl chai v'kayam." So you'll have "I'keyl" would start with, uh, a drey, (sings) "I'keyl" v', "baruch", whatever  
 T yeah?  
 S and "l'imo" so, when you finish the sentence you had so many pictures, and besides that sometimes you repeated the same words a few time, and now-, later on, we were thinking eh, eh, of, of longer phrases.  
 T yeah.  
 S instead of th-, like, we said, (sings) "I'keyl baruch l'imo she'iteinu, l'melech keyl chai v'kayam." So you made it on one or two lines, the other one till there, you took a half a page, already!  
 T yeah. Yeah.  
 S so they're longer.  
 T so that what's, that's one of the things  
 S that's the old style  
 T that make up the style.  
 S anyways, and there was a lot, yeah, repetition, of course, and there was, uh, a lot of crying intonations. You don't find that in  
 T mm hmm  
 S it's, eh, in, in regular, in English songs, you don't find that.  
 T yeah. And you said that it doesn't have to have a melody.  
 S yeah. Or, it could be a little bit melodic, but it's  
 T yeah.  
 S not a tune that someone's gonna hum along with you.  
 T right.

S you're gonna sing all these coloratura's and c, and crying, you're not gonna have congregational singing

T right.

S with that.

T What does, why, where do you think that came from?

S what, the wailing?

T the wailing and the repetition, all of that.

S the repetition is because, eh, eh, they wanted to make the pieces longer.

T ok.

S they, let's say if you had, uh, two lines of music, they wanted to make it into a composition,

T mm hmm?

S or recitative. Composition is not the right word.

T right.

S composition means, implies that there's more than one part to it.

T ok.

S alright. So, uh, that's why you have the repetition.

T and were these used in the synagogue, or, or strictly for concerts?

S no. They used it all the time.

T ok.

S they repeated a lot. Today, uh, everybody's aga-, most are against repeating.

T ok?

S they want to make it that it's a halachically incorrect to repeat so many times.

T uh huh

S alright. So there, there's, there, there's rules about that, what you could repeat, what you can't repeat, and, uh, eh, like if hashem's name wouldn't be right to repeat,

T right.

S or certain blessings, uh, it mi-, it keep the original wording. Some places don't matter, really.

T mm hmm.

S like, if I ask you for something. Aw, come on, aw, please, a da, a

T (laughs)

S so I'm asking you the same thing fifty times!

T right.

S aw, come on! What do you mean you can't, plea-, give it a chance, try!

T (laughs)

S so, it's a sort of a pleading, eh

T yeah?

S yeah, you know. Go ahead.

T and, when they had that style of, of making each word sort of its own musical phrase,

S yeah, or, or, or let, didn't have to be single, could be two words, could be three

T yeah.

S yeah, yeah. They didn't think of anything

T was the music related to the text, or it was



Track 21

- T a chance to show off the voice.
- S eh, the, it's a combination. It's a combination. Usu-, first of all, eh, they had to be in a certain mode.
- T uh huh?
- S you, eh, you wouldn't, you wouldn't sing, if the piece is in major you're not gonna s-, start crying or be in fraygish, or
- T right.
- S eh, eh a lot of, in a lot of, of prayer, many prayers you can, uh, uh, the-, (clears throat) has a free style. In other words, if you're starting a paragraph, a, say a ba'al tefilah ends hashkiveynu. Sings the last line, "ufros aleinu."
- T mm hmm
- S so he's following more or less a certain pattern. More or less,
- T yeah.
- S like a ba'al k'riyah. One reads this way, one reads that. They're reading the same.
- T right.
- S it's just a tiny variation.
- T right.
- S so, until that par where the ba'al tefilah starts, you have a whole, a big paragraph before. You're free to do anything you want over there. You can go in any mode you want, and you can do whatever you like. As long as you sort of come back to a nusach.
- T yeah?
- S the conclusion makes the, uh, makes the first part ok.
- T ok?
- S unless you're using certain motifs that are specifically, that don't belong here.
- T right.
- S let's say I'm using the Rosh Hashanah Meyerov, (sings High Holy day motif) "da da da da da da," and I'm davening Friday night, or shalosh regolim,
- T right.
- S then you know something is wrong.
- T right.
- S (laughs)
- T ok,
- S ok.
- T I thought of another thing that I wanted to ask you about the music that you wrote.
- S yeah?
- T When you wrote things, were they mostly things that, say a student needed a specific thing, or, how did you decide what text to use, which, which kind of
- S no, I, I, I only, I only wrote if there, if I, if, uh, I, if there was a need for it.
- T ok.
- S like if, usually if a student needed something, yeah. Or, sometimes they couldn't sing from the printed book. It was too difficult,
- T uh huh?

S or they, they couldn't make it on the voice, or it was too high or it was too low, or he wasn't that advanced, so sometimes I had to make it simple. Sometimes they felt that the printed material was too simple. They want, they don't, they don't want it like standard. They want it

T yeah.

S to come in from a side door.

T yeah. Ok. So, you usually wrote things

S so I tried to, uh, to make a variation. . .uh, uh, eh, by the way, see, the hazzonim fifty, sixty years ago, they, they tried to daven differently than the ba'al tefilah. They would try ma-, make an invention, should sound different.

T yeah?

S because, a lot of people in the audience knew how to daven plain, they

T right.

S now, we're happy if the cantor could daven

T (laughs)

S as good as that ba'al tefilah from that ba'al tefilah from that time.

T yeah

S straight.

T yeah

S Straight nusach. There they tried, they went away from the nusach a little bit

T yeah

S to make it, try to make it more interesting.

T In traditional services, do most people in the congregation know when they're supposed to sing and when they're not supposed to sing?

S Yeah. Uh, first of all, in the traditional service, and I'm not talking about Young Israel.

S Young Israel

T right.

S has their specific ways, and you must sing their songs,

T yeah

S or else,

T (laughs)

S that's not Young Israel. Otherwise there's, eh, there's no, there are no, eh, specific songs. Eh, like, eh, if, eh, someone is davening Shabbas morning,

Track 22

S they sing Keyl Adon. So he sings any melody he wants. One of the melodies that he's gonna pick, most of the congregation knows it.

T yeah?

S They're familiar with it.

T yeah?

S but he does whatever he wants.

T mm hmm

S that's all they're gonna sing. They might hum along, eh, eh, "v'eineinu tireina." Maybe hum along something.

T yeah

S not too many songs. L-, of course, they adopted now, most places, the Sulzer business. (sings) "ki mitzion, Sh'ma  
T yeah.  
S yisrael." That whole  
T yeah.  
S area. If you go to, uh, to a shteible,  
T yeah?  
S you know, the Hassidic way, there you wouldn't do that. That's, that was said silently. That's why they were  
T huh!  
S able to invent a new melody.  
T right.  
S this, all of a sudden, where did the major come in over there? "ki mitzion,  
T right.  
S "ya da," That wasn't the nusach.  
T huh!  
S and that major business distorted a little bit the nusach. Why? In order to sing the "Eyn Kamocha" in major, the, in other words, we're ta-, there's no nusach for "Eyn Kamocha."  
T mm hmm?  
S It's said silently. Now, now, eh, Sulzer has the im-, eh, eh, in the German synagogues they make a big tzimmi out of taking out the Torah  
T yeah.  
S and putting it back. Very, in fact, the hazzan might even start, uh, with "Eyn Kamocha."  
T yeah.  
S somebody else might be davening till there.  
T ok?  
S so, all of sudden you have, (sings operatically) "Eyn Kamocha", big, eh,  
T yeah.  
S big tenor from Metropolitan Opera. . . so, what led into that? Nothing. There was no, nothing that led into that before.  
T yeah  
S What, he's not, (sings nasal) "eh deh di yeh di yeh." All of sudden a new character comes, (sings operatically) "Eyn Kamo"  
T (laughs)  
S a new personality pops out.  
T yep.  
S so, they said that we need a, we need to have an intro.  
T ok?  
S so we're gonna have the hazzonishe kaddish, (sings) "Yisgadal v'yiskadash sh'mei rabo,"  
T uh huh?  
S and then he, (sings) "Eyn Kamoch", then "Eyn Kamocha" fits right after that.  
T uh huh. Yeah!  
S following that kaddish. So, that's the hazzonishe kaddish.

S that's not the  
 T really?  
 S real nusach.  
 T really?  
 S the nusach is (sings in ahava raba) "v'yisgadai da da da didi da da."  
 T uh huh. Uh huh.  
 S it's a continuation of the Amida.  
 T oh!  
 S so we have the invention of this kaddish, that beca-, so all, the ha-, that's what the hazzan used. After the, after the sh'mona esrei, whenever he had the full kaddish, that was usually the tune.  
 T wow.  
 S now, along came, how, if you finish (sings) "amo yisrael, bashalom." "Yisgadai v'yisgadash sh'mei ra" doesn't sound right. You have no connection wi-, wi-, with the end of the Amida and the beginning.  
 T yeah.  
 S and the kaddish.  
 T yeah.  
 S so, he says, "I have to introduce the Kaddish." So you have,  
 T (laughs)  
 S (sings) "Baruch ato adoshem, ham'varech es amo yisroeyl bashalom. Yisgadai v'..."  
 T uh huh.  
 S he made an introduction to the introduction.  
 T so, it kept backing up.  
 S then he came, backed up further. (sings) "Baruch ato adoshem," already, "ham'varech es amo yisra. . ." then (laughs) eh, the backup of the intro  
 T yep  
 S to introduce the  
 T yep.  
 S introduction. I think that's the background of all that.  
 T wow! Wow.  
 S (laughs)  
 T um, I wanted to ask another question about the music that you wrote.  
 S yeah?  
 T um,  
 Track 23  
 T so you wrote music when your students needed something.  
 S yeah,  
 T right?  
 S and, like, that guy, he ne-, he, the, the, the Koningsburg, the, that, that was an elaborate recitative. That's like a, uh, like a virtuoso type.  
 T uh huh  
 S yeah, I wrote one for him that time.  
 T ok.  
 S (laughs)

T did you ever write things,  
 S I didn't write too many.  
 T did you ever just get inspired to write something?  
 S I don't think, for no reason?  
 T yeah.  
 S no.  
 T no?  
 S I don't think so.  
 T so it was always something that was needed  
 S there was no reason. It was always something, same thing with the records. Uh,  
 if a lot of people asked me for a certain number, then I would do it,  
 T right  
 S cause it payed for me  
 T right.  
 S Five dollars a head.  
 T yeah.  
 S (laughs)  
 T yeah. Did you ever have trouble coming up with something, uh, that somebody  
 wanted?  
 S not that I can, no, there can't be any trouble. The nusach I know! (laughs)  
 T right.  
 S the style I have,  
 T right.  
 S so, so, there's no trouble. Someone can do it better? Ok.  
 T ok.  
 S No question about it!  
 T (laughs)  
 S (laughs) Anyone can do it better.  
 T Who else did you corra-, collaborate with, besides Ganchoff?  
 S I mean, in, in the latter stages? No, I didn't collaborate with anybody!  
 T no?  
 S no. I coll-, he collaborated with me!  
 T yeah.  
 S I'll put it that way.  
 T ok. . . ok.  
 S eh, did I've ever showed you the present he gave me?  
 T I don't think so.  
 S to remember him.  
 T uh huh?  
 S you wouldn't believe it! He gave me a present to remember. Befor-, before Alter  
 died, he said he was gonna leave me something.  
 T uh huh?  
 S Alter. I never got it. I don't know what it was.  
 T huh.  
 S he didn't have to. . . (looking for it) now I can't find it.. . Eh, that's not it. Alright,  
 I'll show it to you a different time.

T ok. What was it?  
 S It was a music book bound with his name in it, had a date, I think 1928, that's probably when he started,  
 T uh huh?  
 S and the whole book was blank!  
 T (laughs)  
 S there was nothing in the whole book. Just his name. On the fro-, on the cover page.  
 T (laughs)  
 S Is that something?  
 T wow!  
 S I have it laying here someplace. Alright.  
 T that's all the music he wrote?  
 S That's what he gave me.  
 T (laughs)  
 S Even now, eh, uh, I, w-, y-, at the, in the latter stages of, Alter, you know, used to call me a lot of times on the telephone, he would ask for advice. W-, you like this phrase better,  
 T uh huh?  
 S or this phrase, he would sing it for me. and, uh, eh, I was friendly with him in the, in the, in, eh, towards the end of his, towards the end of his career, if you want to call it career,  
 T uh huh?  
 S and, uh, I think he only, he only gave me one piece. Yeah. And it was a printed piece, yeah, I think he gave it to me (laughs) in a different key!  
 T (laughs)  
 S He never gave me anything!  
 T huh  
 S That was interesting.  
 T yeah.  
 S I probably never asked him for anything.  
 T probably. (laughs)  
 S But one thing he said to me, I mean, after all, he, he, he was considered very knowledgeable, uh, on the subject.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S eh, he said to me, "if you have any questions on, about hazzonus," he says, he says, "ask me now."  
 Track 24  
 S He says, "soon, there'll be nobody to ask."  
 T wow! Wow.  
 S that remained with me, that did. So I didn't think of, and I said, "I can't think of anything." I said, "You tell me what to ask."  
 T (laughs)  
 S (laughs) That's  
 T did he tell you?  
 S where it ended. No!

T oh.  
 S that was funny.  
 T That's why I'm asking you!  
 S (Laughs)  
 T (laughs) You should have asked! (laughs)  
 S I didn't think of anything at that time.  
 T yeah. Can you think of anything now you wish you had asked?  
 S uh, uh, I was g-, I, uh, I was, befo-, be-, when Glanz was in America before he, when he went back to Israel and he died shortly after, I wanted to ask him some questions.  
 T yeah.  
 S but, uh, I, so, I went to the airport, but he was busy with somebody. He, he, he couldn't talk to me.  
 T hmm.  
 S he didn't bother with me. Alright, I don't blame him.  
 T so, are there things that you feel like  
 S oh, w-, al-, I wanted to catch from Alter  
 T yeah?  
 S He had a, he wa-, he was very mathematical. Not, I don't know if he learned mathematics.  
 T yeah?  
 S his music is very mathematical, in a certain way. It's very, it's figured out, he has certain ways of figuring something.  
 T yeah?  
 S that's why you see, it always balances by him.  
 T yep.  
 S some phrases are stretched on purpose, or whatever it is.  
 T Ok?  
 S I wanted to know how, I'm, I'm sure he had certain, he had certain things in mind when he writes.  
 T uh huh.  
 S certain, certain calculations. I'm positive!  
 T right.  
 S And I wanted to find out what, o-, what he's thinking about! Or how he's thinking. I had a certain thing I found out. I said, "when you write," I say, "who do you want to satisfy? Who do you want to say it's good or bad or what?"  
 T uh huh  
 S "whose ok are you looking for?"  
 T right. Right.  
 S isn't that a good thing?  
 T yeah.  
 S He said Glanz  
 T huh.  
 S Surprise. What would Glanz say about it?  
 T wow

S that's interesting. He, uh, he thought a lot, he didn't agree with him a lot, on a lot of points,  
T uh huh?  
S but he thought that he was very talented.  
T hmm.  
S So, uh, that's what he, oh! I wanted to find out what he keeps in mind when he writes, or even on certain subjects. I didn't even know how to ask him, and I couldn't find out.  
T hmm.  
S the, uh, the only thing that I think I picked up from him (clears throat) is the formation of certain triplets. He showed, he said, whene-, whenever you get in trouble, or you can't figure out, there's a triplet (laughs) that seems to solve all the problems.  
T (laughs)  
S I don't know if you know what I'm talking about  
T I'm not sure.  
S you see, in my writing, you see, there's a lot, eh, a lot of marked triplets.  
T yeah?  
S more than by, by, maybe by somebody else. That add up to a certain calculation, being that we're writing in, see, this music is not supposed to be barred.

Track 25  
T right. Right.  
S It's like a gu-, (sings operatically) "Uchigaleputiga" You don't need any bars for that.  
T right.  
S this is also in that, eh, eh, that style. But we put i-, we're putting in bars so you can see where the accent is.  
T ok.  
S To help you learn it. It makes a clearer picture.  
T yeah  
S When you sing it, you're not announcing, this came on the third beat or this came on the  
T right.  
S fourth beat, or where the accent was. So, uh, I forgot what I'm talking about already. (laughs)  
T (laughs) Triplets.  
S aw, the triplets. Yeah. He, he, he, he gave me the idea how to, how to maneuver the triplets that you can somehow m-, figure out all the bars, that they should balance.  
T ok?  
S uh, I, I, I, uh, I imagine that subconsciously, or, (laughs) that I picked up a little knack of how to make all those triplets.  
T right.  
S maybe I'm wrong, but I think it, I think that's how I picked it up. Otherwise,  
T from Alter.  
S yeah.



T yeah.

S Also, you know, eh, he, uh, he's very good, he was very good in, i- in, in setting down the word. His words come out pretty much honorable. He doesn't swallow any syllables or anything.

T uh huh

S he gives each word some kind of a character or a use or translation

T mm hmm

S or expression. Others are not so particular.

T What about you?

S he's, he's more than me, I think.

T ok?

S I think so. More. Clearer. (laughs)

T yeah. (laughs)

S slower.

T ok. (laughs) How would you characterize your music?

S I don't think I have any music. It's just, eh, uh, in a, it's, uh, just in a certain style.

T yeah?

S If you're in the style, you don't invent anything, really. I can't invent a new interval. All the intervals are there.

T right

S All the driedelach are there, it's just a slight variation on the same turn.

T ok?

S Cause everyone's throat goes a little different. Even if two hazzonim are singing the same thing, it comes out slightly different.

T right.

S 'cause of their throat, or personality, or defects (laughs)

T when you were

S or whatever. (laughs)

T then, when you were writing for a student, would you write

S oh! So,

T based on their own voice?

S Oh, so, when I wrote for Koningsburg, I had a lot of leeway, cause he went, he was able to sing all the way to the top.

T yeah.

S now, there's a few hazzonim that came, they were, made records. And they were very limited vocally.

T uh huh

S so, what we had to, had to make it in a smaller range, and then, all of a sudden, in order not to climb up to the sky, we needed made a, make a flukey modulation in the middle,

T uh huh

S so it should not climb, and shouldn't be so mo-, monotonous.

T yeah.

S I had such cases.

T ok.

S so, there w-, that was like, you go to fit a suit, and, eh, one person needs  
T (laughs)  
S shoulder padding, and one person needs thi-, and they, sometimes you have to  
move the bu-, buttons on the side,  
T yeah, yeah.  
S depends on each case. The suit doesn't fit everybody.  
T right.  
S If you buy a book from a composer, it's not supposed to be in a virtuoso  
Track 26  
S style. It's supposed to be in a style for average, or medium cantors.  
T ok?  
S You don't write virtuoso pieces. Rosenblatt, yes.  
T yeah  
S because Rosenblatt is telling you, "this is what I did!"  
T yeah.  
S Here's how to, he doesn't care if you learn his piece or not.  
T right. Right.  
S says, you want to see what I did? See, I made all this, I climbed up here,  
T (laughs)  
S made this third, I sang this chromatic, whatever it is.  
T yep, yep,  
S so that's where, I'm showing what I did. Kwartin's books are notations of all his  
records.  
T ok  
S but it's not for you. It's not for me. But when a guy like Wieser, I sho-, he's  
writing for the masses.  
T uh huh  
S so, that's supposed to fit, more or less, everybody.  
T ok? What about the s-, pieces that you wrote, that you published?  
S the pieces I published, like, eh, like the Sha-, the, the, the Thesaurus, you mean?  
T yeah.  
S first Thesaurus, I could have made my own.  
T ok?  
S but I wasn't really on the map yet,  
T yeah.  
S so they'd say, "Who's this guy? Blah, who is he, blah?" So I have all the, I have  
the good names, the, the, f-, the popular, most popular, of course, was Rapaport,  
and he didn't publish anything.  
T uh huh.  
S There's only, eh, a few songs by him. 'Cause he was very high priced, and he  
didn't want  
T yeah.  
S to give it out for nothing, or whatever reasons there were. So, uh, and by, by the  
way, the family never gave me a note.  
T huh

S I, they were so honored, and they would, th-, they took pictures of them, and had an evening, and, uh, a whole business. Wouldn't give me one note. Can you believe it?

T wow!

S Until I got a letter. I got a letter from, it's, I think it's on the wall. From, I had to get in writing from Fanny. That's his wife.

T uh huh?

S about two months before she died, she signed a paper, that I can use or edit or rewrite

T wow!

S those notes. Not that they gave me a note!

T yeah. Yeah.

S Tha-, that I had in writing, an ok.

T wow.

S so, anyhow, so the first publications I, I tried to, eh, I used, eh, Rappa-, Kaminsky, there was a, eh, he was a choir leader, also a composer. Eh, their music was, f-, eh, those were the better pieces, of course, the Hebrew was not, was not good,

T mm hmm

S because the accents were all wrong,

T mm hmm.

S and, eh, stuff like that. So, my first job was just to edit it.

T right.

S to make it, make it shorter, or make it a little more correct. Can't be a hundred percent right,

T right.

S but can be a, can have an improvement.

T How did you get their music?

S uh, the same, from the same system. The. either I taught somebody,

T with records, or, ok.

S either I taught somebody

T so, not directly from them.

S no. No. I didn't get anything from th-, from them.

T ok.

S no.

T And, did they know that you were doing it? When you were

S I would ask them for permission

T yeah.

S to do it,

T yeah.

S so, obviously they knew! They were called. The son, the, the son knew, and the, and the, his, Rapaport's son, in fact, he used to go on dates with Ganchoff.

T uh huh,

S and Ganchoff was nine-, sang ninety percent Rapaport. That was his career.

T oh, really?

S yeah. He was the only one who brought it out right.

T ok.

S he was the only one, and his son,  
Track 27  
S eh, he was probably dead now. Son says, I, he says, "I know that Ganchoff's singing my father's music. Didn't put his name on it. Only very few know this.  
T really? Huh.  
S Didn't put his name on it, he says, "I know he's singing my father's music."  
T uh huh.  
S And they were friendly. They went out together.  
T huh!  
S yeah. You don't have to put that down.  
T we'll see.  
S (laughs)  
T (laughs) So that, so you didn't get the music directly from them, but you had it  
S no.  
T just, from other sources  
S it, from students. Yeah  
T and you edited it,  
S my, usually, usually from students, or from trades.  
T right. Right. And then you would edit it,  
S you don't have not, you have no idea how much music is in this house.  
T I have some idea!  
S You don't.  
T (laughs)  
S you don't. There are thou-, eh, eh, it's probably. eh. from the recitatives, probably the biggest collection that anyone has.  
T really?  
S most probably.  
T wow.  
S I think so.  
T wow.  
S yeah. Including libraries.  
T wow.  
S I'm talking about ma-, I'm not talking about printed boo-, I'm talking about manuscripts.  
T right. Right, right. Is it organized in any kind of a way, or  
S no.  
T do you just know where everything is?  
S no. See, it  
T piles. Right?  
S uh, dr-, drawers!  
T (laughs)  
S There must be, in this, in th-, in this here,  
T uh huh?  
S this, there must be, it could be a few thousand pieces in here.  
T yeah.  
S See, see stacks like this?

T yeah.  
 S These are all, these are from manuscripts!  
 T uh huh  
 S They're not, they're not printed pieces.  
 T right.  
 S I don't even look at 'em.  
 T Do you even know what you have?  
 S at one, in my, in an earlier stage I knew where every sheet was,  
 T yeah.  
 S I knew exactly what I had, and if I needed it, I could find it.  
 T right.  
 S Now if I need something, I have to spend a whole day,  
 T (laughs)  
 S and then I don't find it,  
 T aw!  
 S yeah. I don't think there's any, I can't, I can't throw it in the garbage,  
 T right! You can't!  
 S yeah, liste-, I can't sell it. No one will buy it.  
 T well,  
 S eh, and I can't throw it out.  
 T right.  
 S the an-, the, so what's the solution? If, when I'll be here no more, it's gonna end  
 up, one match will take care of it.  
 T no.  
 S tell my wife to burn it.  
 T no.  
 S yeah!  
 T give it to the, one of the libraries.  
 S What are they gonna do, if I don't do anything with it?  
 T They'll use it! That  
 S They're not gonna use it.  
 T that, that archive in Jerusalem? They'll catalogue it.  
 S They wouldn't even know what it is.  
 T eh,  
 S I have to catalogue it!  
 T yeah.  
 S 'cause, they, a lot of 'em,  
 T oh, cause you don't know what  
 S there, no, I know as soon as I, I know where they came from  
 T right.  
 S I, I can identify manuscript, from the manuscript, even if there's no name on it,  
 T right.  
 S and in a lot of cases, I can tell you who wrote it.  
 T right.  
 S just by certain, by the way the notes go.  
 T uh huh?

S or a certain expression, I know, this one makes it this way.  
T wow.  
S The other one makes it the other way.  
T yeah.  
S The same thing, how, how it, how it's expressed. Not everybody, but from the  
T yeah.  
S from the popular ones.  
T wow.  
S yeah. I can tell Weiser, eh, even from a manuscript, Schnipolitsky,  
T yeah.  
S eh, eh, you go, eh, Alter's easy to tell. Eh, the whole, you know, all the popular  
ones. Rosenblatt, uh,  
T huh  
S anybody! Okay. (laughs)

Track 28  
T They could put it with the Birenbaum collection. Do you know what that is?  
S You think anybody's interested in this? I don't think so!  
T Sure! I think so.  
S Not in, no, you're, it's, they're not. They're not. I'll bet you if it was in a library,  
no one would even come to look at it.  
T maybe not very often, but  
S I'll give you, g-, an example.  
T people would.  
S Alter's stuff went into the library, in the, in, in the school.  
T yeah.  
S I gua-, if you look, if they have a record of, do they have a record of who comes?  
I'll bet you very few people came to  
T yeah.  
S to look at it, or ask about it, or whatever it was.  
T yeah.  
S so, you see, nobody's interested.  
T well. . . you never know.  
S I know, the Rapaport collection was given someplace. Nobody comes to look at  
it.  
T hmm.  
S Years ago, people would, they, they, they, they would run for miles to, to, to, for,  
to copy a number from him by hand!  
T yeah. Yeah.  
S Today they wouldn't give you two cents for the best pieces.  
T You know what they're doing now, they're putting stuff on digital. They'll make,  
like, a digital picture of it?  
S yeah.  
T and then you can get it on the internet. All these collections.  
S yeah?  
T That's what they're starting to do.  
S Oh, you can get copies?

T yeah.  
 S for nothing?!  
 T I don't know about, I mean, libraries  
 S how's it work?  
 T are star-, that's how they're starting to preserve, you know, the manuscripts that  
 are old and falling apart,  
 S yeah  
 T They make a digital copy of it, and they can  
 S I had a lot of  
 T save it that way.  
 S material put on film.  
 T yeah.  
 S And I threw out the film later.  
 T (laughs)  
 S No, like, you see it on slides, if you  
 T yeah!  
 S put it into the, so it blows it up.  
 T yeah.  
 S I had a lot of things I had like that,  
 T uh huh  
 S the end was, I threw it out.  
 T how come?  
 S eh, I didn't, I didn't have the slide machine, I just had the film.  
 T yeah?  
 S oh, I figured, who needs it. Threw it out.  
 T yeah. Wow.  
 S I have some manu-, manuscripts that mi-, for a collector they'd be valuable, but  
 there's no collectors.  
 T right.  
 S I have, I have, uh, some things from, European manuscripts from, uh, probably  
 from Russia,  
 T hmm.  
 S I didn't even bother with it.  
 T (laughs)  
 S So, I tell, I explained it, said, you can't, you can't, you c-, I can't give it away,  
 'cause it's something that's supposed to be  
 T right.  
 S a little bit dear to me,  
 T right.  
 S I don't (laughs) you can't give it away, you can't sell it, and you can't throw it  
 out.  
 T (laughs)  
 S So, that's the, that's the boxes there.  
 T yeah.  
 S My wife would like me to throw 'em out!  
 T (laughs)

S Besides the boxes, there's plenty.  
 T yeah.  
 S the cabinet, the garage, a lot of junk.  
 T yeah. Yeah.  
 S I should throw out a lot of it. Every once in awhile I tear up a few sheets.  
 T really?  
 S Yeah. Just to say, "See? I finally got rid of something."  
 T (laughs)  
 S put it in the garbage. Maybe I have some here. (laughs)  
 T (sighs) If you brought it out to the school, people would take it.  
 S If I brought it out, yeah, but they wouldn't do anything with it. They'd throw it out.  
 T They wouldn't throw it out. They might not sing it, but they won't throw it out.  
 S They won't sing it. There is no reason to sing it. Why would someone want to sing, eh, eh, pieces that repeat and, and take a long time to do?  
 T mm hmm?  
 S They might as well get something that's up to date. Why do, or, that's why they use Katchko or Alter

#### Track 29

S or whatever it is. It's  
 T uh huh?  
 S it's, n-, alright, you, they repeat here and there, but  
 T yeah.  
 S it's reasonable! (laughs)  
 T yeah. alright. Huh.  
 S I just wrote for some students, eh, eh, a shabbas service with no repetition in the hazzanic style,  
 T hmm!  
 S and not, no, and not high notes. All in the middle.  
 T ok.  
 S It's laying here someplace on a chair.  
 T ok.  
 S So, every week, I, I, I, I'd ju-, I would sit here and make about three pages. So, before I turned around, it adde-, it added up to a whole book.  
 T yeah.  
 S So, I was think-, if I print it, it's so, it's not too fancy. It's not too virtuoso at all. But it might b-, on the other hand, it, be, migh-, it's probably more usable than the fancier ones.  
 T right. Right.  
 S So, it's on the chair! (laughs)  
 T (laughs)  
 S It's written out nicely! I'll show you some pages.  
 T Oh, yeah. I see.  
 S How, you see, like here. I just pull out a little, they're written clearly  
 T uh huh  
 S you know, nice writing, all that, whatever it is.



T yeah. . . huh.

S Sometimes I forgot th-, that I did the page, and I did the, I did the same number seven times.

T oh, no! (laughs) So, you have choices.

S Seven times. I'll tell you how, oh! You want to, I'll tell you the system, the system that I, my, the last system of writing. I found out, if you sit and write, think of something, write it down,

T uh huh?

S it, it, it doesn't come out, it's not natural. You're thinking, of, eh, of, of how to make this phrase and that phrase, eh, I, I remember, like, the first piece that I wrote, I couldn't make it straight through. I had a beginning,

T mm hmm

S then I thought of a melody at the end,

T mm hmm

S and maybe something in the middle, and I di-, had to fill in all the in-betweens.

T yeah?

S And sometimes it doesn't match, or it doesn't fit.

T right.

S The, the latest, the l-, la, latest way I did it was like this. I took a recording machine.

T mm hmm?

S uh, let's say, let's say for in-, in, you know, the Shabbas service, let's say "Yismach Moshe."

T uh huh?

S So I want to write, see how it comes, how would I improvise "Yismach Moshe" without thinking about anything. Whatever comes out. Make believe I'm davening someplace,

T yeah?

S So, I put on a, take a key, I start, "Yisma-" (sings) "Yismach Moshe di di di di." Whatever it is, I say off the whole Yismach Moshe. Then I stop. Then I say, uh, "I'm starting again. Forget what I did before, whatever it is. Do it again." So, I do the same thing again, I do it three times.

T mm hmm?

S And then, by, in pencil I wrote it out three times.

T ok?

S Then I see what, which was the s-, which parts I said all the time the same,

T uh huh?

S or what it was, or what I don't like, and if I thought it's ok, I just improve on the dikduk, or, because, when you improvise, here and there you're gonna make some small errors,

T right.

S So that's what it was. So I did that seven times.

Track 30

T uh huh?

S And they, each one was in the same style, but a little different.

T ok?

S If you had more time, I would show you.  
T I have time.  
S It's not, it's not so important this minute.  
T ok.  
S oh! Tha-, that was number one. Then I found out a new thing. That I'm gonna, oh! For instance, were you at the, uh, (clears throat) at the, eh, at the program last Wednesday?  
T yeah.  
S oh. Well, he wa-, sang "U'mip'nei Chato'einu." Uh, I said this, he, uh, we didn't want to use the ones in the book, because they were very repetitious,  
T ok?  
S and the melody in there, was not a tune that a person would, could tap along with, sing along with it.  
T right, right?  
S alri-, So we made one, so I made, so, I made one for him, and it wasn't actually for him.  
T (laughs)  
S I made, I improvised seven "U'mip'nei Chato'einu's."  
T ok?  
S cold. I showed him about three or four or five. He selected the, the one that he thought he wanted,  
T yeah  
S So the method was, I just improvised it, like this, and then I did it, like, maybe not after, or later on, a couple hours later, the same. then I found out a new thing. If I'm gonna improvise in a different key,  
T mm hmm?  
S it comes out different. In the same key, the improvisa-, -ivations were almost the same.  
T uh huh?  
S You know what I'm talking about?  
T yeah.  
S how, like, or, you just sang "Yismach Moshe," right? (plays piano and sings) "Yismach Moshe," oh! If, if I start, (plays and sings in a lower key) "Yismach Moshe," If I start in that key, somehow I had a lot of room on top  
T yeah  
S to maneuver,  
T yeah.  
S or if I started it high, I found that I had room on the bottom.  
T yeah, yeah.  
S So, it took a different turn.  
T huh!  
S oh! If you're gonna stop the machine, I can show you seven different "Yismach Moshe's." Aw, maybe we'll leave it for a different time.  
T ok.  
S Just for the fun of it, so you'll see what I'm talking about.  
T ok.

S (laughs)  
T sure!  
S And the, and, in all of them, no words repeat.  
T ok.  
S yeah, that was it. That's the best part! It, no repetition.  
T uh huh.  
S So that was the system. Repeated the same improvisation about three times, wrote it out, then see if I could combine 'em, or what I didn't like, and improve the Hebrew.  
T right.  
S Put it down like that, as, that was step number one. Or, s-, then, sometimes, do it in a different key, it came out a little different. That was sort of, that's the way, uh, I operated.  
T okay,  
S In the old, in the old, in longer pieces, I som-, I couldn't go straight sometimes, I had to, like I said before, I had an idea for a beginning, or an ending, or in the middle or something,  
T right.  
S but not straight.  
T right.  
S but, eh, eh, eh, uh, do, as a nusach, I could go straight. It's  
T yeah.  
S chick chichichichak.  
T yeah.  
S bababababa. Whatever it is! It's no good, so it's no good! Move on.  
T When did you figure out that method?  
S eh, figured it out, I've been doing that for the last few years.  
T uh huh  
S did it that way.  
T ok.  
S I, uh, that's, first of all, when you sit and write, I do like it, I don't like it,  
T yeah.  
S you stop and  
T yeah.  
S you go. . . You do it!  
T yeah. So,  
S You finish it, and you don't like it later, don't use it!  
T So, when you go back and look at  
S The other way, I realize, I, I can stop, I realize, you stop on one, one phrase enough, and you sing, (sings) "Yismach Moshe, ki eved ne'eman karasaw  
Track 31  
S lo." Now I'm stuck. "k'lil, what should I  
T yeah.  
S do now?" (sings in all different keys) "k'lil, k'lil, k'lil," so, you're stuck!  
T yeah.  
S (laughs)

T You just keep going.  
 S Just keep on going, try it a few times, and then,  
 T yeah.  
 S and that's it.  
 T So, do you notice a difference in the music that you wrote before you s-, figured out this system?  
 S uh, uh, oh, so the, uh, the, d-, the music would be a little different bef-, because my figuring is, I'm thinking now in a different terms  
 T right.  
 S before, if I was writing, I don't know, I'm not writing for a student.  
 T ok?  
 S I'm writing either to show off myself,  
 T yeah?  
 S gotta show off, I don't know if I'm, don't much of a show-off.  
 T (laughs)  
 S or, for somebody who's a, who, who's a li-, a virtuoso Cantor, who's gonna  
 T right  
 S sing in a concert,  
 T right  
 S or make a record!  
 T right.  
 S I have a few pieces that are re-, o-, are on records.  
 T yeah.  
 S Yeah, a few guys. It's very fancy. They're like the yi-, "Yismach Moshe,"  
 T uh huh.  
 S or worse.  
 T uh huh.  
 S In that,  
 T (laughs) worse!  
 S In that s-, in that style.  
 T ok?  
 S so, now, when I improvise it, I have in mind a student who doesn't have too much experience,  
 T right,  
 S and who can't drey too much,  
 T right,  
 S and can't sing too high.  
 T ok. (laughs)  
 S For, I think I fit the bill for all of them.  
 T yeah?  
 S So that, that, that's how I think, in the improvisation.  
 T ok.  
 S You can't go higher, and you can't go too low, and you can't repeat words, and not too many turns.  
 T ok.  
 S That's the way. I, I, In other words, it's a limited

T right.  
 S improvisation.  
 T right.  
 S limited.  
 T right. ok. When you l-, go back and look at the music that you've written before,  
 S yeah. I  
 T do you  
 S don't like it.  
 T really?  
 S Every time, a-, every time, when I look at something, even if it's printed,  
 T mm hmm?  
 S I say, well, if I would do it now, I would go a little differently. Make it like this,  
 or express it a little different. Eh, that's true, I remember, uh, when I was in nine-  
 , in, around nine-, in, before I got married, Pinchik called me once to his  
 apartment.  
 T hmm!  
 S He was a big cantor, Pinchik.  
 T yeah.  
 S And, uh, and, uh, I discussed something that he sang on a record, and he didn't  
 remember, he, at least he made believe he didn't, he didn't remember how he  
 ended that piece, he says he always changed his mind how the ending should go.  
 Then he says, and later, the, eh, the end was that he was sorry that he ended that  
 way. I'll give you an example. There's, he has a, a recording, uh, for a section in  
 N'ilah. And he end the piece, (sings) "la, ah, ah eeyah la da da da da dum."  
 That ending is like, eh, if you sing "Mim'kom'cha" or, or "Yismach Moshe," in  
 other words, that would be a standard ending.  
 T yeah?  
 S (sings) "la, ah, ah eeyah la da da da da dum." That's a, eh, every piece end like  
 that.  
 T yeah?  
 S But, N'ilah, it, it, N'ilah should end with a N'ilah theme or  
 T right.  
 S something that smells like it!  
 T yeah.  
 S and he, and he, uh, ended it, he was sorry, the way he made it.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S 'Cause, alright, anyhow. So, we were discussing one of his records, he says,  
 "Well, this, in this piece, I wasn't sure to make it this way, and then I changed my  
 mind, and then, eh, then, eh, then. So, he says he doesn't remember from one  
 time to ano-, he says, "I'm always changing  
 Track 32  
 S my mind."  
 T mm hmm  
 S He says, "You see this piano here?" He says, "Next time I think the piano should  
 be over here."  
 T (laughs)

S you hear, wait awhile!  
 T yeah?  
 S "You see this picture here? I think sometimes the picture should be there." And he's getting all through this routine.  
 T right?  
 S He says, "That's why I didn't get married."  
 T (laughs)  
 S (laughs) That's the punch line.  
 T Really? He never got married?  
 S No! He had girlfriends, but he didn't get married.  
 T uh huh. That's funny. . . huh!  
 S How'd, seriously, if he's always changing his mind?  
 T yeah. (laughs) So, do you ever go back to music that you wrote a long time ago and change it? Now?  
 S Eh, I usually forget about it.  
 T yeah.  
 S Gone, forgotten. And, uh, and, um, and the, the, the latest music, the, and only for the few students that come here that have limited resources,  
 T yeah?  
 S they have no voices, or they can't drey,  
 T (laughs)  
 S or they don't have enough experience, something, but it shouldn't sound like a beginner, like, eh,  
 T right.  
 S eh, uh, it's, it's a step higher than the Katchko baritone book.  
 T ok.  
 S What you might call intermediate hazzonus.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S If there's such a thing as intermediate.  
 T ok.  
 S As opposed to advanced.  
 T yeah? Yeah. Hmm!  
 S yeah. You didn't see those books that came out, from Caleb.  
 T No.  
 S yeah. . . they're very expensive. Eh, these are the books. See? He's my age.  
 T ok?  
 S He's, uh, they, (laughs) they used to say, they'd say, uh, they'd say, "Schall is the Caleb of New York." And then to Caleb, used to say, "Caleb is the Schall of Chicago."  
 T (laughs)  
 S That's what someone would say.  
 T ok?  
 S and he, he's in, it's in, also in the same story. Since he was a kid, he's, he's better than me, he knows, he, he c-, he c-, he writes choral.  
 T uh huh?  
 S He writes choral.

T ok.  
 S Cantorial, I, I'm deeper than him.  
 T yeah, yeah.  
 S more, more, eh  
 T wow!  
 S more, better background, the background, he had, but, uh, it's deeper.  
 T uh huh?  
 S if there is such a thing. Choral he knows better than me.  
 T ok.  
 S Not that it matters. Nice fella.  
 T huh!  
 S he me-, he quotes me in the book so many times.  
 T really?  
 S yeah! A million times!  
 T Oh!  
 S I suppose it's by a-, by accident. There's a lot of pages. I xeroxed some. The boo-, the books are not mine.  
 T uh huh?  
 S They're Barry Sirota's.  
 T ok.  
 S I don't know. There's a lot of times.  
 T Um, I'm starting to think about what kind of things I'll do in my recital,  
 S Ok. Now you're talking! See, a lot of times. There,  
 T uh huh.  
 S even here.  
 T oh, yeah. You're all over there.  
 S Thesaurus, dadadada,  
 T yep. Yep.  
 S He takes out lines from here and there. He talks about it.  
 T wow.  
 S see? It's not the same  
 T so, he's analyzing the music, too?  
 S yeah, yeah. I don't like his analysis.  
 T yeah, that's another thing I wanted to ask you,  
 S oh! I can't take his analysis!  
 Track 33  
 T So, part of my thesis, I have to have some music analysis, and Izzy said I should get you to do it.  
 S d-, analysis? Uh, what do you want to analyze?  
 T whatever!  
 S yeah, I'll analyze, what,  
 T some pieces.  
 S one piece?  
 T Maybe "Yismach Moshe," maybe a couple of other pieces, you can tell me what you were  
 S e-, e-, e-, even w-

T doing.  
 S even without looking at any music,  
 T yeah.  
 S (laughs) the, now, the thing, y-, you might find, you'll find here and there, some, something that will resemble tropes.  
 T ok?  
 S that, most probably, and if they don't, you'll force 'em (laughs) to resemble  
 T ok?  
 S that'll be the basis, and, of course, the mode will be the mode of that prayer in the service! Unless you have ten different services that are using the same words with a different tune!  
 T yep.  
 S Like the Ma'ariv. If it's a Rosh Hashanah ma'ariv, or if it's regolim, or it's a weekday, or it's a whatever it is.  
 T ok?  
 S Then, then you'll see, there, the, (clears throat) uh, eh, you'll analyze, you'll see, the words are mostly correct according, with the dikduk,  
 T mm hmm  
 S and, uh where they fall in the bar on the ri-, on the right accents. Mostly. Heh! And, uh, uh, what else is there? And, and it require, they, the fancier pieces require, require a little talent to put them over, because they need, they need, eh, various intonations,  
 T uh huh  
 S you can't just sing 'em bland. You have some kind of a hazzanic expression.  
 T right.  
 S So you ha-, so they move. You have softer, you have louder, faster, slower. Sometimes you have an, uh, sometimes you have an odd interval.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S Once in awhile, possib-, maybe it wouldn't have any. I don't know  
 T ok. So maybe we can look at one or two pieces at, later on.  
 S oh, whatever it is, and, uh, it requires some experience. A beginner usually can't sing these pieces.  
 T right.  
 S Not equipped with it. And you have to be flexible.  
 T right.  
 S And it's good to know what some of the words mean, or else you can't bring out the expression.  
 T right.  
 S Like we did "u'shnei luchos avonim"  
 T yeah.  
 S so we showed, eh, uh, it has, sometimes, it shows you the action of the word.  
 T yeah.  
 S The direction, it sort of interprets. Interprets the word.  
 T uh huh.  
 S sometimes.  
 T ok.



S Can't say every time? We don't know every time.  
 T yeah.  
 S and slightly melodic, and m-, eh, you have, you have a combination of syllabic and mellismic. Syllabic means when you're reciting "uchikabatabata" one word  
 T mm hmm  
 S it's not like, "a heeya" "Yismach Moshe" "ehhyoo" (laughs)  
 T yep. ok. (laughs)  
 S so you have, those are the ingredients!  
 T ok.  
 S so you have that, you have the nusach ha'tefilah, and you have, uh, on top of the nusach you have, uh, elaborations, or, uh, embellishments. Yeah.  
 T ok? Yeah?  
 S you have the plain nusach sometimes, wi-, with cantorial embellishments.  
 T yeah.  
 S Yeah, that's all. What else is there?  
 T ok. So, we'll look at a couple of pieces, and  
 S So, what e-, what else does anybody have? Ever-, everybody has the same thing.  
 T yeah. Yeah. I, we, I think y-,  
 S one has less, one has more.  
 T I think they just want us to, to l-

#### Track 34

T take a piece and, like, actually  
 S they could  
 T put the music in there, and  
 S there, there is a  
 T write what part is doing what.  
 S yeah, and, and then,  
 T look at that.  
 S and, and, and then you'll look at, then you have here. key, then you have the modulation. Is this a nusach modulation, or is this a modulation from Mozart or Beethoven?  
 T uh huh, right.  
 S So, the modulation, try, is u-, I tried to make the modulation through the nusach. A nusach modulation, as opposed to a, just a music modulation.  
 T right.  
 S through maneuvering with uh, a diminished chord, or this or that,  
 T mm hmm  
 S you know, you can go up to any key from that.  
 T yeah.  
 S so the...  
 T Do you ever write accompaniments?  
 S No! I can put in chords, but I can't,  
 T ok.  
 S I don't know anything about the piano.  
 T ok (laughs)  
 S (laughs) come on, do I have to know piano?

T no! (laughs) um,  
 S You probably took piano lessons.  
 T Yeah, but I'm not good.  
 S I don't care, that's because you're anivos. You're humble.  
 T No. It's 'cause I'm really not very good! (laughs)  
 S You have a small hand?  
 T Yeah, but I can't really  
 S it's good to have a  
 T play more than one finger at a time. (laughs)  
 S No, it's good to have a  
 T yeah.  
 S big hand.  
 T I'm learning guitar now.  
 S alright.  
 T I'm surprised that I'm able to do it, but I am. Um, when you get a new student,  
 S yeah. When what?  
 T When you get a new student,  
 S yeah, I don't take 'em. Yeah, go ahead.  
 T (laughs) Um, are there, is there a special kind of student that you like working  
 with more?  
 S uh. . yeah.  
 T ok?  
 S yeah. You want to know what kind it is?  
 T what?  
 S uh, first off, th-, they have to, eh, if they, eh, they have to read music.  
 T right.  
 S you don't have to be a cracker jack,  
 T yeah?  
 S but at least be able to be corrected!  
 T yeah.  
 S if you make a mistake, so you show 'em, you try 'em, you break it up. It doesn't  
 matter, even ten times, but, after you do that, they can do it!  
 T yeah.  
 S So, I don't mind that, that sort of  
 T ok?  
 S As opposed to a student, I don't ta-, if they don't ha-, know any music, and just to  
 do orally, just  
 T right.  
 S drill. So, it takes you ni-, eh, it takes you a couple of months, you're doing one  
 piece, then it doesn't, still doesn't come out right.  
 T yeah.  
 S I have no patience for that at this stage.  
 T yeah.  
 S Only for someone, or a professional who just wants to go over some points, get a  
 little bit more, uh, maybe of the character of it, like, where to stop, where to drag,  
 T yeah.

S where to yell, where, you know, all the dynamics of it.  
 T mm hmm.  
 S who is basically musical.  
 T right. Right  
 S Not as, as a beginner, starting from aleph beis.  
 T yeah. So, the people that you're teaching, let's say, at HUC,  
 S Yeah?  
 T I mean, you don't work with every single student, but you work with a lot of them.  
 S yeah.  
 T um,  
 S the ones that make the most progress,  
 T yeah?  
 S are the ones that know something already.  
 T ok.  
 S When I get someone who's a complete beginner, I don't tell 'em all the details, can't, I'm, um, I'm glad in the beginning if they could just follow the notes correctly, and the timing should be, more or less right.  
 T ok.  
 S But I don't work, those who have that down, try and work more on, on the expression.  
 T right  
 S to put in a little more character, a little bit of a ta'am into it.  
 T ok. . . so,  
 S that's the idea. It's not what you do, it's how you do it. You can sing  
 T right  
 S a junky thing, if you have a nice delivery.  
 T ok.  
 S Of course, you  
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 S if you're born with a beautiful voice, everything s-. everything sounds good.  
 T yeah.  
 S Do it with a sour voice, then  
 T (laughs)  
 S uh, there, there was a, there, there was a cantor, his name was Rutman. Eh, by eh, G-, Ganchoff thought he was the greatest ca-, cantor that there was.  
 T yeah?  
 S So, uh, they, he was, in a co-, he was s-, sitting with some other Cant-, oh, with Rapaport! They were listening to Rutman. He  
 T mm hmm.  
 S was davening, or singing in a concert, I don't know what it was. And he made all these trills, and, uh, he sounded like a bird here and there.  
 T (laughs)  
 S And he had tremendous artistry in, in the, in the delivery of  
 T uh huh

S the solos. So, Ganchoff asked Rapaport, he says, "Nu, what do you say about that?"

T uh huh?

S As if to say, "Nu?"

T yeah.

S He say, "eh!" He says, he says, "Let him do it with my voice!" (laughs)

T (laughs)

S That the idea. No trick for him to do it! He says, make it on his voice.

T Right. Right. Ok.

S That's the id-, so, that's the trick! If you haven't got worth what, and you can still sell it,

T yeah.

S you're a good salesman!

T yeah.

S If you have Pavorati's voice, everything is sounding pretty good.

T right. (laughs) ok. Well, I think that's probably enough questions for today. Do you

S oh!

T have anything you want to add?

S I don't want to add anything this minute. Any. . . I have nothing to add, really.

T ok. Um, I'm thinking about how to

S I don't think you got too much information.

T I got

S A little bit here and there.

T I got some. I got good, some good stuff.

S Alright.

T Um,

S You have to be able to

T Thinking about, just, how to put together the paper, I, I want to start with just your sort of, basic biographical information,

S Basic biographical, I see.

T but then I want to go mostly into the music.

S oh! Ok.

T So,

S So, that's easier.

T I think you, I think you gave me a lot.

S Alright.

T Alright!

S I played the organ on a few program, on the, on, uh, on the, on tv.

T Really?

S Yeah. There was a pro-, there was a program from the, uh, board of Rabbi's.

T uh huh.

S So, like, they had, uh, I think every Sunday, like, uh, a program, if it was before Chanukah, or before Purim, before this and that. So, they used to, uh, they had a different Cantor on every week. I was on a few!

T yeah.

S I got paid, in fact! The guy who sang didn't get paid.  
 T (laughs)  
 S I remember one case, I was accompanying a guy, he sang off pitch.  
 T uh oh. (laughs)  
 S And I didn't know what to do,  
 T (laughs)  
 S He was in between.  
 T yeah?  
 S And, it was Kol Nidre.  
 T uh huh?  
 S so, everybody, uh, everybody knows Kol Nidre.  
 T right.  
 S So, and, when I saw he was closer to a different, I s-, went up a half a tone.  
 T uh huh?  
 S In the middle of the piece!  
 T yeah.  
 S Just continued a half a tone higher!  
 T wow.  
 S And then he did it another number, and did the same thing.  
 T (laughs)  
 S In the middle of the piece I had to go up a half a step.  
 T (laughs)  
 S Was off pitch.  
 T wow. Wow.  
 S might have it on a tape someplace. Was on, live.  
 T yeah.  
 S They didn't do redo's!  
 T right.  
 S If you're on the t  
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 S v, on that program, you couldn't do it over. If you made a mistake, or you cracked, or this, that, say,  
 T oy! Wow.  
 S Was a one shot deal.  
 T wow.  
 S I was on about three times, I think!  
 T hmm!  
 S Two, for sure. I played on the radio, also, for some, uh, for some guys. All the way back.  
 T yeah.  
 S They sang without music!  
 T yeah.  
 S Without anything.  
 T yeah. Um,  
 S I accompanied Ganchoff for a wedding, I remember. I once accom-, accompanied Dovid Kosevitsky,

T hmm!

S With Dovid Kosevitsky there w-, an interesting thing happened. He did the Sheva Brachos.

T yeah?

S I went to a wedding. With choir!

T hmm.

S So, it was a style, all the way back, eh, they did it with, uh, after he finishes the last blessing, there, the style was, either a kid, a kid, or, or a l-, a girl, or even a lady,

T mm hmm?

S would sing "v'yima-," there are the words, "v'yimaleh m'shaloseinu b'midato b'shurato." That sentence.

T ok?

S There was a style. (sings) "V'yimaleh," and the choir would answer, b-, whatever it is. So, he decided, after the kid, or the girl's gonna sing that, he is going, not to let it end there, he's gonna start repeating these words, and scream on top! "V'yimaleh, m'..." In other words, they shouldn't take away the prize.

T Right. Right, right, right.

S The kid sang, oh, everybody loves a kid,

T right.

S that ends it, now, he's gonna scream on top.

T (laughs)

S So, what happened? So he, uh, I was accompanying him. It was in a Sephardic temple, that's in, uh, Branch Boulevard, in Cedarhurst. He says, "after, after the girl is gonna sing," I think it was a girl. Sing, 'Yi-, (sings) Yishua b'rachamim." Then he goes on, (sings) "V'yimaleh, V'yimaleh," You understand how that works?

T uh huh. Yeah.

S She's ending, then he's taking it, then he's gonna, (sings) "yibi. ." and then he's gonna, (sings) "v'yishua b'ra-" (clears throat) hoarse. (Sings) "rachamim." Then he'd go, (sings) "V'yimaleh, v'yimaleh, mi. . ." Then tur-

T uh huh.

S In screams on top his lungs!

T wow!

S whatever he got.

T wow.

S And then he pou-, goodbye. That's what he made up. He's gonna take that note. He's gonna continue.

T uh huh?

S So, what happened? So, I know already, he told me, he let me know

T yeah?

S what's gonna be,

T yeah?

S but to continue. So what happens? So I knew, I knew, uh, the key. He w-, he had her s-, he, she sang it, in not the key that he thought.

T uh oh.

S She sang it, l-, l-, l-, let's, l-, l-, let's say the, l-, let's say the piece, eh, normally was in F minor, so she sang it in G.

T (laughs)

S So, when she g-, she goes, (sings in high voice) "V'rachamim." Sang, "V'yimaleh, v'yimaleh," and he screamed, and I'm following,

T uh huh?

S and I see, he's getting, he, he u-, he

T yeah.

S he, he didn't know, he didn't realize that it wasn't

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S the key that it was!

T (laughs)

S It's fun-, (laughs) very funny! I figured, should I tell him anything? At the end,

T yeah.

S So, in the, after the ceremony, in the dressing room, I go to, I said, I say, "Do you know what happened?"

T (laughs)

S (laughs) I said, "You think you were in this and this key?" I said, "No, you were in this key!"

T uh huh.

S "Oh!" he says,

T (laughs)

S "Now I understand!"

T (laughs)

S He couldn't understand why he's having so much

T yeah. (laughs)

S difficulty! At that, he always has that easy!

T yeah.

S But he's a tone higher.

T wow. (laughs)

S That was funny.

T huh!

S Oh, he, he was relieved to find out that his voice is really ok, but

T right, that it was ok.

S but, you know, but, was not coming out.

T yeah.

S yeah.

T Huh! Wow.

S That's funny. Uh, different incident with him. This was funnier yet. There was a school that opened up, it was called Combs College of Music.

T mm hmm?

S Have you heard of them? No.

T no.

S The opened up a school, it was a brand, there's a s-, that college is in Philadelphia. They opened up a branch, that, eh, eh, they, they opened it up, and

they, they operated on Broadway and, I think, 93<sup>rd</sup> Street, in that building there's a synagogue there. You know it?

T ok?

S You know that synagogue? Eh, Ganchoff was hazzan there, Roitman was hazzan there all the way back. They, the men sit with those high hats Friday night, and the, anyway. . . They opened up a Cantorial school, and they took me to teach there. And I taught, I taught at that time, at Yeshiva University. Yeshiva University called me in the office, they said, "If you're gonna teach there, you can't teach here." You hear?

T wow.

S They stopped me! In other words. So, anyhow, so, I started to teach there, and then they let me know, if you're gonna continue there,

T yeah.

S you're gonna be taking away students from our, from us, that's not even true,

T right.

S You can't, make up your mind. So I told them, "Ok. I'll quit there."

T mm hmm.

S the other school. In fact, I, I have, I still have the program with my name on it.

T mm hmm.

S So, um, to replace me they took Duv-, David Kousevitsky.

T ok?

S He was so-, sort of flexible, he wanted him, he came to teach, he didn't mind. So, uh, I have it, I'm sure I could find it. I have the whole program, the printed prog-, and on, and then it says, eh, they stamped his name on it, "will teach nusach, D. Kousevitsky." S-, with a stamper, not

T uh huh

S in regular print. So, the guy who was the head of the school, his name is Weintraub, he has a school in Israel now, he says, "You know, David Kousevitsky's gonna come here, he's coming next time. You don't want to come, you can't come." He says, "Prepare some music for him."

T (laughs)

S so he'll have what to sing, then after that he'll do

T yeah. Yeah.

S He'll do whatever he wants. Prepare something. So, this was funny. So, I couldn't say no, after

T uh huh.

S all, I'm the guy, I'm the bad guy!

T yeah.

S I'm quitting!

T yeah.

S So, what is he gonna teach? He's gonna teach the, he's gonna have to teach the, eh, Shacharit, for Shabbat.

T mm hmm?

S So,

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S what did I do? So, I wrote out a page the way he davens.



T (laughs)  
 S You hear?  
 T yep.  
 S The way he davened it. And I write it out, and he's gonna go teach it, now,  
 T yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 S This is funny! So, so the, so the guy, the head of the school, said, "The first  
 time," he says, "he's gonna take over your class? You'll c-, be there the first  
 time, and eh,  
 T uh huh.  
 S I'll introduce you, and then, uh, go home, you'll do what you want."  
 T yeah.  
 S You give him the page, and, he'll ca-, carry on from there.  
 T yeah.  
 S So I fe-, alright, so I hung around to give him the music,  
 T (laughs)  
 S and he's teaching that page, and he's, he's, he can't figure it out yet. So, uh,  
 T (laughs)  
 S So he says, "Where did you," he says to me, "Where did you get this music  
 from?" I, hear?  
 T (laughs)  
 S So I said, "They told me that, that you, that you're going to teach here. So I  
 figured, I'll prepare the page on your style."  
 T (laughs)  
 S (laughs) "Oh!" He says, "No wonder!" he says. He says, "So, you're a crook!"  
 (laughs)  
 T (laughs)  
 S You know what, that was funny! He says, "I see!" He says, he says, "I see the  
 music is, I daven like that!"  
 T (laughs)  
 S That's what he said. He says, "Isn't that funny," he says, "that's the way I  
 daven!"  
 T That's funny!  
 S That was funny, yeah.  
 T (laughs)  
 S And he became my friend after that, and, eh, that was it.  
 T wow.  
 S He was a pretty straight guy, like this.  
 T hmm!  
 S And that was the end.  
 T that's great.  
 S That was funny, certainly.  
 T Wow.  
 S "How could you write this?" He said, "I daven like this!" (laughs)  
 T (laughs) Guess you'd heard him a few times.  
 S Oh, sure!  
 T (Laughs)

S Sure! I knew the routine.  
T yeah. Yeah.  
S I, uh, the, from the big ones, I knew their whole routine. Pinchik I knew almost the whole business. I heard, the ones that I heard, I, I sort of have the, see, the, the, all, most of them, they daven the same every time.  
T yeah?  
S 'Cause they were usually in different places, and the old hazzonim, they davened once a month.  
T mm hmm  
S On, when the, you know, when you bench rosh hodesh.  
T yeah.  
S on ro-, ho-, so, uh, they could repeat. They, uh, Hagy davened he same all the time, Vigoda davened the same, Liebele Waldman davened the same. Ganchoff changed.  
T Ok?  
S Probably wanted to improve, or he had a lot of music he wanted to  
T yeah.  
S air out.  
T yeah.  
S Kapov-Kagen was a-, most of 'em were the same.  
T yeah.  
S So, you could pick up their routine.  
T yeah.  
S If you followed them. In other words, I remember. eh, Pinchik had, the, he had fans, people used to run after him. And, and if he would stop in the middle of a phr-, uh, middle of the singing, guy in the audience would tell you, sing the next word.  
T (laughs)  
S He remember, he remembered how he made it.  
T yeah. Yeah.  
S That was the improvisations. They rehearsed them.  
T yeah. Yeah.  
S ok!  
T alright. Thank you! Should I turn it off?  
S I didn't know it was on! I wouldn't say certain things.  
T no, it's been on.  
S Eliminate all the junk!  
T (laughs)  
S That's 99 percent.  
T Absolutely!

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