

CHICAGO A CAPPELLA

CEDILLE



MIRACLE OF
MIRACLES

Music for Hanukkah

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Music for Hanukkah

TRADITIONAL

ARR. ROBERT APPLEBAUM

- 1 Oh, Chanukah/Y'mei
Hachanukah (3:20)

TRADITIONAL

ARR. STEVE BARNETT

- 2 S'vivon (1:19)

TRADITIONAL

ARR. MARK ZUCKERMAN

- 3 O, ir kleyne likhtelekh (3:50)

GERALD COHEN

- 4 Chanukah Lights* (2:47)

ROBERT APPLEBAUM

- 5 Haneirot Halalu* (4:37)

TRADITIONAL

ARR. ELLIOT Z. LEVINE

- 6 Al HaNisim (1:44)

TRADITIONAL

ARR. APPLEBAUM

- 7 Al Hanisim* (3:58)

CHICAGO A CAPPELLA

JOSHUA FISHBEIN

- 8 Al Hanisim (For the
Miracles)* (4:39)

DANIEL TUNKEL

from HALLEL CANTATA* (7:14)

- 9 I. Hal'luyah! (Psalm 113) (1:28)
- 10 II. B'tzeit Yisrael
(Psalm 114) (1:53)
- 11 III. Adonai Z'charanu (Psalm
115, vv. 12–18) (2:26)
- 12 VI. Hodu (Psalm 118,
vv. 1–4) (1:26)

TRADITIONAL

ARR. APPLEBAUM

- 13 Maoz Tzur* (5:21)

ELLIOT Z. LEVINE

- 14 Lo V'Chayil (3:01)

VLADIMIR HEYFETZ

ARR. ZUCKERMAN

- 15 Fayer, fayer (0:57)

SAMUEL E. GOLDFARB

ARR. APPLEBAUM

- 16 Funky Dreidl (I Had a Little
Dreidl) (3:35)

MIKHL GELBART

ARR. ZUCKERMAN

- 17 I am a Little Dreydl (Ikh bin
a kleyner Dreydl) (1:23)

JONATHAN M. MILLER

- 18 Biy'mey Mattityahu* (4:14)

Bonus Tracks from
Christmas *a cappella*

CHAIM PARCHI

ARR. JOSHUA JACOBSON

- 19 Aleih Neiri (3:54)

STACY GARROP

- 20 Lo Yisa Goy (5:04)

TT: (62:09)

*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

NOTE FROM CHICAGO A CAPPELLA FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS JONATHAN MILLER

Why, you might ask, aren't there more albums of Hanukkah music like this? Finding the music is a big part of the challenge. It's hard to locate works that meet all of our criteria: superb musical craftsmanship, a Hanukkah text, and a setting for a cappella mixed choir. The difficulty has many contributing factors. Culturally, Hanukkah is much more about the home than the synagogue. When we think of Hanukkah, we think of candles, latkes (potato pancakes), gifts, time spent with extended family, and maybe folk melodies... but not a choir. To be sure, there are special prayers said on Hanukkah, and many songs on this album come from the prayers inserted into the liturgy on this

occasion. But Hanukkah is a minor holiday, even though it has become the most visible Jewish holiday since Jews became assimilated into wider culture — especially in America. In addition, Jewish choral music is a recent phenomenon, begun in earnest only about 200 years ago in Berlin, so there's a simple quantity issue: we have much less repertoire to peruse than in other choral traditions. Given all of this, we are especially grateful for the composers and arrangers whose persistence and skill have given us the works found here. Enjoy, *baz'man ha-zeh* — in this season — and may this album brighten your days and nights of Hanukkah for many years to come.

NOTE FROM CHICAGO A CAPPELLA ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOHN WILLIAM TROTTER

Chicago *a cappella* is known for its varied programs, frequently combining music from various centuries, styles, and regions. While all of our singers are classically trained, each also has considerable range, allowing us to stretch well beyond the varied genres often lumped together as “classical,” into jazz, pop, folk, and many others.

With this context in mind, a glance at the track list may make this Hanukkah project seem uncharacteristically focused for our ensemble. After all, all of the texts are from a single religious and cultural tradition, and all are related to a single celebration. Look more closely, however (or even better, listen), and you’ll find a sprawling variety of styles.

There are at least two reasons for this breadth. On the one hand, we are in debt to the fertile imaginations of our composers, who envisioned so many different sound worlds and so many different ways to clothe these texts.

But there is also the nature of Hanukkah itself, which offers so many different modes of personal, social, and spiritual practice. Consider just three of these. Hanukkah offers the chance to reflect on the historical significance of the Maccabean revolt, with its consequences echoing through to the present day. It invites quiet contemplation of the candle flames, set aside from any utilitarian purpose. And it provides an opportunity to gather with family and have a really great party with really great food.

Recording a CD is an exacting and demanding process. But our time together in the studio on this project was frequently light, even joyful, as we entered into these worlds in turn. We hope you enjoy our wholehearted approach to this music, from solemn and reflective to playful and even downright raucous.

PROGRAM NOTES

BY PHILIP V. BOHLMAN

Hanukkah songs are remarkable for the ways they chronicle Jewish history, especially across the Diaspora while, at the same time, they celebrate the most intimate moments of family holiday in the Jewish home. Historical tales of resistance and survival combine with the moments when Jewish communities become modern. Hanukkah songs are distinctive because they sound ongoing narratives of interaction between the Jewish community and the wider world. They bear witness to the special power of song, providing a foundation for pillars of identity while also opening doors that welcome exchange.

Such power of song is especially distinctive in Hanukkah songs, for they so often arise along borders that signal difference. Linguistic borders do not splinter songs into fragmentary repertoires; quite the contrary, for Hanukkah songs come in many languages, and often combine them. Ritual borders that would separate the secular from the sacred become permeable, such that ritual practice becomes common to daily life and worship. Hanukkah songs

sound across the Jewish community, in synagogue and home alike. And surely no less important for the ways in which Hanukkah songs enter the modern world is that they resound far beyond the borders of the Jewish community.

Among religious observances, Hanukkah is a feast rather than a holiday with sacred obligations. The story of the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE appears in First and Second Maccabees, neither of which is included in the rabbinically sanctioned Masoretic text of the Tanach, or Hebrew Bible, thus again deflecting Hanukkah's religious significance. Despite, or even because of, such distinctions, Hanukkah has increased in popularity over time because of the ways it connects religious history to secular life. The customs, languages, culture, *and songs* of Jewish secular life thus came to exert an extensive influence on the celebration of Hanukkah, progressively enhancing its popularity, especially in the modern Diaspora. Hanukkah songs were among

the most important documents of this transformation, so much so that in many modern communities, song — especially communal, collective, and choral — has become the primary means of celebrating the holiday.

We first become aware of Hanukkah songs in an expanding modern corpus and canon around the time of the Jewish Enlightenment, the Haskalah (ca. 1770–1870). It was during the Haskalah that a broader range of musical practices generally entered the Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe from earlier oral traditions. Cantorial practices appeared in print, with versions of liturgical song from various communities published side-by-side. During this same period, folk songs were gathered as canonic repertoires, and Jewish folk song entered the secular realms made possible by such collections. The choral movements of the 19th century — in Europe and in North America — accelerated because of the influence of Romanticism and nationalism, and parallel choral movements expanding into Jewish communities by the mid-19th century. Such modern musical activities in 19th-century Jewish communities flourished because of an accompanying growth in publishing. By the 1880s, there was a virtual explosion in the publication of

Jewish song books, which, in turn, further undergirded the formation of canonic repertoires. The influence of published song books has been lasting, and we recognize it even in the songs collected and arranged for this recording. For example, the sources for “Funky Dreidl” and “Oh Chanukah” come from perhaps the most important collection of Jewish songs from the early and mid-20th century: Harry Coopersmith’s 1950 *The Songs We Sing*, whose 453 pages of Jewish song compiled a vast repertoire built upon numerous Jewish song books containing collections from American immigrant communities in the first half of the 20th century.

Among such repertoires, few were as visible as Hanukkah songs, which often appeared in sections dedicated to the parsing of the “Jewish year.” Published volumes of Jewish song not only made it possible to share Jewish song repertoires across the holidays and among different communities, they also laid the foundations for new arrangements, especially for Jewish choral societies. As one of the most important among the published repertoires, Hanukkah songs played a significant role in generating new networks for the performance of Jewish music in sacred and secular spheres, within the community and beyond. The cantors,

composers, arrangers, and choral directors who populated these networks contributed critically to the creation of what we now know as the modern Hanukkah repertory.

The 21st -century network that together created the present CD has been critical in the very same ways. Collectively in search of Hanukkah songs from different Jewish traditions and communities, these composers, arrangers, conductors, and musicians have forged a repertory that is fresh and modern, respectful of the past and hopeful in the present. Many threads connect those shaping the sound of Hanukkah on this CD. The composers/arrangers/musicians who here shine new light on songs about the miracle of

light — Robert Applebaum, Gerald Cohen, Joshua Fishbein, Elliot Z. Levine, Jonathan Miller, Daniel Tunkel, Mark Zuckerman — come from different traditions and their careers have followed distinctive paths. There is so much in what they have created that makes Hanukkah songs resonate for us anew. Liturgical and folk melodies abound, conveying sensitivity to Hebrew, both biblical and modern, and a Yiddish in conversation with the vernacular of American jazz and popular idioms. The vocal network represented on this album fully encompasses the traditions of Hanukkah across the Diaspora and Jewish history, while *Chicago a cappella* offers ensemble singing that affirms the spirit of the holiday in this musical offering.

1. Oh Chanukah / Y'mei Hachanukah (arr. Robert Applebaum)

There are surely many reasons that “Oh Chanukah” is probably the most popular of all Hanukkah songs. Although it circulates widely as a children’s song — and, indeed, contains all the elements that gather the musical talents of young voices — “Oh Chanukah” boasts a history of countless versions and variants, all of them enjoying popularity at specific times and places. These modern versions of the song form from the confluence of at least two streams, the first springing from Hebrew lyrics, the second flowing together from Yiddish and English sources. Turning to Harry Coopersmith’s mid-20th-century collection, Robert Applebaum channels striking elements from these different streams to create something of a mash-up of “Oh Chanukah’s” popularity.

Chanukah, oh, Chanukah, come light the chanukiah
Retelling the victory of Judah Maccabeus.
And so we gather 'round the table to share in a treat,
Sevonim to play with, levivot to eat.
And while we play, the candles are burning low.
One for each night, they shed a sweet light
To remind us of days long ago.

Y'mei hachanukah:
Chanukat mikedasheinu
B'gil uv'simcha m'malim et libeinu
Lailah vayom s'vivoneinu yisov
Sufganiyot nochal bam larov
Hairu, hadliku
neirot Chanukah rabim.
Al hanisim, v'al haniflaot
asher chol'lu haMaccabim

These are the days of Chanukah:
our altar was sanctified.
Our hearts are filled with joy and with happiness.
Our dreidls spin night and day;
There are doughnuts—especially for us!
Lighting, igniting,
The candles of Chanukah, lined up in a row.
For Your wonders and for Your miracles,
that You wrought through the Maccabees.

—from *The Songs We Sing*, edited by Harry Coopersmith © Copyright 1950 by United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education. Alternative text and translations by Robert Applebaum © Copyright 2003 Lone Press, a division of ECS Publishing Group. ecspublishing.com. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

2. S'vivon / Little Dreydl (arr. Steve Barnett)

It is with the songs about the *dreydl* and the *s'vivon* — Yiddish and Hebrew for spinning top — (more of which are heard later in the program) that Hanukkah traditions and songs most demonstrably blur the borders between the sacred and the secular. The *s'vivon* is the symbol of the miracle of Hanukkah: when it comes to rest, the symbolism that the miracle happened there in Jerusalem is signified by the Hebrew letters on the sides of the *dreydl* (nun, gimmel, hey, shin — גַּם גְּדוּלַת הַיְהוָה שָׁם — “a great miracle happened there”). The Hebrew folk song version of “S'vivon” on this track itself bears witness to the complexities of the miracle’s geography, for it is most common that Hebrew versions refer to a miracle happening “here” rather than “there” [sham]. “S'vivon” is a Hanukkah song that calls attention to the transformation of the historical past into the landscapes of diasporic modernity. Barnett’s arrangement is unusual because it takes the standard folk melody and infuses jazz harmonies and a swing rhythm.

S'vivon sov, sov, sov
Chanukah hu chag tov.
Chag simchah hula'am;
neis gadol haya sham.

—Traditional Hebrew folk song

Little dreidl spin, spin, spin
Chanukah is a joyous holiday
This happy holiday is for all people
A great miracle happened there.

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3. O, Ir Kleyne Likhtelekh / O, You Little Candle (arr. Mark Zuckerman)

The emergence of modern Hanukkah song from published collections of Jewish song in the 19th century is again documented with “O, Ir Kleyne Likhtelekh.” Mark Zuckerman turns to a traditional Yiddish lyrical account of the miracle of light, which the great Jewish poet and lyricist, Morris Rosenfeld (1862–1923), documented in his seminal folk song volumes from fin-de-siècle Poland and Germany (most significant among them, the 1900 *Lieder des Ghetto*). Rosenfeld charted the movement between languages, especially Yiddish and German, as a process of transformation in the Jewish experience and in the making of modern Jewish history — something that is presciently evident in this Hanukkah song.

O, ir kleyne likhtelekh
Ir dertseylt geshikhtelekh
Mayselekh on a tsol.
Ir dertseylt fun blutikayt,
Beryeshaft un mutikayt
Vunder fun a mol.
Ven ikh ze aykh shminklendik
Kumt a kholem finklendik
Redt an alter troyrn
O yid, du host gekrigt a mol,
Du host gezigt a mol
Got, es gleybt zikh koym.
O, ir kleyne likhtelekh
Ayere geshikhtelekh vekn uf mayn payn
Tif in harts bavegt es zikh
Un mit trenn fregt es zikh:
Vos vet itster zayn?

—Morris Rosenfeld

O, you little candles,
you tell tales, endless stories.
You tell about bloody battles,
heroism, and courage:
wonders of once upon a time.

When I see you sparkling,
a vision comes twinkling;
an old dream talks.
Jew, you have fought once,
you won once.
Ah, one can hardly believe it.
O, you little candles:
your stories awaken my pain.
Deep in the heart, something stirs
and asks, through tears,
“What is going to happen now?”

—ECS Publishing, used with permission

4. Gerald Cohen: Chanukah Lights

While many songs about candles and light commemorate the historical miracle of Hanukkah, many others celebrate the intimacy of the family. Gerald Cohen captures this intimacy with “Chanukah Lights,” transforming history into a ritual of everyday experience.

The candles are gently glowing,
Spreading peace, spreading light.
Our family gathers together,
Sharing joy this Chanukah night.
Light, light, bring joy each night!
The candles are gently glowing,
On Chanukah we gather together,
Bring light!

—Gerald Cohen
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5. Robert Applebaum: Haneirot Halalu / These Lights We Light

The singing of “Haneirot Halalu” accompanies the lighting of the Hanukkah menorah, or hanukkiah, during which it symbolically recreates the miracle that the holiday commemorates. The more modern provenance of the song is clearly evident in this version by Robert Applebaum, which weaves English translation and lines of English commentary into the traditional Hebrew lyrics. Important to both Hebrew and English lyrics are the ways in which community — “we,” or “anachnu” — connect the historical moment of the past to commemoration in the present.

Haneirot halalu anachnu madlikin.
Before us the candles of Chanukah;
We faithfully kindle the candles of Chanukah;
Each night for eight nights we light the holy lights
of Chanukah.

And we'll watch them burn,
And just watch them burn.

Haneirot halalu anachnu madlikin.
Haneirot halalu kodesh hem.

Before us the sacred candles of Chanukah,
Their glow sings the song of Your wonders and
miracles, remembering how You redeemed our
people in days gone by.

And the candles burn. And we just watch them burn.

Haneirot halalu anachnu madlikin.

*Al hanisim v'al haniflaot, v'al hat'shuot, v'al
hamilchamot.*

For God who's the maker of miracles,
For God who has been our redeemer,
The flickering flames honor Your name
Remembering how You delivered us in days gone by.
And the candles burn.
And we just watch them burn.

These lights we light.

We light these lights.
These lights are sacred.

We light these lights.
For the miracles, for the wonders, for the
redemption, for the victories.

— Traditional Hebrew liturgy, English text/
translation by Robert Applebaum
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6. Al HaNisim / For the Miracles (arr. Elliott Z. Levine)

The many sources for “Al Hanisim” reveal its many influences from rabbinical practice. Transmission from the earliest sources point to a worship practice in which additional lines and lyrics were regularly affixed through subsequent versions. The same additive practice accompanies “Al Hanisim” in its use during Hanukkah, as a prayer of thanksgiving in which miracle upon miracle enters the song itself. The attribution of meaning to “Al Hanisim” consistently spreads outward its accounts of deliverance from the Hellenization of ancient Israel, accounting for the miracles of other holidays, most notably the mid-winter holiday of Purim.

Al hanisim

V'al hapurkan v'al hagvurot v'al hat'shuot
sheasita la'avoteinu bayamim haheem
baz'man hazeh.

Bimei Matityahu ben Yochanan
Kohen gadol Hashmonai uvanav
K'sheamdah malchut Yavan al
amcha Yisrael, l'hashkicham toratecha
ulha'aviram meichu kei r'tzonecha
V'ata b'rachamecha harabim
amad'ta lahem b'eit tzaratam.

—Traditional Hebrew liturgy

For the miracles

and for the deliverance, and for the mighty acts,
and for the acts of salvation that You performed for
our ancestors in those days, at this time of year;

In the days of Mattathias the son of Yochanan,
The high priest, the Hasmonean and his sons,
when the Greek Empire sought to force Your people
Israel to abandon Your Torah and to deviate from
Your chosen laws and practices,
You in Your great mercy stood with them in their
hour of distress.

—Translated by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

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7. Al Hanisim (arr. Applebaum)

Chicago *a cappella* illustrates the expansiveness of “Al Hanisim” by performing two more variants on this CD, this one arranged by Robert Applebaum. Together, the versions illustrate the ongoing counterpoint between the traditional and the modern, the symbolic ways in which Hanukkah songs bring the past into the present. Tradition in these songs lies firmly in the Hebrew texts, but the three arrangers/composers interpret those texts differently, not changing their meaning in these performances, but rather enriching meaning.

Al hanisim

V'al hapurkan v'al hagvurot v'al hat'shuot
sheasita la'avoteinu bayamim haheim
baz'man hazeh.

Al hanisim

v'al hapurkan v'al hagvurot v'al hat'shuot v'al
hamilchamot
sheasita la'avoteinu bayamim haheim
baz'man hazeh.

Bimei Matityahu ben Yochanan
Kohen gadol Hashmonai uvanav
K'sheamdah malchut Yavan al
amcha Yisrael, l'hashkicha toratecha
ulha'aviram meichu kei r'tzonecha
V'ata b'rachamecha harabim
amad'ta lahem b'eit tzaratam.

—Traditional Hebrew liturgy

For the miracles

and for the deliverance, and for the mighty acts,
and for the acts of salvation that You performed for
our ancestors in those days, at this time of year;

For the miracles

and for the deliverance, and for the mighty acts,
and for the acts of salvation and for the victories
that You performed for our ancestors in those days,
at this time of year;

In the days of Mattathias the son of Yochanan,
The high priest, the Hasmonean and his sons,
when the Greek Empire sought to force Your people
Israel to abandon Your Torah and to deviate from
Your chosen laws and practices,
You in Your great mercy stood with them in their
hour of distress.

—Translated by Rabbi Gerald C. Skolnik

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8. Joshua Fishbein: Al Hanisim

The meanings of “Al Hanisim” multiply once again in this setting by the young American composer, Joshua Fishbein. Although the traditional Hebrew text for “Al Hanisim” is distilled to its essence in this version, it also expands proportionately to become a chronicle of the genealogy of Jewish history empowered by the miracle of redemption.

Al hanisim,
v'al hapurkan, v'al hag'vurot,
v'al hat'shuot, v'al hamilchamot,
sheasita la'avoteinu v'imoteinu,
bayamim hahem baz'man hazeh.

—Traditional Hebrew liturgy

[We thank you] for the miracles,
for the redemption,
for the victories, for the saving acts,
for the wars, which You waged for
our forefathers and foremothers, in
those days at this season.

—Translation by Joshua Fishbein
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9–12. Daniel Tunkel: from Hallel Cantata

Daniel Tunkel brilliantly captures the expansiveness of the Hanukkah choral tradition in his settings of the Hallel Psalms (113–118) in the four movements (out of six) of his “Hallel Cantata” heard here. Although they are performed during Hanukkah services, the Hallel Psalms enjoy a liturgical presence in numerous other festivals and holidays, including those celebrated by pilgrimage and the worship that accompanies the beginning of each new month, Rosh Ha-Chodesh. The Hallel Psalms acquire their considerable meaning for the liturgies that express and enunciate the Jewish year because of the complex simplicity of their liturgical texts: the sense of assurance and deliverance that chart liturgically the path of history for the Jewish people from past to present, and their ability to persevere, even against overwhelming odds. It is this spirit of assurance that emerges from Tunkel’s setting.

I. Hal'luyah!

Hal'luyah
Hal'lu avdei Adonai
Hal'lu et shem Adonai
Y'hi shem Adonai m'vorach
Meatah v'adalam.
Mimizrach shemesh
ad m'vo'o
M'hulal shem Adonai.
Ram al kol goyim Adonai,
Al hashamayim k'vodo.
Mi Kadonai Eloheinu
hamagbihi la shavet
hamashpili lir'ot ba
shamayim uva aretz
M'kimi meafar dal
meashpot yarim evyon.
l'hoshivi im n'divim
im n'divei amo.
Solo:
Moshivi akeret habayit
Em habanim s'mecha.
Hal'luyah.

—Psalm 113

Hallelujah,
Praise, O ye servants of the Lord.
Praise the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name of Lord
From this time forth and forever.
From the rising of the sun unto its
going down,
The Lord's name is to be praised.
The Lord is high above all nations;
His glory is above the heavens.
Who is like unto the Lord our God
That is enthroned on high,
That looketh down low upon
heaven and earth?
Who raises up the poor out of the dust
And lifteth up the needy.
That He may set him with princes,
Even the princes of His people.
Solo:
Who maketh the barren woman to dwell
in her house as a joyful mother of children.
Hallelujah.

II. B'tzeit Yisrael

B'tzeit Yisrael mi-Mitzrayim
beit Ya'akov meam loez.

Hay'tah Y'hudah l'kodsho
Yisrael mamsh'lotav.

ha-yam ra'ah vayanos
ha-yarden yisov l'achor.

he-harim rak'du ch'eilim
g'vaot kiv'nei tzon.

Mah l'cha ha'yam ki tanus
Ha-yarden tisov l'achor.

He-harim tirk'du ch'eilim
G'vaot kiv'nei tzon.

Mi-lifnei adon
chuli aretz,

mi-lifnei Eloah Ya'akov.

Ha-hofchi hatzur agam mayim
chalamish l'may'no mayim.

—Psalm 114

When Israel came forth out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of
strange language;

Judah became His sanctuary,
Israel His dominion.

The sea saw it and fled;

The Jordan turned backward.

The mountains skipped like rams,

The hills like young sheep.

What aileth thee, O seas, that thou fleest?

Thou Jordan, that thou turnest backward?

Ye mountains that skip like rams,

Ye hills, like young sheep?

Tremble, thou earth,

At the presence of the Lord,

At the presence of the God of Jacob,

Who turned the rock into a pool of water,

The flint into a fountain of waters.

III. Adonai Z'charanu

Solo:

Adonai z'charanu
y'varech et beit Yisrael
y'varech et beit Aharon,
y'varech yirei Adonai
ha-k'tanim im ha-g'dolim

Tutti:

Yosef Adonai aleichem
v'al b'neichem.
B'ruchim atem Ladonai
oseh shamayim va-aretz
Ha-shamayim shamayim Ladonai
V'ha-aretz natan livnei adam.
Lo ha-meitim y'hal'luyah
v'lo kol yor'dei dumah.
Va'anachnu n'varech Yah
meatah v'ad olam. Hal'luyah.

—Psalm 115: 12-18

Solo:

The Lord hath been mindful of us,
He will bless the house of Israel,
He will bless the house of Aaron,
He will bless them that fear the Lord
Both small and great.

Tutti:

The Lord increase you more and more,
You and your children.
Blessed be ye of the Lord
Who made heaven and earth.
The heavens are the heavens of the Lord,
But the earth He hath given to the children of men.
The dead praise not the Lord,
Neither any that go down into silence;
And we will bless the Lord from this time
forth and forever. Hallelujah.

IV. Hodu

Refrain:

Hodu Ladonai ki tov;
Ki l'olam chasdo.

Yomar na Yisrael
Ki l'olam chasdo.

Refrain

Yom'ru na beit Aharon
Ki l'olam chasdo.

Refrain

Yom'ru na yirei Adonai
Ki l'olam chasdo.

Refrain

—Psalm 118:1-4

Refrain:

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;
For His mercy endureth forever.

Let Israel say now:
For His mercy endureth forever.

Refrain

Let the house of Aaron now say:
For His mercy endureth forever.

Refrain

So let them now that fear the Lord say:
For His mercy endureth forever.

Refrain

—Translation adapted by Jonathan Miller
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13. Maoz Tzur / Stronghold, Rock of My Deliverance (arr. Applebaum)

“Maoz Tzur” is one of the most traditional and emblematic of all Hanukkah songs. The song’s text and melody have a long history, as early as the 13th century as a paraliturgical hymn, or *piyyut*. The Hebrew text of “Maoz Tzur” anchors it in festival tradition, when it is sung upon lighting the holiday candles, further enhancing the presence of Hanukkah as a holiday for Jewish communities across the Diaspora. Its liturgical roots as a medieval *piyyut* notwithstanding, “Maoz Tzur” became a source of continual variation since the 19th century. Today, sometimes with the title “Rock of Ages,” it has become a popular musical anthem for Hanukkah.

Maoz tzur yeshuati l’cha naeh leshabeiach.
Tikon beit tefilati v’sham toda nezabeiach.
L’eit tachin matbeiach mitzor hamnabeiach.
Az egmor b’shir mizmor chanukat hamizbeiach.

—Traditional Hebrew

Stronghold, rock of my deliverance, it is fitting to offer praise to You.
You will establish the House of my prayer and there we will offer thanksgiving-offerings.
When You prepare total destruction against the raging foe,
I will then complete, with song and psalm, the dedication of the altar.

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14. Elliot Z. Levine: Lo v'chayil / Not by Might

One of the most distinguished Jewish choral conductors of the past half-century, Elliot Z. Levine turns to a simple text from the Tanach in search of the assurance that Hanukkah projects. The miracle of Hanukkah was not won through force, but rather because of the far greater sustenance of spirit and the conviction of belief. This text from the book of Zechariah is not specific for Hanukkah, at least in its historical connections. It is not such specificity that Levine captures here, however, but rather the more transcendent spirit that underlies the commemoration of Hanukkah.

Lo v'chayil v'lo v'choach
ki im b'ruchi amar Adonai tz'vaot.

—Zechariah 4:6

Not by might nor by power
but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.

15. Vladimir Heyfetz: Fayer, fayer / Fire, Fire (arr. Zuckerman)

This track resounds with the spirit of celebration that accompanies the traditional cuisine of the holiday. Latkes — potato pancakes — symbolize Hanukkah so completely that they are synonymous with the holiday. The fire of the oil that is used in frying, like the burning lamps in the Temple in Jerusalem, sustains life, and is thus celebrated in this Hanukkah song.

Fayer, fayer
Oy! S'iz heys!
Se Brent a fayer!
Fayerdike, brenendike heyse latkes!

—Vladimir Heyfetz

Fire, fire
Oy! It's hot!
It burns!
Fiery, burning hot latkes!

—Translation by Jonathan Miller
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16. Samuel E. Goldfarb: Funky Dreidl (I Had a Little Dreidl) (arr. Applebaum)

The version of the “Dreidl” song that Robert Applebaum uses for this very modern popular arrangement entered the Diaspora tradition through the long history of publishing Jewish folk and popular song that was especially important for Hanukkah song. Harry Coopersmith’s *The Songs We Sing* (1950) consolidated numerous traditions of Jewish song together, mainly from the Diaspora, but with a growing presence of songs, ancient and modern, from the new state of Israel. Applebaum’s choral setting marvelously captures the spirit of what would become a new canon of Hanukkah songs, with both Yiddish and English lyrics woven into the sound and sense of a New World.

Neis gadol haya sham [A great miracle happened there]

Get some raisins and nuts

Put a couple in the pot

(raisins are fine for filling up the pot)

And you spin the dreidl

Whadja get?

Nun or gimmel, hei or shin will tell you

if you win or if you lose.

I had a little dreidl

Made it out of clay

And when it’s dry and ready

Dreidl I will play.

For it is dreidl, dreidl, dreidl

Leg so short and thin

Spinning dreidl tires out

It drops and then you win.

Dreidl, dreidl, dreidl

Loves to dance and spin

Dreidl, dreidl, dreidl

Spin, come play, now let’s begin.

Neis gadol haya sham [A great miracle happened there]

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17. Mikhl Gelbart: I am a Little Dreidl (Ikh bin a kleyner Dreidl) (arr. Zuckerman)

It would be impossible to estimate how many dreidl songs fill the Hanukkah repertory, for they proliferate to commemorate and celebrate the festival in countless ways. Children play games while singing dreidl songs (often for pedagogical reasons) to learn Hebrew vocabulary and acquire knowledge about Jewish history, but usually just for good fun. Dreidl songs also open numerous doors into Yiddish songs, especially in the American Jewish experience, in which Yiddish plays an especially symbolic role. For many years, moreover, the spinning top of Hanukkah has been known almost exclusively by its Yiddish name, “dreidl.”

Nun, shin, hey, gimel
Ikh bin a kleyner dreidl
Gemakht bin ikh fun blay,
Kumt, lomir ale shpiln
In dreidl, eyns, tsvey, dray
Oy, dreidl, dreidl, dreidl,
Oy, drey zikh, dreidl, drey
To lomir ale shpiln
In dreidl, eyns un tsvey.

—Ben Aaron

(The Hebrew letters nun, shin, hey, and gimel)
I am a little dreidl,
I'm made out of clay,
Let's all go a-spinning
With the dreidl, one, two, three.
Oh, dreidl, dreidl, dreidl,
O spin, dreidl, spin,
Let's all go a-spinning,
With the dreidl, one, and two.

—English translation by Jonathan Miller
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18. Jonathan M. Miller: Biy'mey Mattityahu / In the Days of Mattityahu

The genealogy of Jewish history, made possible by the miracle of light that ensured the survival of the Second Temple, is again writ large in this Hanukkah song by Jonathan Miller. Here, the miracle also sets a return to the traditions of worship in motion. The secular attributes of Hanukkah also trace a path of return, where the true power of redemption leads always to the Torah.

Biy'mey Mattityahu ben Yochanan
kohen gadol chashmonai u'vanav
k'she'amda malchut yavan har'sha'a
al am'cha Yisrael l'hashkicham
toratecha u'lha'aviram meichukei
r'tzonecha.

V'atah b'rachamecha harabim
amad'ta lahem b'eit tsaratam
ravtah et rivam
dantah et dinam
nakamta et nikmatam.

Masarta giborim b'yad chalashim v'rabim b'yad
m'atim u'tmei'im b'yad t'horim u'r'sha'im b'yad
tzadikim
v'zeidim b'yad oskei toratecha
Ul'cha asita sheim gadol

v'kadosh b'olamecha,
u'amcha Yisrael asita t'shua g'dolah
ufurkan k'hayom hazeh.
V'achar keyn bahu vanecha lidvir beitecha

ufinu et heychalecha v'tiharu
et mikdashecha
v'hidliku neyrot b'chatsrot
kodshecha v'kav'u sh'monat y'mey Chanukah
eylu l'hodot u'l'haleyl l'shimcha hagadol.

—Traditional Hebrew liturgy

In the days of Mattathias son of Yohanan the high priest, the Hasmonean, and his sons, when the evil kingdom of Greece stood against Your people Israel in order to make them forget Your Torah and violate Your laws,

You, in Your enormous mercy, stood up for them in their time of great need, upheld their cause, judged their case, and avenged their oppressors,

You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the degenerates into the hands of those who cling to your Torah,

And You made for Yourself a great and holy name in Your world and performed a great salvation and miracle for Your people Israel, as You do today, And afterward, Your children came to the Holy of Holies in Your house, and they cleansed Your palace and purified Your temple, and they kindled lights in the courtyard of Your sanctuary, and they established these eight days of Hanukkah to give thanks and to praise Your great name.

—Translation from MyJewishLearning.com
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19. Chaim Parchi: Aleih Neiri (arr. Joshua Jacobson)

“Aleih Neiri” is a Chanukah tune composed and recorded by Parchi himself. The overall feel and sound of that recording have been adapted into a choral arrangement by the renowned scholar and conductor Joshua Jacobson, founder of the Zamir Chorale of Boston. Jacobson has added some lovely harmonic touches of his own while keeping the heartfelt nature of the solo line intact.

— *note by Jonathan Miller*

Solo:

Aleih neiri, aleih ha-neir,
Ha-eir chadri, chadri ha-eir,
Aleih neiri, aleih u-z'rach,
L'-yeled kat, l'na-ar rach.

Aleih neiri, aleih ha-neir,
Ha-eir chadri, chadri ha-eir,
Ha-yom li-chag gil es'-mach,
Aleih neiri, aleih u-z'rach.

Tutti:

Aleih neiri, aleih ha-neir,
Ha-eir chadri, chadri ha-eir,
Aleih neiri, aleih maher,
Al rov nisim saper, saper.

Solo:

Aleih neiri, aleih ha-neir,
Ha-eir chadri, chadri ha-eir,
Al Ma-ca-bi b'-oz nil'cham,
Geireish oyeiv ga-al ha-am.

—Chaim Parchi. Reprinted with permission of
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Solo:

Rise up, my light, rise up and shine;
My candles, glow with light divine.
See my menorah shining in the night,
For all the children basking in its light.

Rise up, my light, rise up and shine;
My candles, glow with light divine.
On Chanukah we celebrate and sing;
Our prayers rise, our melodies take wing.

Tutti:

Rise up, my light, rise up and shine;
My candles, glow with light divine.
While candles burn, come tell us the tale
Of God's great wonders in Eretz Yisrael [the land of Israel].

Solo:

Rise up, my light, rise up and shine;
My candles, glow with light divine.
Come hear the story of Judah Maccabee,
The mighty hero who set our people free.

—Translation by Joshua Jacobson. Reprinted with
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20. Stacy Garrop: Lo Yisa Goy

“Lo Yisa Goy” is a prayer for peace. I remember singing this song as a young child in Hebrew school and synagogue, in the context (at least in my congregation) of praying for the state of Israel. I think we’re at a particular point in which people in a lot of different nations could use such a prayer. For this reason, you’ll hear the words in both Hebrew and English. In my research of previous versions of the melody, I discovered three variants for the tune, all of which I have incorporated into my piece.

— *note by Stacy Garrop*

Lo yisa goy el goy cherev,
Lo yilm’du od milchama.

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares
And their spears into pruning-hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.
But they shall sit every man under his vine and fig tree,
And none shall make them afraid;
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Micah 4: 3-4

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation
Neither shall they learn war any more.

CHICAGO A CAPPELLA



John William Trotter
Artistic Director

Chicago a cappella (chicagoacappella.org) is an ensemble of ten singers that performs a wide-ranging repertoire of musical styles and genres from the ninth to the 21st centuries, without a conductor and without instruments. Founded in 1993, the group features a roster of the Chicago area's most accomplished classically trained choral singers and soloists, whose flexible vocal skills and musical adventurousness bring a sense of joy to their performances. *Chicago a cappella* presents an extensive concert series in the Chicago area and has made dozens of guest appearances in the U.S. and Mexico. The ensemble has commissioned new works by composers including Chen Yi, Tania

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