

JEWISH MUSIC

from Bessarabia to Broadway



The 23rd Annual Lytle Scholarship Concert

Sunday, January 27, 2019

3:00 PM

UCSD Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Esa Einai (I Will Lift Up My Eyes)

Ben Steinberg, composer

Sim Shalom (Messenger of Peace)

Bob Remstein, composer

Chasdei Hashem

Israel Alter, composer

Cantor Mark E. Childs, David Samuel Childs
Cecil Lytle, piano & Bertram Turetzky, contrabass

Liebesleid [Love's Sorrow]

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962) composer

Liebesfreud [Love's Joy]

Transcribed for solo piano by

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Cecil Lytle, solo piano

Blue Skies (1926)

Irving Berlin, composer

Somewhere Over the Rainbow (1939)

Harold Arlen, music

Yip Harburg, lyrics

Eva Barnes, vocal & Cecil Lytle, piano

Sonata for Clarinet & Piano (1942)

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), composer

Robert Zelickman, clarinet

Cecil Lytle, piano

INTERMISSION

Eva Barnes & Peter Gourevitch

Narrators

This program is dedicated to the congregation of the Tree of Life Synagogue and the people of the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Mischa, Jascha, Toscha, Sascha
Blah, Blah, Blah

George Gershwin, music (1898-1937)
Ira Gershwin, lyrics (1896-1983)

Deborah Davis, vocals
Cecil Lytle, piano

Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Lebedik un Freylakh (Lively and Joyful)</i> | Abe Schwartz Orchestra |
| <i>Freylakh fun der Khuppe</i> <i>(Wedding Canopy Processional)</i> | Harry Kandel Orchestra |
| <i>“Of Love and Loss”</i> | Bertram Turetzky, Contrabass & composer |
| <i>Los Bilbilicos (The Nightingales)</i> | Traditional Ladino |
| <i>Khasidim Tanz (Dance of the Khasidim)</i> | Traditional |
| <i>And the Angels Sing</i> | Ziggy Ellman Sheldon Cohen, arranger |
| <i>Oy Tate! (Oh Daddy!)</i> | Joseph Frankel Orchestra |
| <i>Bay Mir Bistu Sheyn (For Me, You’re Beautiful)</i> | Sholem Secunda |

Robert Zelikman, clarinet; Deborah Davis, vocals; Bert Turetzky, contrabass;
George Svoboda, guitar; Bob Weller, drums; Ellen Weller, piano.

THE LYTLE SCHOLARSHIP CONCERTS

Each year since 1996, audiences have attended these annual scholarship concerts to experience a targeted musical program for a targeted purpose on a targeted date, the Sunday before Super Bowl Sunday. Every Lytle Scholarship Concert features a particular composer or idea in programming repertoire.

The first year was a solo piano concert of music by the Hungarian composer/pianist, Franz Liszt. Soon there followed annual concerts dedicated to the music of Frederic Chopin, Franz Schubert, Ludwig van Beethoven, Miles Davis, Alexander Scriabin, Duke Ellington, and George Gershwin. Other concerts not specific to a particular composer have centered around an “idea” or genre such as music based on mystical musings of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff, Hymns, Tangos, Ragtime, Gospel tunes, Latin Jazz. Last year’s concert was unusual, featuring five great jazz pianists seated at five equally great concert grand pianos performing together in a circle. It is unlikely that you will ever hear or see a concert like that any time soon! We hope for the same today.

Now in its twenty-first year, Preuss School is a public college prep charter school (grades 6-12, 852 students) on the UCSD campus serving promising youngsters from low income, first-generation families. This award-winning secondary school has served as a model for excellence in urban education for other universities and the nation. Since graduating its first seniors in 2004, 1,600 Preuss School graduates have been accepted with full scholarships into the leading colleges and universities in the country. The proceeds from the annual Lytle Scholarship Concerts provides scholarships to Preuss grads attending UC San Diego.

Your support of these scholarship concerts is deeply appreciated by the many highly motivated and deserving youngsters who have benefitted from your generosity. They are our ultimate inspiration, and we hope you agree when, after Intermission, Mr. Scott Barton, Preuss School Principal, presents just a few of the highly motivated students attending Preuss School UCSD. Their success is our success!

***Add Information Here About Making Contributions to the Lytle Scholarships at UCSD**

“Jewish Music from Bessarabia to Broadway”

Observations by a friendly Observer
Cecil Lytle

Today, our focus is on the music of an ancient people sustained by a rich intellectual, religious, literary, political and social tradition practiced around the world. The repertoire this afternoon represents just a small slice of the bittersweet music Jews evolved elsewhere- -particularly in Eastern Europe and Russia- -then brought to the United States to imprint that heritage on the American consciousness. Some of today’s music is overtly religious in nature; meaning, a music conspicuously borne from Scripture. Other works bear the stamp of regional Jewish ethnic humor and lifestyles in the face of centuries of forced migration and persecution. All of this has left its mark on Western classical music and vernacular American expression.

Songs prior to the twentieth century were captured in Carl Sandberg’s 1927 book, *The American Song Bag*, which bears the dedication:

*To those unknown singers who made songs out of love, fun, grief, and
to those other singers who kept those songs as living things of the heart
and mind out of love, fun, and grief.”*

Sandberg’s vision of musical America placed Stephen Foster (1826-64) as the preeminent artist of his time. By the second half of the 19th century, *Oh Susanna*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Camptown Races*, and *Old Folks at Home* had distilled a vision of a new and happily emerging America. Foster saw his work as chronicling an America with expanding frontiers and domestic colonial aspirations. That period, however, was also highly charged by the conflicts of that expansion. The Seminole and Tecumseh Wars, the Louisiana Purchase, and the Mexican-American War shaped his Pax Americana and fueled his pro-slavery stance in song. Foster’s lyrics are reflections of an American political naivety speaking idyllically about the open prairies, the great plains, gold rush and good things to come. However, this good news often disparaged the Native inhabitants of the land, and adopted what he called, “*Ethiopian dialect*,” when referencing “*kill’d five hundred Nigga*” in song.

Half a century and a Civil War later, Jewish families arriving at Ellis Island drew their inspiration from the burgeoning metropolis and the people in it, not the open plains. New York City was *their* frontier. Like immigrants throughout history, their arrival enriched language, politics, and song. The composers and lyricists we present today give contexts to the *love, fun, and grief* that is the unique Jewish experience in America and elsewhere.

These families were likely aware of the 1908 play, *The Melting Pot*, by Israel Zangwill, himself a Jewish immigrant who fled the Kishinev pogrom in Russia where his entire family was killed. In it, the protagonist, David, composes an American symphony as metaphor for the blending of disparate instruments and people to achieve a singular harmony. It is an exaggerated assimilationist’s point of view, perhaps as politically naïve as the views shared by Stephen

Foster. Zangwill's goals, however, are equity, social tranquility and justice, not the acquisition of land and power.

It was the Bowery, Lower East Side, and Harlem where Jewish musical tradition flourished in America. The iconic aspirational song, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* was written in New York by two sons of Jewish immigrants, Harold Arlen (originally named *Hyman Arluck*, 1905-86) and "Yip" Harburg (originally Isadore Hochberg, 1898-1981). For Harburg, "*Rainbow*" was something of a protest song given its appearance in the celebrated 1939 film and hard on the heels of *Kristallnacht* a year earlier. For Arlen (another son of a cantor) the tropes of the song reveal the composer's identity and Old Testament themes of hope and suffering. Like *Alice in Wonderland*, a young innocent girl is swept away by storm. Her fragility in search of home in the face of catastrophic vulnerability is the essential quest of the story and song. Similar to Orson Wells' *War of the World* radio broadcast also a year earlier, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* stands in history as a prophetic foreshadowing of the horrors of the *Holocaust* yet to come:

*"Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high,
There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby...*

*Where troubles melt like lemon drops
High above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me...*

Harlem, too, was home to two large Jewish populations: poorer Eastern Jewish European immigrants on the central and east side, and upwardly mobile, mostly German, Jews on the more affluent westside near and about Morningside Park and Columbia University. Harlem was a hotbed of music theatres and Jewish creativity and reinvention. Their neighbors included a who's who list of Jewish artists who, alongside the quickly growing number of African Americans Harlemites, helped to reinvent American popular culture over the coming decades. The Gershwin neighbors included the Hammerstein family, Milton Berle, Fannie Brice, Eddie Cantor, Sophie Tucker, and "five bitterly poor German-Jewish boys named, Marx."

Today's program may help us provide a way to think about this history. The music and composers this afternoon are tied together by time, place, and heritage. Many of these Jewish songwriters were sons of cantors in their old countries. It's not surprising, therefore, that the Broadway songs that America sings today convey the seemingly contradictory bitter/sweet affects of lament, endurance, triumph.

FRITZ KREISLER (1875-1962)

The celebrity of Fritz Kreisler predates his immigrating to the U.S. However, little about his life and career went in a straight line!

Born in Vienna, he entered the Vienna Conservatory before his teen years and commenced a worldwide career as violin soloist as the newest "*wunderkind*" among many. Following early

concert success and a subsequent one-year tour throughout the United States, he opts to return home to apply for a position in the Vienna Philharmonic. He was summarily turned down. Even at this young age, Kreisler was developing what would become his highly personalized style of playing that employs an exaggerated vibrato technique. It's easy to imagine how his peculiarly excessive vibrato style would have stuck out as a sore thumb amid a section of 30-40 fellow violinists striving to achieve a uniformity in sound and bow stroke. Abruptly, he considers abandoning music to follow the wishes of his parents to become a medical doctor. Unsure of his ambitions, Fritz enters the Austrian Army to fight against Russia during World War I and sustains a shoulder wound that nearly ends his career as a violinist.

Later and barely in his twenties, his unique style of playing had already earned a reputation as both brilliant and quirky. Vibrato, for Kreisler, was not just for effect, but a colorative device he would deploy without mercy in order to give a melodic line a spoken and highly emotional character. So shocking was the effect, that his contemporary violinist, friend, and pedagogue, Carl Flesch, remarked that Kreisler's (vibrato) playing was: "...an unrestrained orgy of sinfully seductive sounds, depravedly fascinating, whose sole driving force appeared to be a sensuality intensified to the point of frenzy!" Flesch preferred a vibrato style that was, "a thin-flowing quiver."

Certainly, any thoughtful and level-headed Viennese intellectual maturing during the final quarter of the 19th century, would have surmised that Europe's "Spring of Nations" would bring an end to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its familial monarchies. Napoleon had made clear - if it wasn't already - that Vienna was no longer the military and political dynamo it had been the past two hundred years. The French language had already supplanted Latin to become *lingua franca*, not German. By the year Fritz Kreisler was born, Paris had reinvented itself under Baron von Haussman and asserted itself as the city leading a new progressive industrial future. For lots of reasons, Budapest, Vienna, and other European capitals failed in their attempts to mirror *belle epoch* or successfully renew themselves, and German overreach eventually led to the hyper-nationalism of *lebensraum*.

The decline of the Austro-Hungarian Empire could not have been unnoticed by Europe's Jews. Their ancient story is the tale of rising and falling, then rising again. For diasporic Ashkenazi Jews making their home in a modern Europe, the pending collapse conveyed dire consequences, yet again. Kreisler's vibrato and hyper "*sensuality intensified to the point of frenzy*" can be viewed as more than a mere performer's affectation. His peculiar *frenzy* looms as an emotional despair deeply rooted in his Jewish ancestral past amid a collapsing empire.

The music of other composers in the German-Speaking world, also reflected on the past. Despite the surface gaiety of the Viennese waltzes of Johann Strauss II, (the "Waltz King" and great-grandson of a Hungarian Jew) there lies beneath each waltz melody a nostalgic dissonance that yearns for better times- -make Vienna great again! Today's two iconic melodies of Fritz Kreisler (*Liebesfreud* and *Liebesleid*) similarly "quiver" with pathos and almost maudlin sentimentality. Each phrase, each melody has a bell-curve, sighing, heaving architecture- -rising, then falling at the end. Both melodies are waltzes not intended for dancing, but for reflection. Taken together, these two compositions are an inspired witness to the bitter-sweet historical occasion, *Love's Joy, Love's Sorrow*. Now, that's Schmaltz!

Kreisler began touring the United States as early as 1915, finally claiming American citizenship in 1943 after having become a French citizen in 1938. His friends were among the musical titans of the Old and New World, including Johannes Brahms, Gustav Mahler, Anton Bruckner, Arnold Schoenberg, and just about any other living musician in Europe and America. Once settled in the States, his musical companions were chiefly Jewish immigrants at the peak of their careers in the arts and sciences. Albert Einstein shared evenings playing chamber music in the Kreisler home; Serge Koussevitzky collaborated with the violinist in concerto performances with the Boston Symphony. In a newspaper account, Polish pianist, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, also remembered his friend as a terrific pianist: *"I'd be starving if Fritz had taken up the piano, how beautifully he plays!"*

Once again he changes direction. He tries his hand at writing a half-dozen popular operettas and Broadway musicals. But even with Fred and Adele Astaire leading the cast, Kreisler's 1919 operetta, *Apple Blossom*, failed to compete successfully with musicals written by other composers on Broadway. Wisely, he quickly returned to concertizing on closing night, two days later. But he remained fascinated by emerging innovations on the American musical landscape. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find him seated in the audience at the 1924 Aeolian Hall premiere of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, next to other adventurous musical luminaries including Sergei Rachmaninoff, Igor Stravinsky, Leopold Stokowski, John Philip Sousa, and Willie "The Lion" Smith.

IRVING BERLIN (1888-1989)

Leah and Moses Baline fled the pogroms in the city of Mohilev in Russia to settle at 330 Cherry Street in the heart of the Lower East Side tenements of New York City in 1893. Israel Balin was the youngest of six children when the family had its surname changed to Berlin on Ellis Island. Israel would eventually become, Irving. Moses had been a cantor and *shochet* ("one who is trained and certified to slaughter animals in a Kosher manner"). Clearly, Moses was a man of standing in the community. His father was also a cantor, so it was expected that Irving, too, would eventually join the family business.

The Askenazi Jews of the Lower Eastside were beginning to assimilate in a metropolis that provided little space for their individuality. Consequently, Moses never again found full-time work either as a cantor or shochet, eventually trying his hand as a house painter. As the children grew, they found manual work in the sweat mills of New York. Poverty was their steady diet. Young Irving would later remark that, *"Everybody ought to have a Lower Eastside in their life."* It was a place where Yiddish and Hebrew songs blended with the new American journey. Assimilation did not wipe out their love and ear for music. On High Holy Days, father and son still sang together. would later write: *"I suppose it was singing in Shul that gave me my musical background... It was in my blood."*

As a young man, Irving Berlin frequented the music publishing houses on West 28th Street between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, popularly known as Tin Pan Alley. Eventually he would own a small publishing house that rivaled the more celebrated firms of Thomas Harms and Remick Music. 1911 changed everything for him when he plugged his song, *Alexander's*

Ragtime Band. It was an immediate hit nationwide selling over one million copies of printed sheet music. A thousand more songs would flow from his in the decades to come, many with a distinctly patriotic flavor such as *God Bless America* (1918).

BLUE SKIES (1926)

Blue Skies did much to cement Irving Berlin's reputation as a gifted songwriter and helped change public and professional opinions about the significance of Tin Pan Alley composers. It is one of his many songs that have outlived the Broadway shows for which they were written, in this case, *Betsy*. As Berlin's most often performed composition, *Blue Skies* has been revived to acclaim every decade since by a wide variety of talented artists: Josephine Baker helped to establish her celebrity in Paris with her 1927 Odeon Label recording; that same year, Fritz Kreisler stunned classical music concert audiences rendering this tune as an encore; Benny Goodman and Bunny Berigan rode to success on the back of their 1935 recording of the same; and, Frank Sinatra included *Blue Skies* on at least six different records. Right after World War II, Jazz experimentalist, Thelonious Monk, composed a jagged syncopated tune named *In Walked Bud* in homage to his friend and fellow bebop pianist, Bud Powell, based on the chord changes of *Blue Skies*. A generation later in 1978, Willie Nelson breached country music conventions with the crossover appeal of his #1 hit of this Irving Berlin favorite. If this isn't enough to demonstrate the staying power of this tune, one only needs to remember that *Blue Skies* is also heard in the soundtrack of eleven different Hollywood movies, including a recent Star Trek sequel.

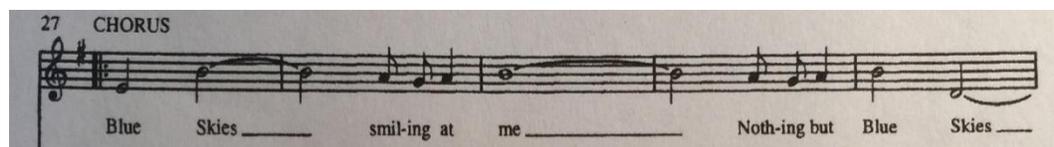
American music scholar, Jeffrey Magee points out two identifiable characteristics in Irving Berlin's melodies the "rising fifth" and a major/minor emotional complexity. Magee comments that:

"A closer inspection of the music, however, reveals some musical traits closely identified with Yiddishkeit in Berlin's early years. For one thing, the melody of the "Blue Skies" chorus opens with a rising open fifth, a gesture that Berlin habitually used to begin his Jewish novelty songs. (see below).

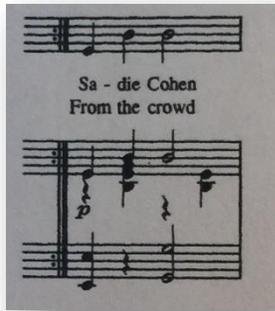
What is a "rising open fifth", you ask? Just think of the opening two notes of, *Stranger in Paradise* from *Kismet*, 1953, or *My Favorite Things* from the *Sound of Music*, 1959.

The first two notes of *Blue Skies* are a perfect fifth rising from the note "E" to the note "B." The composer seemed addicted to this musical gesture for the start of a song, especially songs written in the minor mode.

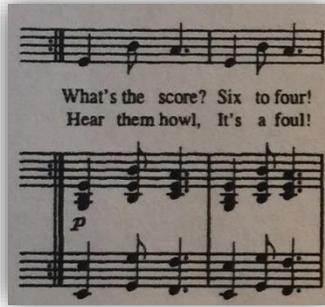
Compare this opening gesture for



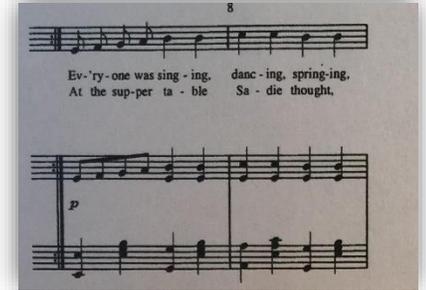
the start of several of Berlin's Jewish novelty songs referenced by Professor Magee.



"Sadie Salome, Go Home"



"Jake! Jake! The Yiddisha Ball-Player"



"Yiddle on Your Fiddle,
Play Some Ragtime"

Secondly, the bridge or middle section of the song emphasizes what could only be called a musical and emotional curiosity. Magee continues:

"For another thing, several commentators have noted a melodic anomaly that appears in the bridge of "Blue Skies": a flatted sixth (E-flat) even though the melody has been strictly pentatonic up to this point. That pitch becomes the melodic peak of the entire song and also pervades an inner voice of the piano accompaniment. For a lyric that talks of the "sun shining so bright" and "things going so right," E-natural seems more appropriate than E-flat. After all, in a G-major context, E-natural would create a "brighter" effect on the "right" note. Why did Berlin not make the obvious choice? Why did he introduce this modal complication?"

Musicologists seem perplexed by what Berlin and jazz artists understood intuitively. This seeming contradiction between mood and music opens up interpretive opportunities. The "bluing" of the E-flat at a point when the lyric is most optimistic provides room for coloristic shadings. To prove the point, just listen to what Ella Fitzgerald and Harry "Sweets" Edison did with this difficult bitter-sweet passage in their 1958 Hollywood recording. President John F. Kennedy is reported to have preferred his buddy Frank's rendition of *Blue Skies*.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)

Born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Leonard Bernstein was the son of Ukrainian Jewish parents. Like Fritz Kreisler, Bernstein shared a friendship with conductor, Serge Koussevitzky. Bernstein spent the summers of 1941/42 studying under the celebrated conductor at Tanglewood when his *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* was published, commencing an intense decade of productivity that also saw the premiere of his *Candide Overture*. He would return to clarinet chamber music only once again seven years later, writing *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* for Benny Goodman. Composed in two movements, the *Clarinet Sonata* employs familiar classical music techniques, contrapuntal melodies, strange harmonies already in use by Paul Hindemith and Bela Bartok, and shifting meters often found in Igor Stravinsky's ballets and orchestral works. Bernstein's penchant for jazz is evident throughout this eleven-minute composition.

The decade of the 1940s was a heady period for Bernstein marked by his sensational last-minute substitution to conduct the New York Philharmonic on November 14, 1943 when Bruno Walter suddenly took ill. Twenty-five-year-old assistant conductor, Leonard Bernstein was called

forward with less than 24 hours' notice to conduct some of the most difficult orchestral repertoire including Richard Strauss' extraordinarily difficult tone poem, *Don Quixote*. The next day, the New York Times reported:

“A nation-wide radio audience and several thousand persons in Carnegie Hall were treated to a dramatic musical event yesterday afternoon when the 25-year-old assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra Leonard Bernstein, substituted on a few hours' notice for Bruno Walter, who had become ill and led the orchestra through its entire program. Enthusiastic applause greeted the performance of the youthful musician, who went through the ordeal with no signs of strain or nervousness.”

Shortly thereafter, he completed his first symphony, the *Jeremiah Symphony* (1943) followed soon by the second symphony, *The Age of Anxiety* (1949). Throughout his creative life, Leonard Bernstein would often draw from his Jewish heritage for musical and social inspiration.

Also during this decade, he entertained discussions with Arthur Laurents and Jerome Robbins about creating a contemporary stage piece based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Was it to be a ballet, an opera, a musical, or something else? At first, Laurents wanted to build the story around the conflicts he experienced as a Jewish teenager coming of age in the Lower East Side clashing with neighboring Irish Catholic youth. With the working title, *East Side Story*, the first drafts proved unsatisfactory to them because the inclusion of Irish drinking and love songs gave the work a fairy-tale character, and the theme of anti-Semitism was lost in the confusing dialogue. A few years later, the trio tried again, responding to the scores of black/white race riots occurring across the country following World War II. They considered writing an opera with gangs of African American and White teenagers. This, too, was quickly abandoned for fear that a Broadway musical of this nature was too “real” and potentially explosive. Finally, with the growing presence of Caribbean immigrants in the city (especially, Puerto Ricans) they felt that they had found the appropriate urban warring families to update Shakespeare's classic story of love and rivalry.

Bernstein, like the Gershwins with *Porgy & Bess*, had found what he believed to be the perfect surrogates to represent the plight of New York's poor Jewish immigrants facing discrimination and oppression at the hands of a more dominant neighboring community. This time, the contest was over the streets or turf- -an eerie preview of the cry, “*You will not replace us!*” The introduction of Puerto Ricans in story also opened up opportunities for Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins to explore the rhythms and harmonies of jazz and Latin dance music unknown to the Broadway stage at the time.

The *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* and *West Side Story* (1957) bookend a highly creative period in Leonard Bernstein's life where he learns to blend classical and jazz styles into a uniquely American idiom. There was much more to come.

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937) & IRA GERSHWIN (1896-1983)

The talented Gershwin boys (Ira and George) were the oldest of four children born to Morris (Moishe) and Rose Gershovitz (née Rosa Bruskin), who were Russian Jews, born in St Petersburg. Their American journey begins in 1891. Like F. Scott Fitzgerald's James Gatz (Gatsby), they reinvented themselves in the New World with a new Anglo-inspired name, Gershwin. Desperately poor, the family lived in over two dozen different apartments around New York- -Ira was born in the Lower East Side (Manhattan) and George in Brooklyn.

The Gershwin brothers were intimate friends with nearly every Jewish writer, musician, and intellectual in the city. The defining moral dramas inherent in Jewish humor and Yiddish theatre would serve them well throughout their creative pairing. George took jazz as the vehicle to convey ancient tales and stories in an Americentric tongue. At New York parties- -which were many- -George was always the entertainer, jester, and raconteur.

"He loved to play the piano. He played marvelously – and at the least provocation. Performing was like a shot of adrenalin to George; he loved to be the life of the party and could entertain for hours at a stretch. Nor was his performing limited to the piano. He was a great storyteller, had a natural gift for dancing, and demonstrated no little talent as an actor. He liked being the star. I remember once going to a costume party at which he and I dressed as two of the Marx brothers. George, of course, was the flamboyant Groucho!"

Richard Rogers

Given their vast output, why didn't George and Ira Gershwin draw upon their rich Jewish heritage for their music and lyrics? By no means is this an original question. This issue, more than anything else has perplexed musicologist and historians for nearly a century. The family was very familiar with Yiddish Theatre and for a time lived on Second Avenue in the heart of New York City's Yiddish Theatre District. Had they applied the stories and tales their parents told them, the Gershwin brothers might have created something akin to *Fiddler on the Roof* decades earlier. The closest they came was the novelty and party song composed around 1921, *Mischa, Jascha, Toscha, and Sascha*. It is a good-natured roast of the four most famous Jewish Russian violinists at the time, Mischa Elman, Jascha Heifitz, Toscha Seidel, and Sascha Jacobsen. The sheer alliteration of their names must have appealed to Ira, the lyricist. The song is a compendium of the state of violin playing and players at or near the peak of their careers. Leopold Auer, a Hungarian Jewish violin teacher who taught them all is also referenced in Ira's rhyming of "Auer" with "sour." Fritz Kreisler briefly earns a first name mention. All of the violinists are captured in the modest concluding sendup of the song:

*"We are not hi-brows, we are not lo-brows
Anyone can see, you don't have to use a chart
To see we're He-brows from the start."*

More seriously, George Gershwin did consider writing a major stage work based on the 1914 book, *The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds* by Shloyme Zanyi Rappaport (S. Ansky, pseudonym). Jews and non-Jews alike can trace their belief in spirit possession back through Medieval times. The first literary mention of the Dybbuk dates back to 11th century Jewish mythology and is about a lost soul that possesses a living human with malevolent intent. Having shown initial interest in dramatizing the book for the musical stage, George backs away from the project when he learns that another artist had purchased the rights to the book. Frankly, this shying away seems more like a lack of will or commitment in light of the many years he spent vigorously pursuing the rights to Dubose Heyward's book, *Porgy*. Yiddish theatres on Second Avenue, however, undertook several interpretations of the Dybbuk. It would be a quarter of a century, however, before two masters of mainstream American theatre, Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins, would tackle the Dybbuk in a ballet.

On the other hand, perhaps George and Ira had reason to fear representing their culture on stage in light of the passage of the U.S. Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 which limited "foreign aliens," especially Eastern European Jews already making their home in large numbers in the Lower East Side. Identity politics was not a game Jewish writers and musicians of their generation felt they could win. Instead, like Leonard Bernstein in *West Side Story*, the Gershwins chose the characters of Catfish Row to tell their story in *Porgy & Bess*.

Buried deep in occasional passages of their music and lyrics, the brothers do, however, drop sly Yiddish slang or Hebraic references here and there. These are inside jokes that perhaps only Jews, and the ever-sarcastic Marx Brothers, would recognize at the time- -a joke within a joke! One example occurs almost without notice in their highly successful 1931 Broadway musical, *Of Thee I Sing*. The musical is a post-depression satirical takedown of corruption and lust in high governmental office. Near the conclusion, there is a scene where the nine U.S. Supreme Court justices render a decision in a case involving corruption in high office. They sing:

JUDGES:

"We will supervise today's inauguration,
And we'll sup'rintend the wedding celebration
In a manner official and judicial.
We're the one, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
eight, nine Supreme Court Judges!
We have powers that are positively regal;
Only we can take a law and make it legal."

ALL:

"They're (We're) the A.K.s who give the O.K.s!
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
eight, nine Supreme Court Judges!"

The "A.K.'s" refers to the Yiddish slang term for *alter kocker*, or "old farts." *Of Thee I Sing* would be the first musical to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

BIOGRAPHIES

Cecil Lytle

Lytle was First Prize winner in the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition and since then has earned a reputation as a recitalist performing 19th and 20th century piano music. Indeed, diversity has been a central aspect of his career.

Lytle's award-winning television programs, *The Naked Gershwin* and the documentary, *The Naked Liszt* continues to be broadcasted around the world. Cecil Lytle joined the UC San Diego music faculty soon after winning First Prize at the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition and since then has earned a reputation as a recitalist performing 19th and 20th century piano music. Indeed, diversity has been a central aspect of his career.

Professor Lytle served as chair of the Music Department, Provost of Thurgood Marshall College at UCSD, and is credited as one of the chief founders of Preuss School. Although semi-retired, Professor Lytle continues to serve students by teaching UCSD courses in Paris, France every summer.

Cantor Mark E. Childs

After earning his B.A. in Music from U.C. San Diego (Muir '86), Cantor Mark Childs earned his Master of Sacred Music degree along with an ordination as Cantor in 1991 from Hebrew Union College-Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music in New York City. He was recently awarded a Doctor of Sacred Music (*honoris causa*). Cantor Childs has served Congregation B'nai B'rith in Santa Barbara, CA since 1991. His worship services and educational/cultural programming have enriched both Jew and non-Jew alike throughout the greater Santa Barbara area where he resides with his wife Shari, and sons David (now in LA) and Adam (now in NYC). He is nationally active as a concert artist and is a member of both the American Conference of Cantors and the Cantors Assembly. He has a particular interest in interfaith dialogue through music and study and serves as President of the Interfaith Initiative of Santa Barbara County. His recordings include "**Messengers of Peace**" and "**Cycles and Symbols**" (www.cdbaby.com)

David Samuel Childs

David graduated from UCLA in 2016 with his Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance and is an alumnus of Aspen Music Festival. He is currently studying at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles and serves as Cantorial Intern at Sinai Temple of Los Angeles.

Robert Zelickman, clarinetist

Robert Zelickman, clarinetist, has been teaching and performing in San Diego since 1982. He is a member of the bass clarinet quartet JAMB and co-director of Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble. Robert was a member of Orchestra Nova for 23 seasons and has performed with the San Diego Symphony and the San Diego Opera. Recently, Robert retired from UC San Diego where he lectured on Jewish Music, conducted the Wind Ensemble and performed regularly,

premiering many new compositions. He currently performs in recitals and chamber music concerts throughout San Diego.

Eva Barnes, narrator

Eva Barnes is delighted to collaborate again with Cecil Lytle and particularly in support of the Lytle Scholarship Fund. Professor Barnes teaches in the Theatre and Dance Department at UCSD, balancing her love of teaching and performing. Performance credits include *Liszt in the World* (starring Cecil Lytle and Arthur Wagner), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Mainly Mozart Festival, Narrator for Roger Reynolds' composition, *Flight*, and performances with theater companies across the nation and in Poland. In March, Ms. Barnes will be narrator for La Jolla Symphony's production of Leonard Bernstein's *Symphony #3 (Kaddish)*. She received her BA from Marquette University and MFA in Acting from UCSD.

Peter Gourevitch, narrator

Peter Gourevitch is Distinguished Professor-Emeritus of Political Science and the founding dean of the UCSD School of Global Policy and Strategy. His research and teaching focuses on international relations and comparative politics, specializing in political economy with a particular specialization on international trade and economic globalization, trade disputes, regulatory system and corporate governance.

In addition, Peter served on the initial planning committee that led to the founding of Preuss School and is presently writing a book about his family ancestry. In 2014, Professor Gourevitch was awarded UCSD's highest recognition, the Revelle Medal.

The Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble

The Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble and its popularity on the California scene reflect a revival of interest in this music that blends the Jewish folk music of Eastern Europe with the songs of the Yiddish theatre. From the outset their approach differed from other Klezmer groups.

“As classically trained musicians, we consider ourselves a chamber group,” says Deborah Davis. And Klezmer is the musical canvas from which all of us draw our inspiration.”

Robert Zelikman loves the music's straight-from-the-heart approachability. “I am at my freest when I play Klezmer,” he says. “When I play that music I am in a “different world.” That musical world reflects the joys and sadness of the human condition. And it is this universality that makes it so accessible to today's audiences.

This Yiddish musical theatre, which once thrived along Second Avenue in New York City, linked the immigrants to their old country and their New World. It produced a musical tradition that has since melded with the folk music of Eastern Europe and, in the process, has redefined Klezmer itself.

The music of the Ensemble reflects their desire to draw on Klezmer's past, perform it in the present and contribute to its future.

Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble Members

Deborah Davis, vocalist

It's no accident that singer Deborah Davis performs with the Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble. She grew up in Brooklyn, New York and lived with her immigrant grandmother who loved to sing and who introduced her to the music of her youth and the songs of New York's Yiddish musical theatre, which once thrived along Second Avenue. In 1973 Deborah moved to the west coast with her late husband, Rob Gross who was part of the Center for Music Experiment. Deborah graduated from UCSD in 1980 with a degree in voice and in 1991 she and Clarinetist Robert Zelickman teamed up to found the Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble. In 2001 Deborah became the first ordained cantor in the Humanistic Jewish movement. Since that time, she has had the privilege to be able to officiate at over 200 weddings.

Ellen Weller, pianist

Ellen Weller has been playing Jewish music since childhood. She has composed several pieces inspired by Jewish themes, including "Intervals of Peace" for viola soloist with orchestra and choir, "Tears of Babylon" for brass ensemble, "Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn: A Yiddish Swing Fantasy" for the 2nd Avenue Klezmer Ensemble with orchestra, and "1918: for two pianos and community." She has two CDs on the Circumvention label, and performs on flutes, saxophone and clarinet in jazz, free improvisation and classical concerts locally and internationally. Ellen earned her Ph.D. from UCSD, and is now Professor of Music at Palomar College and the Director of the Palomar Symphony Orchestra.

Bertram Turetzky, contrabassist

Bertram Turetzky has been a key figure in the renaissance of the contrabass, and since 1955 more than 300 new works have been written for, performed and recorded by him, making him the most frequently recorded contrabass soloist in America. Although Mr. Turetzky is equally versed in contemporary, jazz and classical music, for him, playing Klezmer is like coming home. "Klezmer is the first music I heard as a child. Klezmer music takes me back in time." Mr. Turetzky's career includes a multitude of performances at concerts and festivals in music centers of the world. His book, *The Contemporary Contrabass* (1974), outlines new techniques for the instrument. Bertram Turetzky is a Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of California, San Diego, where he spends a major part of each year in residence.

George Svoboda, guitar

Born in Cheb, Czechoslovakia and now residing in San Diego, California, Mr. Svoboda studied guitar and history of music at the State Conservatory of Music in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. At the end of 1982 he moved to the USA and settled in San Diego. It was there that he met and performed with the musicians that now comprise the Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble. "Klezmer is European music and I grew up hearing it," he says. Even though it was suppressed officially, Klezmer was played by Gypsies and the Jewish musicians in that area and became part of his heritage. "Music is what I do and it's the best part of my life," says Svoboda. "It's my connection to the old country... It's an emotional thing with me." Mr. Svoboda has also been

actively involved in teaching for over twenty-five years. He is currently a tenured Professor at San Diego Mesa College where he has been teaching performance studies and guitar.

Bob Weller, percussionist

Pianist/Percussionist/Composer Bob Weller has enjoyed a significant career as a jazz drummer, working with jazz greats Joe Pass, Mose Allison, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Benny Golson, Kenny Baron, Herb Ellis, Dave Carpenter, Walt Weiskopf, Larry Koonse, Hollis Gentry III, Jeff Beal, Steve Tavaglione, Anthony Davis and Mike Garson. He has also recorded and performed with experimental/free jazz/avant garde artists including George Lewis, Bertram Turetzky, Nathan Hubbard, Lisle Ellis, Vinny Golia, Jason Robinson, David Borgo and wife Ellen Weller. In addition to progressive jazz recordings with his brother, LA drummer Dick Weller, he has recorded with the radical Klezmer group Rabbinical School Dropouts on John Zorn's Tzadik label, as well as two recordings with the Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Maryann Callery, Jennifer Leighton, UCSD Development, UCSD Music Department, John Menier and UCTV, Erika Johnson, Jessica Flores, David Espiritu, Barbara Jackson, Peter Gourevitch, Eva Barnes, Mark Childs, David Childs, Bertram Turetzky, David Borgo, Bob Zelickman, and Debbie Davis. **OTHERS???**

A special tribute is extended to Betty McManus, a companion, editor, mediator, teacher, wife, and friend, who helps Cecil Lytle get a few things right year after year.

Cover image, *Shtelt* by unknown artist. Photo image provided by Jack Studebaker.