

Who We are Beyond the Matbe'ah:

The Paraliturgical Music of the American Reform Movement
from the 1960s to today



Presented by Jordan Goldstein

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A Senior Recital in partial fulfillment of HUC-JIR DFSSM Cantorial Ordination

Pictures, clockwise from top left: URJ Biennial music lab, Boston 2017; Debbie Friedman and Cantor Jeff Klepper, CAJE in the early 1980s; Heather Booth, Fannie Lou Hammer, and the Freedom Summer Project, Mississippi 1964; Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Montgomery, 1965; URJ Eisner Camp, 2019

The Paraliturgical Music of the American Reform Movement from the 1960s to today

Explicitly **paraliturgical** Jewish music — which I am defining in my research as music that is labeled by its composer as Jewish and/or directly pulls from Jewish text and themes without being liturgy or intending to act as existing liturgy — is a regularly occurring phenomenon throughout all of Jewish history. Ancient examples, like *Shir HaShirim* (the Song of Songs), to medieval poetry that has become liturgy over time (*piyyutim*), prove that the desire to capture the human experience and one's relationship with Judaism through sung text outside of the *matbe'ah* (the expected structure of prayer) runs deep in the Jewish people. Song is an important part of not only Jewish worship but also culture, and is used again and again in the Tanakh and beyond. Unsurprisingly, the Jewish people have continued to use the medium ever since to explore themselves, ideas, and emotions in ways that go beyond prayer.

Fast forward to the 1960s, and Reform Jews in America are actively using this category of music to define themselves in a period filled with shifts and change. For the first time, the majority of Jews in the country were actually born in the America, becoming a generation more likely to label themselves as of the American nationality than that of their families' country of origin. Large movements for justice, like the Civil Rights Movement and anti-Vietnam War protests, would shape this generation not only in their convictions but also the music from which they find power. Influential Jewish thinkers and philosophers, like Abraham Joshua Heschel, would also lead a shift toward Prophetic Judaism and an ethics-first theology that is highly compatible with the ideals of Jewish citizens wanting to actively participate in democratic, liberal, American life. All of these new factors led to big changes in the music Reform Jews wrote, sang, and embraced, both in content and aesthetics.

With the Holocaust in the rear-view mirror and having to define what it means to choose Diaspora when the State of Israel exists coming up ahead, we have been actively trying to define, explain, and understand ourselves as American Reform Jews ever since.

More often than not, this paraliturgical music in the Reform Movement dives into at least one of three major themes in ways that structured prayer texts cannot: **identity** and its intersections, the application of Jewish ideas to the current **socio-political** climate, and **theological** exploration. A great fusion of genres, instruments (like the acoustic guitar), and influences from Jewish and American traditions, there is no better way to understand this journey and development than in our own words. Even today, we are still working through complex ideas and tensions using this ancient tradition of poetry and song.

The Lady with the Lamp

Featuring Laynie Zell, Sierra Fox, Justin Callis, Kevin Mckenzie

Max Helfman

Music of Identity

Proud 2 B

Julian Chin, piano

Jacob Spike Kraus

The Water in the Well

Julian Chin, piano

Featuring Margo Wagner, Leslie Goldberg, Samantha Chamberlin, Sarina Elenbogen-Siegel, Ilana Mulcahy

Debbie Friedman

Love is Love is Love

Julian Chin, piano

Featuring Kalix Jacobson, Ze'evi Tovlev

Dan Nichols

Everyone Has a Name

Benjie Schiller, piano

Benjie Schiller

Music of Socio-Political Response

Jeremiah on 9-11

Pedro d'Aquino, piano

Featuring Gabe Snyder

Jack Gottlieb

Get to Work

Dan Nichols

Medley of Protest and Social Justice Music

Featuring Beth Reinstein, Justin Callis, Shayna Burack, Sierra Fox

Various Artists, arr. Goldstein

Tree of Life

Elana Arian, mandolin

Featuring Cantor Josh Breitzer

Nefesh Mountain

Music of Theology

Lo Yarei'u

Pedro d'Aquino, organ

Ben Steinberg

Grant Us Peace

Pedro d'Aquino, piano

Jack Gottlieb

Always There

Julian Chin, piano

Dan Nichols

The Sun Will Rise Again

Pedro d'Aquino, piano

Featuring the DFSSM class of 2023: Agnes Valdman, Becky Mann, Ella Gladstone Martin, Emily Short, Emma Maier, Isaac Sonett-Assor, Kalix Jacobson, Rokhl Weston, Sydney Michaeli, Ze'evi Tovlev

Noah Diamondstein, Eric Hunker arr. Goldstein

Conclusion

I Have a Voice

Featuring Elana Arian

Elana Arian

The Lady with the Lamp (1950)

Text: Emma Lazarus

Music: Max Helfman

A Polish immigrant to America, Max Helfman's music is heavily influenced by his experience of living and working in New York Jewish community during the early twentieth century. This setting of the ending of Emma Lazarus' "The New Colossus," acts as a love letter from early Jewish immigrants to America and represents a time when the intersectional of Jewish and American identity was still so new.

Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to be free
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless,
Send these, the tempest-tossed, to me.

I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Proud 2 B (2017)

Jacob Spike Kraus

As part of the kickstarter for Kraus's sophomore album, a friend asked him to write about how proud he is to be Jewish, and the resulting song was this piece, aptly named "Proud 2 B." Kraus has been song leading for over a decade, and currently shares his music far and wide at summer camps and synagogues. He is the son of a rabbi and a Jewish day school alumnus, carrying his strong sense of Jewish identity and thorough Jewish literacy into his songwriting. Alongside this pride and knowledge base, Kraus brings very modern and American musical influences and genres into his work, like pop, folk, rock, and r&b, to create a particular yet familiar American Jewish sound that can engage many generations of American Jews.

A pair of lights on a Friday night
Warm bread and a cup of wine
Oh what a way to bless the day
The same the whole world over

Three stars and a quick amen
Next week, do it all again
A melody's connecting me

To my global community

And though we're all
interconnected
We still find those so disaffected
And everyone's got a main
objective
This is ours, this is us, we are one

CHORUS:

I am not afraid,
I've never been one to run from
what's in my way,
And everything I've become's
written on my face
I tell you I'm proud to be a part of
this family, now

I'm not sure but it seems to me
That five thousand years of history's
A legacy that's begging, "Please
I'm something to be proud of"

And every time we say "L'dor vador"
We take the sequence and we add
one more
A link in the chain, a face to a name
It has always been this way

And it's not always easy going
We keep on fighting, we keep on
growing
And there's no towel we can throw
in
This is ours, this is us, we are one

CHORUS

Some have said that it's not possible
That peace will always be an
obstacle
There's no problem so unsolvable
This is ours, this is us, we are one

CHORUS

The Water in the Well (2001)

Text: Debbie Friedman, Tamara Ruth Cohen

Music: Debbie Friedman

Verses 1 and 3 omitted for time

Debbie Friedman's works have fundamentally changed Jewish music in the Reform movement in several ways, particularly in her use of the feminist and empowering lens that she brought to the women of the Tanakh. In works like Miriam's Song, Devorah's Song, and this piece, The Water in the Well, her personal identity and beliefs impacted the way she saw and uplifted these characters, and in turn inspired many women to see themselves more clearly in our tradition.

Spring up O well, and sing ye unto it
Spring up O well, and sing ye unto it

CHORUS:

Oh the water in the well and the
healing in the well
The women and the water and the
hope that's in the well (x2)

*When the world was created, there was
heaven and dry land
And all the waters gathered, upon hearing
God's command
There was a bit of water, that was left or so
they tell,
That was the water that became the water
from the well*

It was in Miriam's honor that the first
well came to be,
To celebrate her music, her dance
and prophecy,
The people came to Miriam when
their spirits rose and fell
She nourished all their visions with the
water from the well

CHORUS

*"Spring up a well!" the twelve tribes sang,
and the rushing waters flowed
High as pillars, into rivers to the oceans they
would go
Surrounded by the trees and fruits, so rich
and bountiful
The Israelites were nourished by the waters
from the well*

When Miriam died, the well dried up,
and Moses shed his tears
And God said, "Moses, touch this
rock and water will appear"
Well, Moses raised his staff in anger
and upon the rock it fell
And out came springs of water, it
was water from the well

CHORUS

For the memory of the women, for
the memory of the well
For the ones who came before us,
their stories we must tell
We are searching for the water,
where we wander, where we dwell
For Miriam and all of us who thirst to
find the well

CHORUS

Love is Love is Love (2017) Dan Nichols

Dan Nichols did indeed meet a woman in Ohio who told him she had rainbows in her eyes while visiting a congregation in the state. This moment led to him writing this re-contextualization of the rainbow blessing. The rainbow holds dual meaning here: in the Torah, it is a reminder of God's promise to us to respect and find the beauty in all life after Noah survives the flood, and in the modern era, it is a reminder of the sanctity and beauty of the LGBTQIA+ community existing in a world that considers them other. This song has become an anthem for the queer Jewish community, and the opening and closing lines hold great resonance for myself and my colleagues who will be ordained as the Reform movement's first non-binary cantors this spring.

Whoever you are, whoever I am, we are more than woman or man.

I met a girl in Ohio, she told me she had rainbows in her eyes
Rainbows in our eyes, we'd see where love resides
Rainbows in our eyes, the color multiplies when

CHORUS:

Love is love is love is love is love is
love is love

Love is love is love is love is love
Love is love is love is love is love is
love is love is love

Love is love is love is love is love

There is a light shining through us
We are kaleidoscopes of hope
Helps us all to see what love can
truly be

A gift to set us free, pure and holy
And I see you right beside me
There's never been another one like
you

Do you see me right beside you?
Holdin' on to this spinning ark of
green and blue, where

CHORUS

In the end and in the beginning,
faithful, loving light, never dimming

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם זִכְרֵךְ
הַבְּרִית וְנֶאֱמָן בְּבְרִיתוֹ וְקִיָּם בְּמֵאֲמָרוֹ

Baruch Atah, Adonai, Eloheinu
Melech haolam zocheir habrit
v'ne'eman bivrito v'kayam
b'ma'amaro

*Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,
Ruler of the universe who remembers
the covenant, is faithful to the
covenant, and keeps the promise.*

CHORUS

Whoever you are, whoever I am, we
are more than woman or man.

Everyone Has a Name (1992)

Text: Zelda, based on a translation by Marcia Falk

Music: Cantor Benjie Schiller

Cantor Schiller's setting of this text by Israeli poet Zelda takes the original Hebrew and interprets it through her own personal experiences. Written shortly after giving birth to her youngest, the delicacy and tenderness with which she treats the concept of naming comes through her composition. By musically distinguishing each example of names or identities we hold as unique and emphasizing the universal nature of these many names by highlighting the word "everyone" towards the end of the piece, Schiller captures the beautiful complexity of intersecting identities, especially those of the Jewish American experience.

Everyone has a name
Given by God,
Given by our parents,
By our stature,
Given by our smile,
Given by the clothes we wear,

Given by the mountains,
Given by our walls,
By the stars,
Given by our neighbors
By our sins,
Our longings.

Everyone has a name
Given by our enemies,
Given by our love,
Our rejoicing,
Given by our labor

Everyone has a name
Given by the seasons,
Given by our blindness,
By the sea,
Our death

לכל אש יש שם

L'chol ish yeish shem

Everyone has a name
Given by God,
Given by our parents,
Everyone, everyone has a name

לכל אש יש שם

L'chol ish yeish shem

Jeremiah on 9/11 (1976, 2004)

Text: Jeremiah 1:1-2 according to the JPS Tanakh, Jack Gottlieb

Music: Jack Gottlieb

This piece is from Gottlieb's "Musical Encounter for Singers," written in response to a commission from the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York to celebrate the United States Bicentennial in 1976. Using themes from the Prophets as inspiration, this work connects American history to the ever-relevant teachings and stories of the Tanakh. Originally titled "Jeremiah's Tirade," this particular solo was updated in 2004 to react to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and remember the 2,749 lost.

*How lonely the city that was full of
people! Now she is like a widow. All
night long she weeps, tears roll down
her cheeks.*

*Not a soul remains, even the ones
who came to her rescue.*

Her beauty is no more.

*She remembers the splendor of
soaring towers.
Gone the sun to warm her sons and
daughters,
Only deep bone-chilling misery!*

Her pride and joy! Why?

*Now her adversaries scheme and
plan on more calamity!*

Grim, determined!

*But the phoenix rises above the
ashes to avenge her!*

Enough of this Lamentation!

*My country 'tis of thee,
Right or wrong, when you're strong,
You can go it alone,
Well, to a degree!*

Gung ho!

From sea to shining sea,
Open door, but no more,
If you're down on a list,
A Statue of Liberty!

On with the show!
Yankee Doodle Dandy!

Your leaders are mocking
democracy,
And the two parties lack
accountability.
The Donkey is impotent and up a
tree,
And the Elephant, alas, is also an ass!

But, oh say can you see?

Be aware and be fair,
Don't invent what isn't there.
When you lie or distort,
And deny a day in court,

Then the guilt is presumed,
And the innocent are doomed
In the Land of the Free!

Get to Work (2016) Dan Nichols

For many, the results of the 2016 Presidential Election ignited many strong emotions. For Nichols, his response to the election of Donald Trump and the implications of this event came through as music, and particularly this call to action. He has since added and rewritten verses as our political landscape has shifted and changed, though this iteration is based on his first presentation of the piece to represent his full response at that time.

When a man who's running the
country is dangerous
And there's too many people saying
there's no place for us
It's time to get to work
When the leader of the free world
grabs women by the crotch
And the women who voted for him
feel no need for this to stop
It's time to get to work
When one percent is riding on the
backs of ninety-nine
And the middle of the country slides
deeper in decline
It's time to get to work

Get close, get uncomfortable
Tell a new story and hold onto hope
Get close, get uncomfortable
Tell a new story and hold on to hope,
get to work

When one in three black kids will see
prison one day
And the man who's black gets shot
in the back because he runs away
It's time to get to work
When a man running for president is
endorsed by the KKK
And we show up to the voting booth
and elect him anyway
It's time to get to work

Until black lives matter as much as
white
And a woman's choice is a sacred
rite
It's time to get to work
I will not be silent in the face of this
man
I will not hold back, I'll do everything
I can
It's time to get to work

(Get to work) Get close, get
uncomfortable
(Get to work) Tell a new story and
hold onto hope
(Get to work) Get close, get
uncomfortable
(Get to work) Tell a new story and
hold on to hope, get to work

Slavery has only changed
The terms are different, but the tune
is the same
In a world turned upside down
Emancipate us from this clown
This is our country too
Red, white, and black and blue
Every Muslim, Christian, Jew
No bully takes that from you

(Get to work) Get close, get
uncomfortable
(Get to work) Tell a new story and
hold onto hope
(Get to work) Get close, get
uncomfortable
(Get to work) Tell a new story and
hold on to hope, get to work

Medley of Protest and Social Justice Music

Arranged by Jordan Goldstein

*The value of **tikkun olam** (repairing the world) is deeply entrenched in the principles of the American Reform Movement, as well as the concept of Prophetic Judaism. It is therefore no surprise how much protest music, and music that speaks for justice and social action from an explicitly Jewish perspective, has come from American artists and has been supported, sought after, and published regularly by Transcontinental Music Publishing. While there is a deep and complex relationship between African American protest songs and American Jews that involves conversations around appropriation and respect, there is plenty of music that is written by and for the Jewish community to use. The range of songs in this collection move from Guthrie's iconic "This Land is Your Land," which was written in 1945 but had a massive resurgence in popularity during the 1960s, to Hunker's "Hold the Line," released in 2020 during the Covid pandemic as a call to collective, communal action.*

Pieces included (in order of appearance):

Praying with Our Feet (Joe Black, Steve Brodsky, 2017); Stand Up (Chava Mirel, 2017); One and Only (Josh Nelson, 2017); Olam Chesed Yibaneh (Menachem Creditor, 2001); Lo Alecha (Build it Up!) (Jordan Schmidt, Jacob Fishman, 2019); Lo Alecha (Jeff Klepper, Dan Freeland, 1995); The Na Na Song (Dan Nichols, 1998); Ozi V'zimrat Yah (Shefa Gold, 2006); Hold the Line (Eric Hunker, 2020); Make Those Waters Part (Doug Mishkin, 1986); Those Who Sow (Debbie Friedman, 2006); This Land is Your Land (Woody Guthrie, 1945); Aleinu (Dan Nichols, Ellen Dreskin, 2018)

Let us gather all together in the cold and in the heat
And make a vow that history's cruel lessons won't repeat.
We will not stand idly by and watch our values die.
When we heed the call for justice, we are praying with our feet

Hear our footsteps on the pavement, let them echo in the street.
Feel the longing in our hearts, growing stronger with each beat.
It's time to take a stand, we're marching hand in hand,
When we heed the call for justice, we are praying with our feet.

Stand up for our mother, stand up for each other
Stand up for our mother, stand up for each other

We stand on the earth so we better stand for her together
Aren't we all, aren't we part of one God?
We were put in this paradise, it's our job to guard her life
Aren't we all, aren't we part of one God?

So open up your heart to all the lost and lonely
Let no one be alone tonight before our One and only, before our One and only

Olam Chesed Yibaneh, ya dai dai dai dai ya dai dai dai...

Build it up (build it up, we all gotta help each other
Build it up (build it up), each sister and each brother
Build it up (build it up)! we all gotta help each other
Build it up, build it up, build it up!

לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגִמּוֹר
וְלֹא אַתָּה בֶּן חוֹרִין לְהִבָּטֵל מִמֶּנָּה

Lo alecha ham'lacha ligmor
v'lo atah ben chorin l'hibateil mimenah

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁנָּתַן לָנוּ הַזְדָּמוּת לְתֵקֵן אֶת הָעוֹלָם

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam shenatan lanu hizdamut l'takein
et haolam

עֲזֵי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה

Ozi v'zimrat yah, vay'hi li lishua

We need your ears to heed the call
We need your light to shine through it all
We need your hands to hold the line, hold the line

Somewhere tonight lives a free man,
somewhere else freedom's just a song of the heart

We need your heart to find the good
We need the will to do what we should
We need your strength to hold the line, hold the line

We must find the river flowing between them
and we must make those waters part!

Hold the line, you and I will
Hold the line, you and I will
Hold the line, hold the line

Those who sow,
who sow in tears,
will reap in joy,
will reap in joy

This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California, to the New York Islands,
From the Redwood forests, to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land was made for you and me

It's up to us to own the vision, we are an answer to a call
It's up to us to live the words we speak, for the benefit of all
It's up to us to bow down deeply, there's a broken world to raise
Aleinu L'shabeiach...
We are praying with our feet.

Tree of Life (2018)
Nefesh Mountain

The day after the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the Jewish bluegrass/folk group Nefesh Mountain (created by duo Doni Zasloff and Eric Lindberg) wrote this piece and released it to the world. This tragedy marked an unprecedented act of antisemitism in the United States. It continues to be ever-present in the minds of American Jew, while this composition has become a uniquely American prayer for hope in the face of such fear.

Oh sweet spirit, hear my prayer
Help these words heal someone out there
I am but a voice, just a cry in the air
But I sing nonetheless in this pain we share

Oh sweet friends come and dry your eyes
And hold each other by this tree of life
I'm angry and tired by this great divide
But I sing nonetheless with love on our side

Oh sweet souls who feel broken now
We'll heal together, somewhere somehow
Time and again we have been let down
But we sing nonetheless, still whole and still proud

Oh sweet spirit, hear my prayer
Help these words heal someone out there...

Lo Yareiu (1988)

Text: Isaiah 11:9, 2:4, Micah 4:4 (translations from the JPS Tanakh)

Music: Ben Steinberg

Our one Canadian (North American!) composer, Ben Steinberg's compositions have become a mainstay of contemporary Jewish tradition. His setting of these verses from the Prophets weaves together the three separate sections into one coherent theological statement — that a devotion to God, faith, is about creating peace amongst all peoples, and that it leads to such a peace.

לֹא יִרְעוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל־הָרָקֹדֶשׁ כִּי־מִלָּאָה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַה אֶת־יְהוָה כַּמַּיִם לַיָּם מְכַסִּים:

Lo yareiu v'lo yashchitu b'chol-har kod'shi ki-malah ha'aretz dei'a et-Adonai
kamayim layam m'chasim

In all of My sacred mount, nothing evil or vile shall be done; for the land shall be filled with devotion to God as water covers the sea.

וְכָתְתוּ חֲרֻבֹתָם לְאַתִּים וְחִנִּיתוּתֵיהֶם לְמַזְמֵרוֹת לֹא־יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד
מִלְחָמָה

V'chit'tu charvotam l'itim vachanitoteihem l'mazmeirot lo yisa goy el-goy
cherev v'lo-yilm'du od milchama

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war.

וְיָשְׁבוּ אִישׁ תַּחַת גִּפְנוֹ וְתַחַת תְּאֵנָתוֹ וְאֵין מַחְרִיד

V'yashvu ish tachst gafno v'tachat t'einato v'ein macharid
And every man shall sit under his grapevine and fig tree, with no one to disturb him.

Grant Us Peace (2004)

Text: adapted from the Union Prayer Book, Gates of Prayer

Music: Jack Gottlieb

This text has been part of the development of American Jewry, due to its placement in many of its prayerbooks. It is an uniquely American prayer and poetry, since it is not a translation of any particular liturgy focused on peace, but rather pulls from multiple sources and adds some text around country and nation. Gottlieb's setting borrows from a musical theatre sensibility that is also American and Jewish in origin and aesthetic, which only accentuates what makes this text special and reflective of Reform values and theology.

Grant us peace, Your most precious gift, O Eternal Source of peace.
And give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the world.
Bless our country, that it may always be a stronghold of peace,
And its advocate in the council of every nation.

May contentment reign within its borders,
Health and happiness within its homes.

Strengthen the bonds of friendship and fellowship among the inhabitants of all lands
Plant virtue in every soul, and may the love of Your name hallow every home and every heart.

Bless us, bless us Eternal Source of peace,
With the consolation of peace,
Shalom, salaam, pachem, peace

Always There (1996)

Dan Nichols

Nichols compares his relationship with God to a new romantic relationship, where one is still learning to trust that their partner will be there through it all. An exploration of doubt in God, whether in the partnership or very existence, this piece inspects belief in a way that set liturgy just can't. Nichols' faith and insecurities are paired with a great act of faith — trust.

If I turned away, would You wait for me?
If I sometimes strayed, would You set me free?
If I were to doubt You, would You still believe in me?
If I saw the truth, would You somehow help me see?

CHORUS:

My heart's filled with questions that my head can't answer,
Still with my reservations I find You're always there.
When I'm tiptoeing backward like a faithless dancer,
Without hesitation I find You're always there.

If I spoke to You, would You try to hear,
The secrets lost inside of me,
all my deepest fears?

CHORUS

My doubt, Your love, cold hands,
warm touch,
Closed mind, open heart, last
chance, new start

CHORUS

If I were to doubt You...

Avodah Zara 8a, Babylonian Talmud

Translation by Jordan Goldstein

ת"ר: יום שנברא בו אדם הראשון, כיון ששקעה עליו חמה, אמר: אוי לי, שבשביל שסרחתי עולם חשוך בעדי ויחזור עולם לתוהו ובוהו, וזו היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים, היה יושב [בתענית] ובוכה כל הלילה וחזה בוכה כנגדו, כיון שעלה עמוד השחר, אמר: מנהגו של עולם הוא

The Sages taught: Adam, on the day of his creation, saw the setting of the sun over him and said, 'Woe is me! It is because I have sinned that the world is darkening around me and will return to chaos and void — for this is the death sentenced upon me from Heaven!' So he sat down fasting and weeping through the whole night as Eve wept beside him. But when the dawn arose, he said: 'This is the usual course of the world!'

The Sun Will Rise Again (2022)

Noah Diamondstein, Eric Hunker

Arr. Jordan Goldstein

The most recently published piece in this recital, Rabbi Noah Diamondstein and Eric Hunker collaborated on writing this song before the pandemic reached the United States, though the theme of anticipating the unknown that runs through certainly resonates with its 2022 release. The pair take the famous midrashic tale of Adam and Eve experiencing a sunset for the first time and use it as a framework for exploring one's relationship with God with nuance and vulnerability. Rather than giving any exact answers, questions leave room for the listener to sit with their own response when faced with the one's helplessness. And still, we are reminded that the sun will, indeed, rise again.

If you weren't sure the sun would rise again,
Would you holler out your troubles to the Eastern wind?
Would you think about the people that you love
As you watch your first and last dawn turn to dust?

If tomorrow wasn't promised like today
Would you cry out to the heavens from the garden where you lay?
Would you curse the God who took it from your hands,
Weeping for the darkness returning to the land?

From my heart to my hand
From Your lips, the whispered waters and the life-giving land,
For all my faults, I've no mend
But the night will end, the sun will rise again

What if when you fall asleep, you weren't sure you'd wake?
Would you weep beside your lover for the life you won't create?
Would you make the list of sins you can't atone,
Or sigh and let the sweet surrender carry you home?

From my heart to my hand
From Your lips, the whispered waters and the life-giving land,
For all my faults, I've no mend
But the night will end, the sun will rise again

If I lay me down to sleep, I pray don't let the dark find me
Keep me hidden in the light of You
And if I die before I wake, I pray the darkness might yet break
And we might gaze upon the sight of You

Before I fall and all this ends,
Before the curtain crashes down upon our family and friends
I'll turn my eyes to the West
And thank each of my lucky stars for this chance I've been given

From my heart to my hand
From Your lips, the whispered waters and the life-giving land,
For all my faults, I've no mend
But the night will end, the sun will rise again

I Have a Voice (2019)

Elana Arian

Written with participants of the URJ Kutz Camp in 2019, Arian's piece has become a popular anthem for protests, Pride month, and beyond in the Reform movement, due to the message of the song and Arian's proud queer identity. Interestingly, a morning blessing is adjusted here from the singular to the plural, from "me" to "we," to make the blessing not just about any one individual being made in the image of God, but being thankful that we are all equally made in the Divine image.

I will open my eyes
I will not look away
I will use this gift I've been given
Every day...

I have a voice, my voice is powerful
My voice can change the world (2x)
Change the world...

I will give of myself
I will reach out my hand
I will use this heart I've been given
And take a stand...

I have a voice, my voice is powerful
My voice can change the world (2x)
Change the world...

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשנו בצלם
אלהים

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu
melech haolam, she'asanu b'tzelem
Elohim

I will fight for the truth
I'll stand up for what's right
I will use this strength I've been given
And be a light...

I have a voice, my voice is powerful
My voice can change the world (2x)
Change the world...

With Great Gratitude

Cantor Evan Kent, recital advisor
Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller, fall semester coach
Cantor Josh Breitzer, mentor

Instrumental Collaborators:
Julian Chin
Pedro d'Aquino
Elana Arian

My teammates in the DFSSM class of 2023: Agnes Valdman, Becky Mann, Ella Gladstone Martin, Emily Short, Emma Maier, Isaac Sonett-Assor, Kalix Jacobson, Rokhl Weston, Sydney Michaeli, and Ze'evi Tovlev

My many incredible cantorial classmates: Margo Wagner, Samantha Chamberlain, Leslie Goldberg, Sarina Elenbogen-Siegel, Ilana Mulcahy, Beth Reinstein, Shayna Burack, Justin Callis, Sierra Fox, Laynie Zell, Kevin McKenzie

The voices I turn to: Amanda Weiss & Gabe Snyder

Cantor Azi Schwartz and Master Class

Rabbi Rachel Timoner, Rabbi Stephanie Kolin, Rabbi Matt Green, and the whole CBE family

Mandy Kelly, Marcus Villegas & Edgar Rivera
Elio Cruz & the HUC Maintenance Staff

Rich & Suzanne Goldstein, my home and my roots wherever I go

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