

The Composers —

ROBERT APPLEBAUM (bobapplebaum.com)

For many years, music was an abiding love but a professional sideline for Robert Applebaum, who taught physics and chemistry at New Trier High School, Winnetka, IL, from 1965 until his retirement in June 2000. He began composing choral music for the Jewish liturgy in 1980 and has written three Sabbath services, including one for choir and jazz trio. He has composed choral settings of many psalms as well as non-secular texts.

Professional, community, and children's choirs throughout the world have performed Applebaum's music. Chicago *a cappella* included two of his Chanukah pieces on their 2002 recording *Holidays Live* and three of his settings of Shakespeare texts on their highly acclaimed 2005 Cedille release, *Shall I Compare Thee?* His setting of *Im Ein Ani Li Mi Li* is included on Chicago *a cappella*'s 2010 recording, *Days of Awe and Rejoicing*. As a jazz pianist/composer, he has three albums to his credit: *Hora and Blue* (Global Village, 1993) with the Modern Klezmer Quartet, *The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From the Tree* (jazz piano duos with his son Mark Applebaum (Innova, 2002), and *Friday Night Jazz Service* (2007).

ROBERT APPLEBAUM on *El Malei Rachamim*

"When Cantor Nancy Kassel contacted me with the assignment to set this prayer, my first response was "Thank you for giving me such a juicy text!". Three images in this text resonated for me: A merciful and compassionate God, the wings of the *Shechinah* providing shelter and repose, and the binding of the souls of those who have died to Adonai, and by extension, to us, the living. I eschewed approaching *El Malei Rachamim* with large, emotional gestures, focusing on evoking something quiet, yet solemn, something closer to the feel of perfect rest. Musically, I intentionally tried to preserve some of the qualities of more traditional High Holy Days music while imbuing the piece with a somewhat contemporary sound."

NOAH ARONSON (noaharonson.com)

Noah Aronson is an energetic and soulful composer and performer whose unique musical style propels his music into communities across North America and Israel. While studying piano and jazz composition at Berklee College of Music, Noah simultaneously held the position of Composer-in-Residence at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, Massachusetts, teaching and composing a wide array of new liturgical works. Noah conducted the Manhattan HaZamir Choir from 2008-2010 and his choral music received an honorable mention in the GTM Young Composer's Award contest. Noah released his first solo Jewish album in 2011 and the title song, *Am I Awake*, was a winner in the NewVoices song competition that year.

Noah's newest project, *Left Side of the Page*, sets to music some of the poetic selections from the *Mishkan T'filah* prayer book. He had the honor of presenting music from this project at the 2013 URJ Biennial, as he led a community of over 5000 people in Shabbat prayer. Noah's music is now sung in progressive communities worldwide and has been included as part of the cantorial curriculum at the Hebrew Union College Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music.

NOAH ARONSON on *Hayom T'am'tzeinu*

"A few years ago I completed a project called *The Left Side of the Page*, where I set out to merge the beautiful poetry found on the left side of the page of the *Mishkan T'filah* siddur with the traditional liturgy on the right. This has been a wonderful exercise of merging *keva*, our fixed tradition, with *kavanah*, our desire and perhaps also our imperative to interpret and make our

tradition applicable to our daily lives. It was in this spirit and with this intention that I sought out to continue this work with this setting of *Hayom T'am'tzeinu*.”

STEVE COHEN (stevecohenmusic.net)

Steve Cohen received his training at the Manhattan, Juilliard, and Eastman Schools of Music, and has composed a large catalog of symphonic, chamber, liturgical, and musical-theater pieces. Mr. Cohen’s Jewish choral music has been performed by the Zamir Chorale, HaZamir, Zemer Chai (Washington, DC), Kol Zimrah (Chicago), the Zemel Choir of London, and the Gregg Smith Singers, and is heard regularly at Congregation Emanu-El of New York City and the North American Jewish Choral Festival.

In addition to composing, Mr. Cohen has arranged and orchestrated numerous scores for orchestras, touring shows and other performing groups.

STEVE COHEN on *Shalom Rav / B’sefer Chayim*

“This setting is meant for the N’ilah service at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. When I saw that both texts were on the same page, I knew I had to find a way to combine them musically. My solution was to use a technique made famous by Irving Berlin, born Israel Balin in Belarus, Russia. Mr. Berlin would often write two contrasting melodies based on the same set of chord changes, present each one separately, and then combine both of them in counterpoint. Prime examples of this practice include *Play a Simple Melody*, *You’re Just in Love*, and *An Old-Fashioned Wedding*. Having done this with this text, I can tell you that it’s not nearly as easy as Mr. Berlin made it seem. Don’t try this at home!”

CANTOR JONATHAN COMISAR (jonathancomisar.com)

Jonathan Comisar began his music career in his native Rochester, NY, where he studied piano in the preparatory department of the Eastman School of Music. He continued to study piano and music theory at the Oberlin Conservatory and after graduation, studied composition with Pulitzer Prize winning composer David Del Tredici. Jonathan Comisar is an ordained cantor with a Masters in Sacred Music from the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music. He is a noted composer of Jewish liturgical music and has received commissions and artist residencies from synagogues across North America. Cantor Comisar has been appointed to the faculty of Hebrew Union College, where he teaches courses on music theory, liturgy, and composing and arranging.

Jonathan Comisar is an emerging musical theater composer and a member of the prestigious BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop. His musical theater piece, *Things As They Are*, about the life of American photographer Dorothea Lange, was awarded Best of the Festival Audience Favorite Prize at the NY Musical Theater Festival, 2010, and was twice nominated for the Fred Ebb Foundation Award, in 2009 and 2011. Cantor Comisar is now pursuing his Masters in composition at the Manhattan School of Music.

JONATHAN COMISAR on *Horeini Adonai Darkecha*

“This is meant to be a three-part meditation before the Amidah. It has a gentle folk/pop feel and weaves together the English and Hebrew texts in a sincere *kavanah* before prayer.”

CANTOR ERIK CONTZIUS (contzius.com)

Cantor Erik Contzius earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at Rutgers College, then studied abroad at the University of York, England. He received his Master of Sacred Music degree from the

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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music, studying in Israel and New York City. Contzius models his composition style after the likes of Bonia Shur, Abraham Levitt, Ben Steinberg, Robbie Solomon, and Joseph Myerov, combining elements of traditional Jewish modes and motifs with the sounds of modern classical music.

His noted works published by Transcontinental Music include: *The Travelers' Prayer*, *Hineh Mah Tov*, and *Shalom Rav*. His piece *And Hannah Prayed* was selected for the Third International Festival of New Jewish Liturgical Music, sponsored by Shalsholet. His setting of Psalm 116 (*Mah Ashiv Ladonai—quid retribuam Domino*) was composed specifically for the occasion of the American Conference of Cantors' mission to the Vatican as a part of the Second Annual Jewish Catholic Dialogue, where it enjoyed its premiere. Many of Cantor Contzius's compositions are featured on the recording *Teach My Lips a Blessing*, with the Amor Artis Chamber Choir. Erik resides with his family in Westchester County, New York.

ERIK CONTZIUS on *Tiku Vachodesh Shofar*

“With *Mishkan HaNefesh*, a great deal of focus has been brought to this small, simple text. It has been augmented with quotes from the psalms and even the word *t'kiah* is singled out. Thus, I wanted to emphasize the sound of the shofar from within the composition. The opening statement by the cantor imitates the shofar calls. One can clearly hear *t'kiah*, *sh'varim*, and *t'ruah* within the first bars of the work. The congregation is brought in at the end with a simple refrain that the cantor sings over to celebrate anticipating the sounding of the shofar. The work can be rendered in its entirety or as a cantor solo, ending before the congregation joins in.”

CANTOR JORDAN FRANZEL (cantorfranzel.com)

Cantor Jordan Franzel serves Congregation Or Ami in Lafayette Hill, PA. He received his Masters of Sacred Music from HUC-JIR, Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music and was ordained as cantor in 1996. Prior to his pulpit in Pennsylvania, Cantor Franzel served as senior cantor of Central Synagogue in New York City and the Touro Synagogue in New Orleans, LA. He has been on the faculty of the URJ summer Kallah, has taught at the Hava Nashira Institute for Jewish songleaders and musicians, and has served on the editorial board for the different forms of the union songbook, *Shireinu*.

Cantor Franzel can be heard on two recordings of Danny Maseng's liturgical music: *Soul On Fire* and *Labor of Love*, as well as recordings of thirty-six of his own compositions, *Experiments in Nusach Volumes 1 & 2*. Cantor Franzel's music has been utilized at Hebrew Union College, various congregations and camps, and most recently at the URJ biennial. A number of his liturgical settings have been published in several volumes of *Shabbat Anthology*. Cantor Franzel is a member of the American Conference of Cantors and is a fellow of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality.

JORDAN FRANZEL on *Hayom Harat Olam*

“I always thought that the liturgical pieces reminding us of the essence of Rosh HaShanah, that it is the day the world was conceived, that followed each series of shofar blasts, were overshadowed by the primordial sound of the ram's horn; or rather, overshadowed by the noise of the congregation as they sat down after each set of blasts. In order to keep everyone's attention, I have employed percussion throughout the piece. There are also parts of the melody that were written in imitation of the shofar sounds. The refrain of the *Areshet S'fateinu* section is borrowed, in part, from the Ashkenazic melody of the shofar blessing.”

ANDREA JILL HIGGINS (andreajillhiggins.com)

Andrea Jill Higgins is a composer, pianist, arranger, conductor, musical director, and teacher. She has a degree in Composition from Mills College, where she studied with Darius Milhaud, and a Master of Music degree in Musical Theater Direction from Arizona State University, where she was faculty associate at Lyric Opera Theatre. She is a widely published composer and has been involved with more than 150 musical theater productions including her own recently produced *Babe: An Olympian Musical*, about the legendary woman athlete Babe Didrikson.

Jill founded the adult and junior choirs at Temple Solel, in Paradise Valley, AZ, where she was music director and composer-in-residence for thirty years. She was on the board of the Guild of Temple Musicians, and is still an active member. She was one of the founding board members of the “Opera Dames” (Arizona Opera), and has participated in many shows and events for Phoenix Theatre, and Phoenix Musical theatre, Stagebrush, Fountain Hills Theatre, and others. Jill was nominated for the Arizona Governor’s Award in the Arts in 2011, and has traveled extensively as a commissioned composer and music director/pianist, giving workshops in both liturgical and theatre music.

ANDREA JILL HIGGINS on *Tavo L’fanecha*

“*Tavo L’fanecha* has a very unique place in the Yom Kippur liturgy: It introduces the *Viddui*, the confession of sin. I wanted my composition to allow the congregation to listen, and look inward, not sing along, before they confess. Therefore, the music, while melodic throughout, does have a few abrupt harmonic changes, and you might even hear some jazz progressions along the way. The recurring ascending fifth intervals motive is meant to inspire our worship, so that our prayers will surely ascend to God.”

CANTOR JEFF KLEPPER (jeffklepper.com)

Cantor Jeff Klepper (HUC-JIR 1980) has served congregations in New York, Haifa, and Chicago. He has performed with Rabbi Dan Frelander in the group Kol B’Seder since the early 1970s. Many of their songs, including *Shalom Rav* and *Lo Alecha*, are sung throughout the Jewish world. Jeff earned a Masters in Music from Northeastern Illinois University and holds an Honorary Doctorate from HUC-JIR. He is co-editor of the song section in *Mishkan T’filah*, and co-founder (with Debbie Friedman, ז”ל) of the annual Hava Nashira song-leader workshop. Since 2003, he has been cantor of Temple Sinai of Sharon, and a member of the faculty of the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College in Newton, MA.

JEFF KLEPPER on *Hareini M’kabeil*

“I usually have the luxury of choosing which texts I set to music. When I come across words that jump off the page, calling out for a melody, I sit down with my guitar and speak or sing the text, over and over until the perfect tune reveals itself. Sometimes the process of creation is smooth and easy—sometimes less so, but it is always rewarding and inspiring on a very deep level. For *Shirei Mishkan HaNefesh* I was assigned a meditative *kavanah* at the beginning of the morning service—an important moment of gathering and anticipation, but not the time for a bold musical statement. Thus, the tune I composed consists of two major chords that shift back and forth as if a slowly swinging pendulum, with two simply-chanted lines that spiral around each other, not unlike a mobius strip. I added a concluding line in English (from an anonymous High Holy Days reading), which allowed me to create a majestic moment of choral harmony, with the echo of a traditional and well-known High Holy Days tune.”

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ELLIOT Z. LEVINE (shadowpress.biz)

Elliot Z. Levine has been the baritone for the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble since its inception in 1969. He received his BA from Queens College (NY), and his MM from the Manhattan School of Music. Levine studied composition with Robert Starer, renaissance performance practice with Alfred Deller, and Orff Shulwerk in Salzburg. He has been awarded five Meet-the-Composer Grants. For over thirty years he has been a conductor and coach at Western Wind Workshops at such institutions as Dartmouth, Smith Colleges, University of Massachusetts, and ACDA choral conferences around the country.

He has taught at CCNY, Upsala, and the College of Mt. St. Vincent, and has been composer-in-residence at the Church of St. Thomas More in New York City, and the schools of Delmar, NY. He is the cantorial soloist at Temple Emanuel in Great Neck, NY, and the High Holy Day cantorial soloist in Nantucket, MA. Levine is published by Shadow Press, Harold Flammer Inc., Transcontinental Music Publications, E. Henry David, Plymouth, Colla Voce, and Willis Music Co.

ELLIOT Z. LEVINE on *Adonai Mab Adam*

“I was honored (and not a little daunted) to be asked to write a new setting of *Adonai Mab Adam*. In these days of easy access to everything, we composers are always in the historical shadow of our predecessors. After many different starts in different styles, I decided on a homophonic, and a rather nineteenth-century one, which felt appropriate to me.”

CANTOR LISA LEVINE (cantorlisalevine.com)

Cantor Lisa Levine is an internationally known composer, author, and worship artist. After earning her BA in Music from UCI and studying in Israel at the Reuben Academy, she went on to HUC-JIR DFSSM in New York, where she completed her Master’s Degree in 1989. She recently received her Honorary Doctorate from HUC after twenty-five years of service to the Jewish people. Her solo recording, *Gems of the High Holy Days*, was recorded live for Iowa Public Radio. Her other recordings include *Reaching For Peace*, *My Songs for the Jews of Cuba*, as well as *Soulful Shabbat Ruach* and *Soulful Shabbat Song and Band Book*. *Sowing Seeds* is her newest project, featuring the Israeli jazz band Seeds of Sun. Her choral series is published by Transcontinental Music Publications and her poems appear in the WRJ Torah Commentary and Centennial Covenant Book. Lisa is the creator and author of *Yoga Shalom*, a unique Book/CD/DVD published by URJ Press. Lisa is currently a student in the Aleph Rabbinic Pastoral Program and Chaplain Intern at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital. She appears as artist-in-residence sharing her music and Yoga Shalom in congregations, conferences, and retreats around the world.

LISA LEVINE on *Ki Anu Amecha*

“This is a text I grew up singing in English in my classical Reform congregation. I wanted my version to begin with a *niggun* that would be easy to catch on to and is recurring, building with intensity as the prayer unfolds, to mirror the relationship between God and the Jewish people. I also wanted the *nusach* of the High Holy Days to be present, and the 5-3-1 sequence is heard from the beginning as a descant in part I. The Hebrew text is laid out as a call and response from the cantor to the choir/congregation to mirror the partnership between God and *am Yisrael*. The optional English can be substituted for the final verse of Hebrew or added after that final verse. The *niggun* can also be used as a theme that can be sung and woven into other places within the service, dropping the Hebrew and substituting “Lai.. lai... lai...” In this way, the melody will become part of the fabric of the High Holy Days experience.”

RABBI MARK LIPSON (transcontinentalmusic.com)

Rabbi Mark Lipson received his BA from Hartt College of Music. He then continued his cantorial studies at HUC-JIR SSM. Upon ordination, Mark was elected Cantor of Temple Shalom in Norwalk, CT, and served there for the next seventeen years. He continued with his rabbinic studies in 1993 and, following his rabbinic ordination, was elected as senior rabbi of Temple Shalom in 1995. In 2003, Rabbi Lipson received an Honorary Doctorate from Hebrew Union College.

He has produced and composed a considerable amount of secular music for recording and broadcast, including a number of charted records and musical scores for PBS and ABC television. His liturgical compositions can be heard in synagogues throughout North America and have been published by Transcontinental Music Publications.

MARK LIPSON on *P'tach Lanu Shaar*

“In this piece, I attempted to employ the traditional N’ilah motifs in an unexpected manner. The third is only implied in the *nusach* and I always conceived of it as an unstated minor third. Here, I experimented with treating the harmony as a major third since the third was only implied, giving it a different feeling.”

JEFFREY MARDER (mardermusic.com)

Jeff Marder is in demand in the Broadway world as a keyboardist, conductor, and synthesizer programmer, having worked on such productions and cast recordings as Disney’s *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, *Newsies*, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, Cirque du Soleil’s *O*, and numerous others.

As a composer, Jeff’s compositions have been heard at synagogues throughout the United States, ACC/GTM Conferences, the Shalshet Festival for Jewish Liturgical Music, and in recitals. His music can be found on oySongs.com and mardermusic.com.

JEFFREY MARDER on *Zochreinu*

“This setting of *Zochreinu* relies heavily on the use of call and response between the two voice parts for the dual purpose of accessibility by the first time listener and as an onomatopoeic tool. While the excerpted text of this setting is asking God to inscribe us in the Book of Life, the flowing melodies are meant to be evocative of the deeper meaning of the prayer. May we be inspired to live a life full of lovingkindness and acts of *tikkun olam* that emulates and honors the memory of all who came before us so that we may grow closer in our relationship with God.”

JOSH NELSON (joshnelsonproject.com)

One of the most popular performers and composers in modern Jewish music, Josh Nelson brings his extraordinary message of hope, unity, and spirituality to concert stages and worship services across the globe. Josh is a gifted multi-instrumentalist and songwriter whose work is celebrated and integrated into the repertoire of congregations, camps, and communities around the world.

Recently hailed by Time Magazine as a “star of the New Jewish Music,” Josh is the music director for the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Biennial Convention, faculty for the Hava Nashira Music Institute, and a musical artist-in-residence for the JCC Maccabi Artsfest. His music builds community, lifting up congregations and concert audiences alike through experiences that are at once energizing and deeply moving.

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JOSH NELSON on *Avinu Malkeinu*

“I have been moved by this prayer ever since I was a child, sometimes by way of Max Janowski’s iconic melody, and other times while simply focusing on the words. How extraordinarily challenging, intimidating, inspiring, and uplifting it was to dig more deeply into the well of this text and to rise to the surface singing this melody. May we all take these words to heart: *Aseib imanu tz’dakab vachessed v’hoshieinu* (act toward us with kindness and mercy, and save us). If we are all, indeed, created *b’tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God), then it is also our own responsibility to treat others with that same love and compassion.”

CANTOR RACHELLE NELSON (oySongs.com/rachellenelson)

Cantor Rachelle Nelson is a native Floridian. She is a graduate of the University of Miami in both Music Education and Music Theory Composition. After graduation from the University of Miami in 1979, Rachelle continued on to HUC-JIR SSM, where she was ordained in 1984. Cantor Nelson is the first woman cantor in the Reform movement to serve both the Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. In 1991, she became cantor of Temple Beth Am in Miami. Rachelle is skilled in several instruments: voice, piano, flute, and guitar. Cantor Nelson is a highly recognized composer of Jewish music throughout the United States and Europe. She has had numerous compositions published by Transcontinental Music Publications.

To add to her compositional success, Rachelle collaborates with her colleague, Rabbi Terry Bookman, and together they have published *Bless Our Days* (prayers for inspiration and healing), *Bless Our Years* (songs for the cycle of life), and *Bless Our Holy Days* (blessings for the festivals and holidays). Nelson and Bookman have also created In the Spirit Music Foundation to encourage the writing and publication of new and inspirational Jewish liturgical music by young composers. In 2005, Cantor Nelson was honored by the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science as a “Woman of Valor.” She has co-officiated at the URJ Biennial services. In 2009, Cantor Nelson received her Doctor of Music, *honoris causa* from HUC-JIR. Rachelle is the extremely proud mother of twin daughters, Leah and Rebecca.

RACHELLE NELSON on *B’Rosh HaShanah*

“The words of *B’Rosh HaShanah* are some of the most powerful words in our High Holy Days liturgy. They inspired me to compose a haunting refrain that would capture the emotions of struggle, of vulnerability, and humility.”

CANTOR CHARLES OSBORNE (cosborne.net)

Charles David Osborne serves as senior cantor of Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto, Ontario, and is internationally recognized as a singer, composer, conductor, and teacher. He is a graduate of the H.L. Miller Cantorial School of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and has served on the faculties of JTS, Northeastern University, and Hebrew College of Boston. Founder and director of Kol Rinah - The Jewish Youth Choir of Greater Boston, Cantor Osborne was active with the Hazamir teen choral festivals of the Zamir Choral Foundation, and was the *rosh musica* for their first two summer tours of Israel in 1996 and 1997.

Cantor Osborne has recorded widely with the Zamir Chorale of Boston, and can be heard on the Western Wind’s acclaimed *Birthday of the World*. He has composed over 200 pieces of music, both sacred and secular, including choral pieces, songs, symphonic works, and full-length oratorios. His composition *Samachti B’omrim Li* is one of the most popular pieces of synagogue music in the world. Cantor Osborne is a member of the American Conference of Cantors and the Cantors Assembly.

CHARLES OSBORNE on *M'chal Laavonoteinu*

“*M'chal Laavonoteinu* is an excellent example of an ideal Jewish prayer; its opening phrase, *Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu...* (our God and God of our forbears...) is a classic example of *z'chut avot*, asking God to hear our prayers by virtue of the “merit of our ancestors.” It then combines elements of both communal and individual prayer. The rabbinic prayer texts as well as the *Ki vayom hazeh* proof text are written with the worshipers in the plural, while the balance of the proof texts (“It is I, I alone... As a cloud fades away...”) are written in the original Hebrew addressing the individual, something not readily apparent in the English translation. Musically, I wanted to create a framework for this text that is an appeal to a God who is both personal and present, a gentle, heartfelt prayer to a loving and merciful parent. There is both a congregational refrain and easy, two-part chorus; my hope is that, additionally, each individual worshiper will be able to identify with the words and notes of the sections for soloist/cantor/service leader.”

BOB REMSTEIN (thegtm.org)

Bob Remstein has composed many Jewish liturgical works, most of them commissioned, including a complete Sacred Service he wrote in 2002 to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of Congregation B'nai B'rith in Santa Barbara, CA. A founding member of the Helfman Institute composers' group, he premiered his setting of *Hashkiveinu* in 2011 and his first sermon-in-song, *Moses and the Rock*, in 2012. He is currently at work on a full-length musical version about Noah and the flood. In secular music, he has scored numerous video games for SceneIt, arranged and produced music for the hit film *Little Miss Sunshine*, and, as co-leader of the lounge/electronica group Supercasanova, has written and produced tracks used on the TV shows *Without a Trace*, *Chuck*, *Inside the NFL*, *Monday Night Football*, and *The Guiding Light*, as well as various shows on Animal Planet, E!, Style Network, and MSNBC. Currently, the group is producing tracks for the animated show UMIGO.

BOB REMSTEIN on *Pit-chu Lanu*

“*Pit-chu Lanu* happens towards the end of *N'ilah*, the final service on Yom Kippur day. At that point, people are tired and hungry and just need one more push to seal themselves for blessing for the coming year. In my piece, that yearning to open the gates of righteousness and justice is expressed almost literally as the melody moves from repeated notes to small, scale-like shifts to much larger leaps towards the ends of the lines. Throughout, the struggle between hopefulness and disappointment is carried on, allowing the soloist and choir the opportunity to make manifest the congregation's own longing for happiness, security, and spiritual fulfillment.”

CANTOR STEPHEN RICHARDS (transcontinentalmusic.com)

Cantor Stephen Richards was honored by the Society for Jewish Music in 2006 as one of ten outstanding Jewish composers in America. Prior to entering the School of Sacred Music, Stephen worked as a composer-arranger in musical theater. He served congregations in Rochester, New York, and Indianapolis before becoming the Editor of Transcontinental Music Publications and a faculty member of the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. In 1980, he moved to Phoenix and was cantor at Temple Beth Israel for eleven years. Over a hundred of his synagogue compositions have been published by Transcontinental Music Publications. Cantor Richards has fulfilled commissions for many organizations and congregations.

The Cantare Con Vivo Chamber Ensemble premiered his choral cycle, *Songs of the Mountain* at concerts in Walnut Creek and Oakland, CA, and recorded it in 2007. *Prayer - A Suite For Oboe and Strings* was composed for the Phoenix Symphony, was recorded by the Krakow Symphony Orchestra, released by Master Musicians Collective, and performed by the Chamber Orchestra of the South Bay in Los Angeles. Kim-

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ball Wheeler and the Liverpool Symphony, with Gerard Schwarz conducting, recorded his song cycle, *Songs of a Survivor*. It was released in January of 2006. His one-act opera, *The Ballad of Ruth*, was recorded by the Israel Philharmonic, and performed in a chamber version at Stephen S. Wise Synagogue in Los Angeles.

STEPHEN RICHARDS on *K'dushat Hayom*

“I see this text as a plea for sanity and order in our world of conflict and terror. The musical setting emphasizes and keeps bringing back the phrase *M'loch al kol baolam kulo bichvodecha*, “Reign over all the world in Your glory.” It is our plea for God’s help to bring peace and beauty and goodness back into our lives and our beloved Israel.”

MARK SALTZMAN (thegtm.org)

Mark’s formative years began as a wandering Jew in the desert of Barstow, CA. Since that time, he has enjoyed an active role in Jewish music, serving as clergy for over thirty-five years, of which nearly twenty have been at Congregation Kol Ami in West Hollywood, CA, where he is now cantor emeritus. He is a noted composer of liturgical music, and has been proud to be a part of the roster of synagogue composers published by Transcontinental Music Publications.

In addition to his work in the Jewish community, Mark has written and directed a variety of musical programs for the Los Angeles Opera Community Outreach, Opera UCLA, California Institute for the Arts, and the USC Thornton School of Music. He is the founding director of Sanctuary for Humanity, an interfaith, multicultural non-profit service organization, and serves as the Artistic Director of Music at the Boston Court Performing Arts Center in Pasadena, CA.

MARK SALTZMAN on *Unshofar Gadol*

“Musical settings of *Unshofar Gadol* often evoke dramatic and musical fireworks (equivalent to the Dies Irae in a Latin mass). The fearsome shofar sounding, the angels trembling, the day of reckoning forthcoming... scary stuff! However, I found myself drawn more toward the mystical and poetical aspects of the text, with Mahler and Schubert particularly coming to mind while I composed. I imagine a multitude of tentative prayers ascending heavenward as the shofar calls sound from the distance. I feel the beauty and sweetness of God the shepherd watching over us with infinite love and deep compassion as destiny is fashioned. And though not knowing what the outcome will be is unsettling; the final journey is a spiritual one. An ascension that leads us ever upward, and onward into a sacred light.”

SIMON SARGON (simonsargon.com)

Simon Sargon is a composer whose rich and varied body of work includes orchestral and chamber music works, solos and ensemble pieces, and a wide range of vocal and choral compositions, both secular and sacred.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Brandeis University, he holds his graduate degree in Composition from the Juilliard School. Since 2004, he has been an Honorary Member of the American Conference of Cantors, and in 2009 he was awarded the prestigious Distinguished Professor Teaching Award from Southern Methodist University, where he taught on the faculty for over thirty years. He is music director emeritus at Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, TX, having served that renowned congregation for twenty-seven years.

SIMON SARGON on *HaMelech Yosheiv*

“*HaMelech Yosheiv* is one of the monumental texts of the High Holy Days liturgy. In seven brief words, it expresses the unimaginable heights of God’s majesty; creating in the worshiper an awareness of God’s transcendence as opposed to man’s vulnerability. I sought to express this awareness musically through the use of extreme contrasts of dynamics coupled with climaxes of unexpected power. Although the text was written using medieval Hebrew imagery, its underlying statement of the relationship between God and humankind speaks to the modern worshiper in a timeless fashion.”

CANTOR BENJIE ELLEN SCHILLER (huc.edu)

Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller is Professor of Cantorial Arts at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music. Her work involves training cantorial and rabbinical students to bridge the gap between performance and spiritual leadership. She serves as cantor of Bet Am Shalom Synagogue of White Plains, NY, with her husband, Rabbi Lester Bronstein. Cantor Schiller also serves as a part-time faculty member of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality Cantorial and Rabbinic Program.

She is a nationally-known composer. Her works include *Life-Song Cycle* (a series of pieces for Jewish life passage ceremonies), *Hallelubn* (a multi-rhythmic setting of Psalm 150), *Lamdeini, You are My Song*, *U’kratem D’ror- Proclaim Liberty* (an American-Jewish response to 9/11), and various commissioned works for choirs, synagogues, and interfaith liturgical groups. *A World Fulfilled*, a solo recording of her compositions, was released in 2002.

BENJIE ELLEN SCHILLER on *Or Zarua / Bishivah Shel Malah*

“I have composed *Or Zarua* as a hymn sung by the congregation at the beginning of Yom Kippur to prepare for *Kol Nidrei*. (For those communities whose practice it is to begin the *Kol Nidrei* service with a Torah processional, the singing of this piece would accompany that processional.) The overall feel is one of awe; the tempo is steady. With each repetition, the drive and majesty of the singing intensifies. The piece begins softly. It should be repeated several times. When the melody has been fully established by the congregation, a choir may add the upper harmonic line as a way to further expand the piece. (This is an option only.) *Bishivah Shel Malah*, a cantorial recitative chanted by the cantor, immediately follows the congregation’s singing of *Or Zarua*. It is a declaration giving divine and communal consent for the recitation of *Kol Nidrei* that immediately follows. This piece is my arrangement of Hazzan Israel Alter’s cantorial recitative.”

DAVID SHUKIAR (davidshukiar.com)

The music of David Shukiar has been heard in synagogues, concert halls (including Lincoln Center in New York), and theatres all over North America and Israel. David has twice been awarded the Guild of Temple Musicians Young Composers Award, an honor shared by only a few other composers in the history of this prestigious award. He is now proud to oversee the award, hoping to inspire a new generation of young Jewish composers. He has enjoyed commissions from cantors and synagogues, including from the American Conference of Cantors and the Guild of Temple Musicians to help dedicate a new building at Beit Daniel, a Reform community in Tel Aviv.

David has enjoyed being the composer and conductor-in-residence for various festivals and synagogues. As a composer of musical theatre, David’s most notable works include *Make Believe*, a two-time winner of the Burdette Fitzgerald Memorial Award for Theatre for Young Audiences, *Benjamin and Judah*, a musical about the story of Chanukah, which premiered in New York and has been and continues to be

The Composers —

performed on both the East and West coasts, and Louisa Mae Alcott's *Little Women: The Musical*, winner of the Y.E.S. Festival of New Works. As an arranger, David has worked with many different ensembles, helping to create music that gives each group a unique voice. In addition to publishing many of his choral pieces, Transcontinental Music Publications published *Klei Zemer: Easy Arrangements for Synagogue Bands*. David is also an accomplished music director, having shared his talents with CBS Television, Anita Mann Productions, and various synagogues. David serves as Cantorial Soloist and Music Director for Temple Adat Elohim in Thousand Oaks, CA.

DAVID SHUKIAR on *Untaneh Tokef*

"*Untaneh Tokef* continues to be a difficult and complex piece of liturgy for me. It is the beginning of the section of our service where we declare how God will determine our fate for the coming year. I have always struggled with the notion of God choosing my fate for me, and, even as a child, I chose to look at it a little differently—where God gives ME the power to choose life for myself. Perhaps it is not about God writing me in for a good year, but me deciding to really look at my actions in the previous year and choose to work on becoming the best version of myself that I can be. This is a complex and sometimes difficult process. My piece explores this process. At first, all the voices are in unison, singing a single note, but as the opening choral phrase moves on it becomes layered and more complex. We modulate from the minor to major and back to minor again, showing that at all times, the happy and sad occasions, the triumphs and challenges we face, we always have the ability to choose to be our best self, to recognize the godliness in us all. In my view, this choice comes from God."

CANTOR ROBBIE SOLOMON (robbiesolomon.com)

Cantor Robbie Solomon is a prolific and eclectic composer of Jewish music whose works range from popular songs written for his iconic musical group, Safam, to choral works which have become staples in the repertoire of the Zamir Choral Foundation. Among other compositions, he has authored several Friday night services, a full-length musical *The Orphan Queen*, and many individual works for the synagogue.

Along with an orthodox upbringing in Baltimore, MD, and rabbinical study at the HUC-JIR, Cantor Solomon received conservatory training at the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem, Berklee College of Music, and New England Conservatory. He is certified with both the Reform and Conservative movements, and presently serves as cantor for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation in Baltimore, MD, where he lives with his wife, Helen. The Solomons have two sons, Byron and Sam, a daughter-in-law, Kristy, and two grandsons, Nicolas and Leo.

ROBBIE SOLOMON on *Uvchein Tein*

"I am pleased to be part of this project, creating new music for the High Holy Days and the new *machzor*, *Mishkan HaNefesh*. *Uvchein Tein* is a combination of the serious plea to the Eternal which characterizes the liturgy during the Days of Awe, and a lively *niggun* indicating our joy in worship."

BEN STEINBERG (transcontinentalmusic.com)

Ben Steinberg, educated at the University of Toronto and Royal Conservatory of Toronto, is composer-in-residence at Toronto's Temple Sinai, with which he has been associated since 1970. A noted composer, conductor, and lecturer, he is one of the most widely-commissioned composers of Jewish music worldwide.

His honors include the International Gabriel Award for Broadcast Excellence, the Kavod Award of the Cantors' Assembly, the inaugural Guild of Temple Musicians' Shomer Shirah Award, a Lifetime Achieve-

ment Award from the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism, Honorary Membership in the American Conference of Cantors, twice artist-in-residence for the city of Jerusalem, an Honorary Doctorate from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and the Reform movement's highest honor, the Eisendrath Bearer of Light Award.

BEN STEINBERG on *Esa Einai*

“One of our most beloved psalms, *Esa Einai* is among the most inspiring texts in the Bible. Originally composed for a cantor friend as a solo and piano piece and subsequently published, this choral accompaniment was later requested by another cantor whose traditional synagogue did not permit instrumental accompaniment during services. Having been raised in that milieu myself, I took great pleasure in transcribing the work for a *cappella* choral accompaniment. The style is modal, reflective, and contains traditional chazzanic elements.”

CRAIG TAUBMAN (craignco.com)

Craig Taubman is a songwriter, performer, community organizer, and dream weaver. His songs bridge traditional Jewish themes and ancient teachings with passages and experiences of contemporary Jewish life. He speaks a language that is both comfortable and acceptable to children and adults.

His extensive music catalog consists of over 100 recordings, featuring everything from Jewish liturgy to Disney recordings with Minnie and Mickey! His most recent venture, the Pico Union Project (www.picounionproject.org), is a multi-faith cultural arts center in Los Angeles, CA, founded on the principle of “love your neighbor as yourself.”

CRAIG TAUBMAN on *Sh'ma Koleinu*

“My hope is that this setting of *Sh'ma Koleinu* will allow communities to retain a sound from their past that is comforting, while creating a new melody line that they can add their voices to. May our voices be heard, and our prayers be answered.”

CANTOR NATALIE YOUNG (natalieyoungmusic.com)

Cantor Natalie Young is an award-winning composer whose music is being used by communities all over the world. Her gift for writing beautiful and memorable melodies has made prayer experiences accessible for worshipers young and old. Natalie proudly serves as the cantor at Temple Beth El in Aliso Viejo, CA. She is also privileged to be able to share her musical gifts and teachings with communities as a cantor/composer-in-residence throughout the year.

Natalie's work can be found in various publications including *Shirei Ha-T'fillot* by the Movement for Reform Judaism, the *Ruach* series, and the *Shalshelet Festival Songbook*. Her songs have been featured at URJ Biennials, the Shalshelet Music Festival, Hava Nashira, American Conference of Cantors conventions, North American Jewish Choral Festival, HUC-JIR DFSSM, and various concerts around the country. Natalie has released two solo albums of original music: *Carry Me* and *Natalie Young: Standing On the Shoulders*. An anthology of her original music was published in 2015. Natalie lives in Irvine, CA with her husband, Rabbi David Young and their children Gabriel, Alex, and Bella.

NATALIE YOUNG on *B'sefer Chayim*

“In a world filled with hatred and violence, holding steadfast to our faith and God's loving presence in our lives can feel especially challenging at times. We pray for a life of goodness filled with blessing, prosperity, and peace, and remind ourselves that these things are indeed within our reach. As we turn to God and recite these words, we renew these possibilities in our lives.”