

April 28, 2015

## The Torah and the Road

### A New Release and a World Premiere

Many Jews around the world are currently counting the Omer, the time between Passover and Shavuot, when Moses and the Jewish people received the Torah at Mt. Sinai—the journey from the exodus to the covenant. There could not be a more apt time to release a new album of liturgical music and to mount a world premiere of biblically inspired allegory—about the road that Jews have been on since the exodus, if not before—each composed by one of the greats of Jewish music.

In the newly released album of Yehudi Wyner's liturgical works, the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer combines traditional liturgical texts with some from more recent sources. *The Torah Service* opens with a setting of *yih'yu l'ratzon* (May the words of my mouth and my heart's meditations be acceptable...). Its meditative quality stands in contrast with much of the rest of the service, which is often dramatic and characterized by punchy, staccato brass and intense choral motifs. *Friday Evening Service*, originally commissioned by and performed at New York's Park Avenue Synagogue, serves as an excellent companion piece to *Torah Service*, drawing from the same well and source of inspiration. As Wyner noted in his reflections on the original recording, "There is so much in the ancient sacred texts that conveys the impression of a culture under extreme pressure, with the need to express thoughts and feelings with great intensity and to lament or exult in prayer and prophecy."

This addition to the Archive's *Volume 7: Masterworks of Prayer* features Cantor Joshua Breitner and the New York Virtuoso Singers, accompanied by an ensemble of two trumpets, horn, trombone, and double bass. The recordings are enriched by two videos featuring detailed commentary by the composer discussing each service, and an extended audio interview that focuses on his memories of and relationship with his father, Lazar Weiner, who is widely considered the supreme exemplar of the Yiddish art song.

Watch the videos, sample the music and explore

**Volume 7: Masterworks of Prayer, Album 6: Yehudi Wyner's  
[Torah Service and Friday Evening Service](#)**

Now available from the Milken Archive



Biblical inspiration and the "eternal" plight of the Jewish people as they keep their covenant with God was also integral to the creation of Kurt Weill and Franz Werfel's epic masterpiece, *The Eternal Road*. Extended portions of the work were recorded by the Milken Archive in 2001. Unfortunately, with a cast of hundreds, the incredibly demanding and unsustainably expensive production played for only 153 performances in 1937 and hasn't been seen in the U.S. or even performed in English since. That is, until next week!

On May 6th and 7th, the Collegiate Chorale will present the U.S. premiere of *The Road of Promise*, a new concert adaptation of the epic spectacle at New York's Carnegie Hall. The concerts will be led by Tony Award-winning conductor Ted Sperling, with a cast of world-renowned actors and singers



(Ron Rifkin, Anthony Dean Griffey), the 200-voice Collegiate Chorale and the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

First conceived by impresario and Zionist Meyer Weisgal in the wake of the National Socialist Party's electoral victory in 1933, *The Eternal Road* sought to educate and inspire action in response. The story is that of a young boy who knows nothing of his Jewish heritage, but finds himself at a synagogue under threat of a pogrom. As all await their fate, the Rabbi brings stories from the Old Testament to life, enlightening the boy, who emerges as a new hope for his people.

As a special offer to the Milken Archive community, the Collegiate Chorale has graciously offered a **25% discount** for either performance. We encourage you to take advantage of this offer by entering code **CCW20349 (May 6)** or **CCT20346 (May 7)** when purchasing tickets through their website.

See the world premiere of Kurt Weill and Franz Werfel's

## **The Road of Promise**

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