



WITH PERFECT FAITH

a Holocaust Cantata

Duke Vespers Ensemble

Sunday, April 19 at 2:00 pm in Duke Chapel

Allan Friedman, *conductor*

Marianne Roberts, *lector* Susan Hellman, *soprano*

David Arcus, *organ* Carrie Shull, *oboe* Nate Leyland, *cello*

With Perfect Faith

Allan Friedman

Dedicated to the victims of the Shoah, and to those who keep their memory alive.

Section I – A Sacred Realm

1. With Perfect Faith, *cello solo*
2. A Sacred Realm, *reader*
3. Without any Faith, *chorus*
4. Ani Ma'amin, *soprano*
5. I Believe, *chorus*
6. In a Sealed Freightcar, *chorus*

Section II – What Can We Say?

7. What Can We Say?, *reader*
8. While Bouncing the Shema Back and Forth in Shul, *chorus*
9. Lamentations, *soprano*
10. A Few More Things About the Holocaust, *chorus*
11. God Hid His Face, *chorus*

Section III – An Oath to Remember

12. An Oath to Remember, *reader*
13. Psalm 137, *soprano*
14. Rachel, a Ewe, *chorus*
15. The Second Generation, *chorus*
16. Partisan's Song, *chorus*

Section IV – Kaddish

17. With Perfect Faith (Reprise), *cello solo*
18. Mourner's Kaddish, *reader*
19. Kaddish in a Death Car, *chorus*
20. Psalm 88, *soprano*

Section V – El Meleh Rachamin

21. El Melech Rachamin, *reader*
22. Alone, *chorus*
23. El Meleh Rachamin, *soprano*
24. Walls, *men's chorus*
25. I Did Not Manage to Save, *women's chorus*

Section VI – The Mystery: Man

26. The Mystery: Man, *reader and audience*
27. Rebecca, 1942, *chorus*
28. Hatikvah, *soprano*
29. Witness, *soprano and chorus*

Section I – *A Sacred Realm*

The Holocaust is a sacred realm. One cannot enter this realm without realizing
that only those who were there can know.
But the outsider can come close to the gates.

–*Elie Wiesel*

Without Any Faith

Without any faith in God, what is the use of all I do? Without any faith in his redemption, it's not worth living for even a second. Blessed be He.

– *Anonymous*

Ani Ma'amin

Ani ma'amin, ani ma'amin beemuna sh'ley mabviat hamashiach. Aah v'af al pi sh'yit mameyba ani ma'amin im kolze ani ma'amin.

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah. Although he may tarry, I believe.

– *Maimonides, Lessons of Faith*

I Believe

I believe in the sun though it is late in rising. I believe in love though it is absent. I believe in God though he is silent.

– *Anonymous*

In a Sealed Freightcar

Here, in this carload I am Eve
With my son Abel.
If you see my older boy—Cain, son of Adam,
Tell him that I...

– *Dan Pagis*

Section II – *What Can We Say?*

Judaism and Christianity do not merely tell of God's love for humanity. They stand or fall on their fundamental claim that the human being is of ultimate and absolute value.

The Holocaust poses the most radical counter-testimony to both Judaism and Christianity. No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children.

– *Rabbi Irving Greenberg*

While Bouncing the *Shema* Back and Forth in Shul

We were there, *Avinu*, when a mortal gift of flesh sealed the covenant with your Chosen Ones, and so were You.

We were there, *Elobenu*, when angels blessed your first born with the name of *Israel*, and so were You.

We were there, *Moshienu*, when the sole might of your outstretched hand guided Your children from the chains of Pharaoh's bondage, and so were You.

We were there, *Malkeinu*, when Judaic shout of trumpets claimed a homeland for your nation, and so were You.

We were there, *HaRachaman*, when the winds of your forgiveness swept us from our tears in Babylon to our laughter in Jerusalem, and so were You.

We were there, *Adonai*, when the glory of your defenders shone for eight days with the purity of one, and so were You.

We were there, God, when the life of your Holy People was diffused into gas and their spirits chased into ovens, and where were You?

– Talia N. Bloch

Lamentations

Kol a mar ba shem, kol beramah nishma, n'hee b'chee tamruim! Rachel m'vah kah albaneha, me'ana l'binachem baneha, ki ei neinu. Lo aleichem kolove'rei derech? Habitu ur'uh: im yesh mach'ov k'machovi asher o'leil li?

A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping! Rachel is weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are no more. Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see: is there any pain like that which has befallen me?

– *Jeremiah 31:15, Lamentations 1:12*

A Few More Things About the Holocaust

Not only their money
was taken
a few more things
like beds and bathrooms
songs and stories
air.

Not only their furniture
was taken
a few more things
like hallways and windows
bags and babies
hair.

Not only their time
was taken
a few more things
like hinges and handles
brothers and sisters
prayer.

Not only their breath
was taken
a few more things
like shame and shadow
space and spirit
God.

—*Beatrice H. Lifshitz*

God Hid His Face

All the roads led to death,
all the roads.
All the winds breathed betrayal,
all the winds.
At all the doorways angry dogs barked,
at all the doorways.
All the waters laughed at us,
all the waters.
All the nights fattened on our dread,
all the nights.
And the heavens were bare and empty,
all the heavens.
God hid his face.

—*Rajzel Zychlinsky*

Section III – *An Oath to Remember*

In the presence of eyes which witness the slaughter,
Which saw the oppression the heart could not bear,
And as witness the heart that once taught compassion
Until the days came to pass that crushed human feeling,

I have taken an oath:

To remember it all, to remember, not once to forget!

Forget not one thing to the last generation when degradation shall cease,
To the last, to it's ending, when the rod of instruction shall have come to conclusion,

An oath:

Not in vain passed over the night of terror.

An oath:

No morning shall see me at flesh-pots again

An oath:

Lest from this we learned nothing.

—*Abraham Shlonsky*

Psalm 137

'Al naharot Bavel sham yashavnu gam bakhinu b'zache re nu et tsiyon. Im eshkachech Yrushalayim tishkach y'mini tidbak l'shoni l'chiki im lo ezk'rekhi im lo a'ale. Et Yrushalayim 'alrosh simchati et Yrushalayim a rosh simchati.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, sat and wept as we thought of Zion. If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither, let my tongue stick to my palate, if I cease to think of you, if I do not keep Jerusalem in my memory even at my happiest hour.

—Psalm 137: 1,6

Rachel, a Ewe

We named you
for the sake
of the syllables
and for the small boat
that followed the Pequod
gathering lost children
of the sea.

We named you
for the dark eyed girl
who waited at the well
while her lover
worked seven years
and again
seven.

We named you
for the small daughters
of the Holocaust
who followed their six-pointed stars
to death
and were all of them
known as
Rachel.

— Linda Pastan

The Second Generation

true, we are the children
of a nocturnal twilight
the heirs of Auschwitz and Ponar
but ours is also the rainbow:
in us the storm meets sunlight
to create new colors
as we add defiant sparks
to an eternal fire

— Menachem Z. Rosensaft

Partisan's song

Never say that there is only death for you, though leaden clouds conceal skies of blue. For the hour that we have hungered for is near, 'neath our tread the earth shall tremble 'We are here!'

From lands so green with palms to lands all white with snow, we shall come with all our anguish and our woe. And where a spurt of blood fell upon the earth, there our courage and our spirits have rebirth.

We'll have the morning sun to set our days aglow, and all our yesterdays shall vanish with the foe. And though the dawn meets some delay in night's dark hand, this song of life shall ring from land to land.

This song was written with our blood, and not with lead. It's not a song that birds sing overhead. This song rang out above the roar of crashing walls, and to all future generations this song calls.

—Anonymous poem from the Warsaw Ghetto

Section IV – Kaddish

Mourner's Kaddish

Yit-gadal v'yit-kadash sh'may raba b'alma dee-v'ra che-ru-tay, ve'yam-lich mal-chutay b'chai-yay-chon uv'yo-may-chon uv-cha-yay d'choil beit Yisrael, ba-agala u'vitze-man ka-riv, ve-imru amen.

Y'hay sh'may raba me'varach le-alam uleh-almay alma-ya.

Yit-barach v'yish-tabach, v'yit-pa-ar v'yit-romam v'yit-nasay, v'yit-hadar v'yit-aleh v'yit-halal sh'may d'koo-d'shab, b'rich hoo. Meen kol beer-chata v'she-rata, toosh-b'chata v'nay-ch'mata, da-a meran b'alma, ve'imru amen.

Y'hay sh'lama raba meen sh'maya v'cha-yim aleynu v'al kol Yisrael, ve'imru amen.

O'she shalom beem-romav, hoo ya'ab-she shalom aleynu v'al kol Yisrael, ve'imru amen.

Magnified and sanctified be G-d's great name in the world, which He created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom during our lifetime and during the lifetime of Israel. Let us say, Amen.

May G-d's great name be blessed forever and ever.

Blessed, glorified, honored and extolled, adored and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One, though G-d is beyond all praises and songs of adoration which can be uttered. Let us say, Amen.

May there be peace and life for all of us and for all Israel. Let us say, Amen.

Let He who makes peace in the heavens, grant peace to all of us and to all Israel.

Let us say, Amen.

—Sabbath Evening liturgy

Kaddish in a Death Car

In a sealed up death car
strung with barbed wire,
a Jew stands up and talks to God,
“I carry candles with me, See? I light them.”

Each of us in this car
will say Kaddish
after himself: “*vyisgadal vyisg'dash sheme rabo...*”

Without a cry
each said kaddish after himself.
And God stood up
to say kaddish for the world.

– Aaron Zeitlin

Psalm 88

*Adonai, Elohei y'shuati Yomtsa'akti balailah negdecha, yomtza'akti balailah negdecha.
Ta vo l'fa necha t'filati bateh az'n'chab l'rinati. Kisav 'ab v'ra ot nafsbi v'cha yai lish'ol
li'sh 'ol bigi yu.*

O Lord, God of my deliverance, when I cry out in the night before you, let my prayer reach you: incline your ear to my cry. For I am sated with misfortune; I am at the brink of Sheol.

–Psalm 88: 1-4

Section V – *El Meleh Rachamin*

El Meleh Rachamin

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence among the holy and the pure, to the souls of all our brethren: men, women, and children of the House of Israel who were slaughtered and suffocated and burned to ashes.

May their memory endure, inspiring truth and loyalty in our lives.

May their souls thus be bound up in the bond of life.

May they rest in peace.

And let us say: Amen

–Yom Hasboah liturgy

Alone

...All of them the wind took,
All have flitted away
And I am left alone.
And like a close of a very ancient dirge
And like a prayer of pleading, and fear
Falls on this heart, this silent, sultry weeping
This passionate tear.

– Hayim Bialik

El Meleh Rachamin

El maleh rachamin sho chren bam'ronim ha'ma tzei m'nuchab nechona ta al kan fey hash I nah b'ma'a lot k' do shim uteho rim ke'zo har ba ra kia maazhirim et nish'mat kol achein v'ne yisroel hanashim nashi v'tav sbne hi b'r' gu v'nit b'hu v'nis, r'fu v'ni n'chu b' gane den tehey menuchato ano ba'al harachamin hastier seder kena f'av le'olamin veyritzror bitzror bachayim et nishmatechem adonai hu nachalata v'yanuach be'shalom al mishkavo techem v'no mar amen.

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence among the holy and the pure, to the souls of all our brethren: men, women, and children of the House of Israel who were slaughtered and suffocated and burned to ashes. May their memory endure, inspiring truth and loyalty in our lives. May their souls thus be bound up in the bond of life. May they rest in peace. And let us say: Amen

– *Yom Hashoah liturgy*

Walls

If the walls between us
were made of glass,
we'd have shattered them long ago
and we'd have walked
over the pieces to each other.

But the walls between us
are invisible
they are hard to penetrate
since they run through
our hearts and spirits.

– *Willy Verkanf-Verion*

I Did Not Manage to Save

I did not manage to save a single life
I did not know how to stop a single bullet
I wander round cemeteries which are not there
I look for words which are not there
I run to help where no one called to answer the event
I want to be on time even if I am too late.

– *Jerry Ficowski*

Section VI – *The Mystery: Man*

Reader:

Tell me not man is a beast
Compared to man, beast is angel.
Do beasts build crematoria?
Do they hurl children into the fire?
Do they take pleasure in death?

Audience:

Tell me not man is a beast
He is more than an angel
He is word of an Isaiah.
He is outcry of Job.
He yearns for new worlds.
Tell me not man is a beast.

Reader:

Tell me not man is a beast.
Compared to man, beast is angel.
Do beasts use napalm on each other?
Do they torture prisoners?
Do they kill their own kind?
Tell me not man is a beast.

Audience:

Tell me not man is a beast.
He is more than an angel.
He is willingness to help.
He is ability to fast.
He is a creature that can cry, confess, and change.
Tell me not man is a beast.

Reader:

Tell me not man is a beast.
Compared to man, beast is angel.
Man robs, wrecks, and ravages.

Audience:

But unlike beast and unlike angel,
Man can begin again.
So tell me not what man is.
Tell me instead what man can be.
Tell me what you would be,
And then I will know what man is.

—Aaron Zeitland

Rebecca, 1942

We stole a glass and hung the canopy
between two bunks,
life is ancient beauty.
Still in this
the bride and groom are happy,
the ceremony small.
Every duty properly done:
manage a rabbi and the ring,

several cakes and a cantor,
three bars of chocolate,
one harmonica—
by arrangement with the other blocks,
two jars of marmalade,
and a set of lookouts.

—R. M. Cooper

Hatikvah

Kolod balevav p'nima, nefesh Y'hudi homiya. 'ulfaatemizrach kadima, ayin l'tsiyon tsofiya. Od lo avda tikvatenu, hatikva bat sh'not al payim, 'liyot am chofshi b'artsenu, b'erets Tsiyon Yrushalayim.

So long as still within the inmost heart a Jewish spirit sings, so long as the eye looks eastward, gazing towards Zion, our hope is not lost – that hope of two millennia, to be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.

– I. H. Imber

Witness

...I sing to celebrate and cry.
My sounds are prayers to be heard by the living
and the dead. I bear witness to the light, to the dark
and claim the miracle
while the ocean whispers
that for each wave that dies,
another one rises
and breathes itself to the shore.

– M. Pasternak

THE DUKE VESPERS ENSEMBLE

Allan Friedman, *director*

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Ali Carnes	Fontane Au	Chase Bannister	James Cheeks, Jr.
Liza Crabtree	Karen Cook	Paul Leary	Justin Jaworski
Jordan Fuson	Erica Dunkle	PJ Nicholls	Kevin Johnson
Jennifer Midura	Ruthan Freese	Christopher Shreve	Matt Lyons
Kristina Warren	Meredith Hawley	Roman Testroet	Christian Pikaart
Stephanie Westen			Aidan Stallworth

The Duke Vespers Ensemble is a select group of singers specializing in Renaissance and 20th-century motets. The choir was founded twenty years ago at Duke as the primary leaders of evensong, which is celebrated in Duke Chapel during the academic year. The choir is made up of Duke students, staff, and alumni of diverse religious backgrounds. The choir performs two concerts each year, as well as special services for Advent, Lent, Candlemas, and All Hallows' Eve. In the last few years the choir has performed masterpieces such as Josquin's *Missa Pange lingua*, Victoria's *Missa pro Defunctis a 6*, and Byrd's *Mass for 4 Voices*. This past December and January the choir toured internationally for the first time, traveling to Dresden, Prague, and Munich.

Marianne Roberts (nee Cohen) was born in 1920 in the Rhineland, the younger of two girls. Her father, a World War 1 veteran, passed away on January 1, 1933, the day Hitler came to power. On Kristallnacht, or “The Night of Broken Glass” November 10, 1938, over 40 armed men stormed into the house where she and her sister were living and destroyed everything of value. The two girls were able to hide in the root cellar for over two days, where they lived in the dark without food or water. After living with some other Jews for a few months in a nearby house, Marianne and her sister received a visa to move to the US. After being stripped of all their financial resources aside from about five dollars, they made their way to England and then on to the United States. Ms. Roberts now travels locally and speaks about the horrors and the lessons of the Holocaust. She is a proud mother of two children, a son who lives in Cherry Hill, NJ and a daughter who lives in Durham.

Soprano **Susan Jean Hellman** is a rising talent in musical circles, primarily as an interpreter of Italian Opera. The past two years she has been a Resident Artist at the Palm Beach Opera, appearing as Mimi in *La Bohème* and Clotilda in *Norma* this season and as Giannetta in the mainstage performance of *L’Elisir d’Amore* and Violetta in *La Traviata* in 2007–2008. At Central City Opera she performed Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* and was awarded the Darla Mabee Larson Memorial Award. Ms. Hellman was also chosen as the soprano soloist for the 2007 World of Offenbach Spring Tour with Glimmerglass Opera, where she also sang the role of Minerva in Offenbach’s *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Her other roles include L’Amour and Une Ombre Heureuse (*Orphée et Eurydice*), Barbarina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Betty Parris (*The Crucible*), and Princess Nicoletta (*The Love for Three Oranges*). Ms. Hellman has also been an apprentice at the Sarasota Opera and has sung with the Opera Theater Festival of Lucca, Italy, the Ezio Pinza Council for American Singers of Opera in Oderzo, Italy. She received a BM from Indiana University in 2001, and MM from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 2004. Ms. Hellman sang the premiere of *With Perfect Faith* in April, 2001.

Allan Friedman directs the Duke Vespers Ensemble, as well as the Duke Divinity School Choir and the Women’s Voices Chorus of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Originally from Duluth, Minnesota, Allan earned his BA in music at Duke where he studied conducting with Rodney Wynkoop. In the fall of 1997, he studied at the University of Natal, Durban in South Africa where he learned choral music from Joseph Shabalala, leader of Ladysmith Black Mombazo, renowned for their work on Paul Simon’s album Graceland. In 2001, he graduated with a Masters Degree in Musicology from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he wrote his thesis on South African choral competitions. In the spring of 2005 Allan earned his Doctorate of Musical Arts from Boston University where he wrote his dissertation on Russian Jewish Choral Music from St. Petersburg circa 1905–1925.

PROGRAM NOTES

In the spring of 2000 I had the opportunity to visit the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. for the first time. What I saw shocked, enraged, grieved, and humbled me. I found myself unable to speak for several hours, and deeply moved even after many weeks. My ultimate response to what I had seen was to conceive and compose *With Perfect Faith*. Knowing that the words of survivors and others closely tied to the Shoah would have more power than anything I could devise, I sought out poetry in English that spoke to me and my various reflections and reactions to the Holocaust: anger, admiration, guilt, and hope. I also chose Hebrew scriptures that spoke of great times of crisis and grief that mirrored these reflections.

Formally, the piece owes a great deal to the Britten *War Requiem* and the Schütz *Musicalische Exequien*, both of which were on my consciousness when I composed the piece in the summer of 2000. The separation of reader, soprano, and choir, as well as prose, English poetry, and scripture was inspired by the Britten. The use of a small baroque-style ensemble, alternating with the choruses, was inspired by Schütz. The key relationships, texts, and ranges of the pieces are all designed to escort the listener through the six sections of the piece. In turn, each section calls forth a different reaction to the Holocaust: admiration for the faith of the dead who had gone to the gas chambers with perfect faith, questioning the absence of God in the unspeakable horrors of the Shoah, vowing to remember the slaughter forever, honoring the dead, coping with the guilt of survival, and, finally, searching for hope in the future.

With Perfect Faith had its premiere on April 17, 2001 at Judea Reform in Durham and was performed for the second time in April, 2004 at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

– Allan Friedman



Allan Friedman conducts the Vespers Choir.



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