

Gertrud Baumann is the soprano. There is no biographical material for her in the liner notes.

Frederick Lechner, baritone, studied in Berlin and sang with the Berlin-Charlottenburg Opera. In 1935, he emigrated to New York, where he made his debut in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. He became the cantor of Manhattan's Central Synagogue in 1937, and from 1943-48 sang at the Metropolitan Opera.

Herman Schey, baritone, studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. He became a naturalized citizen of the Netherlands. He was mainly a concert and Lieder singer, who specialized in the German repertoire, and also sang under the conductors Furtwängler, Klemperer, and Walter, among others. He became a renowned singing teacher.

Joseph Schmidt, tenor, trained as a cantor in Romania, studied music at the Berlin Conservatory. He began singing on the radio in 1928, and became one of Europe's most popular tenors. In 1938 he sang at Carnegie Hall. He made nine movies and over 200 records. When the Nazis invaded France, he escaped to Switzerland, where he was placed in an internment camp near Zurich. He perished there of medical neglect, in 1942.

Hermann Schildberger, the music director of the project and conductor of the recording, fled Germany in 1939 and emigrated to Melbourne, Australia. He became the music director of the Liberal Synagogue of Australia and New Zealand, founded several choirs, and was the conductor of the Victoria State Services Orchestra, the Victoria National Theatre Opera Company, and was music director of the National Theatre Opera school.

A Fitting Testimonial

My favorite selections from these CDs are from the music of Lewandowski and Sulzer, which I loved as a youth. Through good fortune, I attended a Conservative synagogue in Newark, New Jersey, where the prayer service was sung by a "Berlin operatic" cantor, who maintained this wonderful tradition. Among them—there are too many to list—are the Hebrew "Mi El Kamocha" ("Now Let Us Praise"), a responsive included in this recording, sung by Lindberg, Lechner, and Baumann. And, I found just as wonderful, the congregational hymn welcoming the Sabbath, which is set to a Lied by Robert Schumann and sung by soprano Gertrud Baumann; and "This Is My Covenant," composed as part of Beethoven's "Six Songs by Gellert," and sung by alto Paula Lindberg (see accompanying article).

The recording's *pièce de résistance* is the traditional "Sh'ma Yisra'el" ("Hear, O Israel"), which is sung to conclude the service for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish religion. After a day of fasting and atoning for one's sins, the individual supplicant asks of God to be placed in the Book of Life for the coming year. At the conclusion, the final Sh'ma is sung, declaring that there is but one God in the heavens. In this recording, in the ultimate

refrain, the voice of tenor Joseph Schmidt soars above the congregation, proclaiming allegiance to God for himself, the children of Israel, and for all mankind.

Celebrating God's Universal Creation

by Susan W. Bowen

Hermann Schildberger's recording project, out of which emerged this wonderful 2 CD set, is a real eye-opener for students of 20th-century European history and culture. His great enterprise, to record the Sabbath and Holiday services for the Jewish community, was designed for posterity, of course, but its stated purpose was more specifically the spreading of great Classical culture, far and wide, through the most beautiful music, to rural regions in Germany, where Jews had no access to great singers or organ music. In these religious services, Schildberger successfully included secular instrumental works of Bach and other Classical masters, as a means to engage and elevate the minds of his congregants, and he incorporated some of the most profound works of their religious repertoire into the Jewish prayer service as well.

It is striking to hear Schildberger's setting of the Sanctus from Franz Schubert's German Mass (D. 872). "Holy, Holy, Holy" (or the Kedusha, in Hebrew) which was sung in German as part of the Yom Kippur service, the Day of Atonement, the highest of Holy Days. Changing but a few words referring to Christ, Schildberger lets Schubert's musical composition, whose prayer praises the holiness of God, speak for itself, proving the universality of the language of music.

Such great music served to inspire congregations while in prayer, and for those who would take part in these services on a weekly basis, it had an even more profound effect. It also served to disseminate the principles of Classical composition. Schildberger's skillful employment of the Classical Lied, or song form, indicates not only the high level of culture that the Berlin Jewish community shared with its Christian counterparts, but that the culture itself was clearly based upon an ecumenical idea. But even more beautiful, is that it speaks to the polemical assertion that Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. has made over many years, often to incredulous audiences of our postwar culture, that German Classical culture, which he identified as the most developed in poetry and music, and Jewish culture in Germany (and that of the Yiddish Renaissance to the East) were actually the same.

'God Is My Song'

The following example gives us a glimpse of that process of Classical composition employed by Schildberger, which

LaRouche, like the poet Friedrich Schiller, insists is an intelligible one. Schildberger employed two different versions of a Lied by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) “Gottes Macht und Vorsehung,” (“God’s Power and Providence”). It is commonly known today as “God Is My Song,” the fifth in his song cycle “Six Songs by Gellert” Op. 48, composed in 1803.

Schildberger’s first use of Beethoven’s Lied was meant to follow the weekly reading from the Bible, during the Sabbath (Friday) evening service. Performed here by alto soloist Paula Lindberg with organ accompaniment, she sings the text of Isaiah 59:21, “Dies ist Mein Bund” or “This Is My Covenant.”

This is My covenant with them, saith the Lord. My spirit that is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your children’s children, said the Lord, from henceforth and forever.

The same Lied appears again on the second CD, this time as a three-strophe choral setting for the morning service of the New Year, Rosh Hashanah. It begins with the text “Gott Ist Mein Lied” (“God Is my Song”), the same text that Beethoven chose for his “Gottes Macht und Vorsehung” setting, from Gellert’s poem. At this point, we need to make a brief digression to look at the Gellert poems themselves, in order to understand the context for Schildberger’s setting.

‘Six Songs by Gellert’

Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-69), a contemporary of Johann Sebastian Bach, wrote many religious poems which were set to music by several composers, including Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach and Joseph Haydn. Beethoven chose six of Gellert’s poems, and set them in a *Liederkreis*, or song cycle, in which the songs were conceptualized as a unit, and hence, sung in succession. Since a well-composed poem is already a musical score, through vowel harmonies and meter, as well as poetic idea, Beethoven named his composition, *Six Songs by Gellert*. The composer, in setting poetry to music, must be able to wield musical metaphor to add another dimension to the poet’s work, by utilizing vocal registration, coloration, polyphony (multiple voices), and by lawfully developing and resolving existing and new ironies.

Working through the six songs of the Gellert cycle, is designed to uplift the mind, to a more profound experiencing of the ideas of *imago viva Dei* and *capax Dei*, those unique qualities of man that define him as “the living image of God” and “participating in God”: The first song, “Bitten” (“Prayer”) opens a dialogue with the Creator, to prepare the mind for prayer. The second song, “Die Liebe des Nächsten” (“Love of Thy Neighbor”) argues that anyone who claims to love God, but hates his brother, is making a mockery of God’s love. That is followed by the tension of “Vom Tode” (“Concerning Death”), in F-sharp minor, which forces our mind to reflect on man’s mortality, and how we live our lives. This heralds

the major change that next occurs: The fourth song of glory and exaltation, “Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur” (“The Celebration of God by Nature”), comes after the question of the meaning of life and death is posed, and this fourth song begins to resolve the question. But, it is not until the fifth song, “Gottes Macht und Vorsehung,” that the concept of God is internalized, and becomes no longer something outside of ourselves. Indeed, if we are to truly sing “God Is My Song,” we must, of course “sing”—i.e., *participate*—in the Creator and the process. Beethoven’s instructions are that it be sung “*mit Kraft und Feuer*” (with strength and ardor) preparing the mind for the final, sixth Lied. The “Busslied” (“Song of Atonement”) is, again, a beautiful dialogue with God, which revisits the entire process of the sinner’s transformation through to its joyful, concluding atonement.

The cycle, as with Brahms’s *Four Serious Songs*, addresses the individual’s cognitive development, which the composers understood to be of utmost importance for the ennoblement of society as a whole. This is associated with the concept of *agapē*, the Greek term for sacred love, which is best known through its use in the Epistles of St. Paul.

Beethoven’s Gellert song cycle was well known in Germany, and it would have been familiar to many of the Berlin Jewish Reform Congregation. It was common practice for Lieder to be rearranged to accommodate religious or secular choral singing, as, for example, with Beethoven’s Gellert song number four, “Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur”; or, as in these recordings, “Begrüsst,” a Lied by Robert Schumann, freely adapted by Schildberger, arranged here for solo voice, choir, and organ, as performed well by soprano Gertrud Bauman.

Classical Composition

A closer look at Schildberger’s use for Rosh Hashanah of Beethoven’s Lied, allows us to examine the nature of a Classical composition. What makes a musical composition “Classical,” is not simply that the melody line comes from a great composer, but rather, that it is characterized by the principle of transformation through the process of resolving both poetical and musical paradoxes.

In the relatively simple setting presented in these recordings, Schildberger chose 3 stanzas from the 15 in Gellert’s poem, including the first and last stanzas. And, although he retained the idea that flows through Gellert’s poem, Schildberger altered the text of the last stanza slightly. (The translation below is *EIR*’s translation from Schildberger’s text.) The choir sings the familiar score of “Gott ist Mein Lied,” with the piano accompaniment adapted for organ, and the vocal score rearranged for four choral sections (rather than one singer), with the alto, tenor, and bass sections singing the voices from the piano accompaniment.

God is my Song, He is the God of Strength.
Lord is His Name, and great are His works,
and all the Heavens are His realm.

He knows my supplication
And all the deliberations of my soul.
He knows how often I do good, and fail to do it.
He hastens to stand with me in mercy.

If my God is my shield,
If God will become my savior,
Then I ask nothing from heaven or earth
And I stand willing to face any calamity.

The first stanza is sung *forte* and joyfully, as if a declaration. There is a dramatic shift at the second stanza, where the poetic idea changes to become more internalized. It moves from describing the greatness of God—i.e., how I know God—in the first stanza, to the more reflective concept, that God knows my thoughts, and “all the deliberations of my soul”—i.e., how God knows me. This implies another process—being able to reflect on both conditions (I know God knows me), and the unfolding of the process of reflection.

This change is expressed clearly in the music, as the density of singularities increases: It is more polyphonic, the entrances are staggered, each sectional voice is singing its own clearly distinguishable part, and the vocal color changes. The choir communicates, and the mind hears, that something more intense is going on here. There is a change in the idea, which, even knowing nothing about music, no listener can miss.

For the third stanza, “If my God is my shield,” the choir sings what appears to be a repeat of the more unison form of the first stanza. But, because of the knowledge of the idea developed in the second verse, and because of the experience of having gone through hearing (and singing) the changes that take place in all aspects of the piece, the mind is ennobled, and, now hears it differently. Thus, the last stanza is not a simple repeat at all, beyond the slight variation in the line itself; it is a reflection of the whole process just experienced, sung and understood from a higher standpoint.

This is emphasized further in the majestic organ postlude, which repeats the accompaniment, twice, before it concludes, to assist the mind in contemplating what just came before; the postlude is composed, with its repeats, to enable the participants to more deeply reflect on the entire foregoing process.

Keeping in mind that the original idea of the recording project—to take advantage of the new technology of the phonograph to spread Classical culture everywhere, through the Jewish prayer services using the most beautiful music, especially in less-developed areas of Germany—there is much more here than the oligarchy today would like people to know. For a person steeped in the old traditional melodies of the synagogue, listening to this recording is uplifting, as it enables the listener, be he or she in the Europe in the 1930s, or presently in the United States or elsewhere, to hear these melodies transformed into polyphony. Today, it is enjoyable for anyone, of whatever background, religion, or nation, to hear this Classically composed religious music; through it, there are a

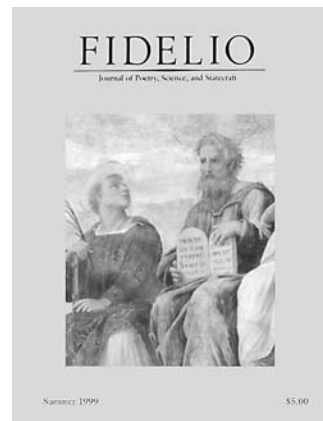
The Mendelssohn Renaissance

The Summer 1999 issue of the Schiller Institute’s *Fidelio* magazine features the work of Moses Mendelssohn, providing extensive documentation of his political, philosophical, and cultural role in shaping the German Classics and the Yiddish Renaissance. Articles include “What It Takes To Be a

World-Historical Leader Today,” a speech by Helga Zepp-LaRouche on Feb. 14, 1999; “Philosophical Vignettes from the Political Life of Moses Mendelssohn,” by David Shavin; and “Moses Mendelssohn and the Bach Tradition,” by Steven P. Meyer.

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. characterized the issue: “The only way to free Germany to act as a nation, once again, is to give long overdue recognition of the loss to all humanity of that Yiddish Renaissance set into motion by the collaboration of Lessing and Mendelssohn around the heritage of Leibniz and Bach. It was the Jewish bearers of that noble legacy, in Poland and elsewhere, who were the true victims of Hitler. This horror killed Germany and Poland, especially Germany, as much as it killed those Jews who typified the bearers of that Yiddish Renaissance tradition.

“The new *Fidelio*, as a package, puts that issue into the only right choice of perspective. To do justice to the victims of Nazism, one must restore that German Classic which Mendelssohn and his collaborators contributed so much to building.”



number of valuable lessons to be learned.

What a bittersweet irony it is for the world today, so Hobbesian, a half-century after the end of World War II, to see that it was entirely natural in the Germany of 1928-30, when the recordings were made, for the religious poems of a fundamentalist Protestant, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, to be set to music by a Catholic composer, Ludwig van Beethoven, and then to become incorporated with such facility into the Jewish prayer service, adding beauty and depth to the celebration of God’s universal creation.