

**SHARIM V'SHAROT**

Dr. Elayne Robinson Grossman,  
*Conductor and Music Director*

Daniel Hyman,  
*Assistant Conductor*

— ✨ LIVE IN CONCERT ✨ —

# JEWISH COMPOSERS OF BROADWAY

*A dazzling celebration of the legendary  
Jewish songwriters who shaped the sound of Broadway!*



SUNDAY,  
**JUNE 7, 2026**



**3:00 PM**

Experience an unforgettable afternoon featuring the music of  
iconic Broadway composers, brought to life by the dynamic voices of

— ✨ *Sharim v'Sharot* ✨ —

**TICKETS**

**\$25**

ADVANCE PURCHASE

**\$30**

AT THE DOOR

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Thank you for your generosity.



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*“Music and texts, song, reaches directly to our minds and hearts. It is a perfect educational tool for everything that human beings do socially, ritually, spiritually, historically, emotionally, and mentally. It teaches us about the past, orients us in the present, and helps us to navigate the future.”*

—Dr. Elayne Robinson Grossman



## Jewish Composers of Broadway

Dr. Elayne Robinson Grossman, Music Director and Conductor

Daniel Hyman, Assistant Conductor

Gavin Laur, Piano

William Beitmann, Rehearsal Piano

June 7, 2026

3:00 PM

**Mi Shebeirach**

Debbie Friedman (1951–2011) and Drorah Setel

Arr: Barry Brian

**Shehecheyanu**

Music: Marvin Hamlisch (1944–2012)

Text: Traditional

Arr: Sheldon Levin

**The Rhythm of Life**

Music: Cy Coleman (1929–2004)

Text: Dorothy Fields (1904–1974)

Arr: John Leavitt

**Somewhere**

Music: Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

Text: Stephen Sondheim (1930–2021)

Arr: William Stickles

**Stand by Me**

Ben E. King (1938–2015), Mike Stoller (1933–),

and Jerry Leiber (1933–2011)

Arr: Roger Emerson

The men of Sharim v'Sharot

**Seasons of Love**

Jonathan Larson (1960–1996)

Arr: Roger Emerson

**For Good**

Stephen Schwartz (1948–)

Arr. Mac Huff

Gloria Feldman, soprano; Helene Raush, soprano;  
Francine Safir, alto; Stuart Lehman, tenor

**I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'**

George Gershwin (1898–1937), DuBose Heyward (1885–1940),  
Dorothy Heyward (1890–1961), and Ira Gershwin (1896–1983)

Arr. Douglas E. Wagner

The men of Sharim v'Sharot

**You'll Never Walk Alone**

Music: Richard Rodgers (1902–1979)

**with Climb Ev'ry Mountain**

Text: Oscar Hammerstein II (1895–1960)

Arr. Mark Hayes

Gloria Feldman, soprano; Francine Safir, alto; Max Yaffe, tenor

**The Lady with the Lamp**

Music: Max Helfman (1901–1963)

Text: Emma Lazarus (1849–1887)

Max Yaffe, tenor

**Amerike di Prekhtike**

Music: Samuel Ward (1848–1903)

English Text: Katharine Lee Bates (1859–1929)

Yiddish Text: Berl Lapin (1889–1952)

Arr. Mark Zuckerman

**God Bless America**

Irving Berlin (1888–1989)

Robyn Ultan, soprano

**The Bill of Rights**

Music: Jay Gorney (1896–1990)

Text: Henry Myers (1893–1975)

Arr. Elayne Robinson Grossman

**Keep Marching**

Shaina Taub (1988–)

The women of Sharim v'Sharot  
Helene Raush, soprano; Francine Safir, alto

**Eishet Chayil**

Music: Caryn Alter

Text: Proverbs 31:10–13

Arr. Caryn Alter and Elayne Robinson Grossman

*Premiere of Choral Arrangement*

Jointly with Beth El Synagogue Choir

## Our Mission

Sharim v'Sharot was founded in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We are an independent choir that sings in four-part (or more) harmony. The choir's mission is to promote the performance, preservation, and study of Jewish music, and to educate the public about Jewish music. Our name comes from Ecclesiastes 2:8, and is Hebrew for "People of Song." The choir is a member of the New Jersey Choral Consortium, the Guild for Early Music, and Chorus America. Currently, we rehearse in Lawrenceville, NJ with members from various counties in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Our repertoire includes Jewish music of many eras and countries, from medieval chants to the Italian Renaissance of Salamone Rossi's madrigals, through 19th century liturgical music of Germany, France, and Austria, 20th and 21st century Israeli and American concert works, Broadway, show tunes from the Yiddish theater, Ashkenazi and Sefardic folk music, and modern popular styles. We sing in Hebrew, Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish, French, Italian, and English. We've performed in concert halls, at synagogue celebrations, interfaith services, Jewish community events, Yom HaShoah commemorations, Yiddish clubs, nursing homes, retirement communities, and choral festivals in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. We have held Community Choral Festivals and Young People Jewish Song Writing Contests.

Sharim v'Sharot enjoys exploring new music. Some of our members have composed and arranged our music, some of which you shall hear today.

Sharim v'Sharot is deeply committed to the pursuit of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. All concerts are given in accessible locations. We especially encourage auditions and participation by qualified singers of underrepresented minorities and other individuals who belong to groups that have been historically underrepresented or marginalized within Jewish arts communities. You don't have to be Jewish to sing with us. For audition and concert information, or to receive emails about our concerts and other events, please visit [sharimvsharot.org](http://sharimvsharot.org) or write to [info@sharimvsharot.org](mailto:info@sharimvsharot.org).

Sharim v'Sharot is honored to have received grants in 2026 from the Presser Foundation, Mercer County Culture and Heritage, and the Jewish Federation of Princeton Mercer Bucks!



Come join us to learn about the variety of Jewish music throughout the centuries and spread the word about Jewish music. You don't have to be Jewish to sing with us. For audition and concert information, or to receive emails about our Concerts, Choral Festival and Folk-Fest-Sing-Along and other events, please visit [sharimvsharot.org](http://sharimvsharot.org) or write to [sharimvsharot@gmail.com](mailto:sharimvsharot@gmail.com).

## Special Thanks

As our choir Sharim v'Sharot: People of Song presents our Spring Concert, as the culmination of our 26th Season, our deepest gratitude goes to our highly-esteemed Musical Director and Conductor Dr. Elayne Robinson Grossman, who formed the choir in 2000, and has led, guided, and nurtured it so successfully, from that time to today. We also wish to express profound gratitude to Assistant Conductor Daniel Hyman, who stepped in when our Director became indisposed, to work with her to prepare the choir and to conduct today's performance. I also wish to thank all of our soloists and our accompanist Gavin Laur.

In addition to preparing to perform, many of our choir members and Board Members took responsibility for essential tasks required to produce the concert. These include: Francine Safir, Steven Cohen, Barbara Gronsky, Stacy Wolf, Emma Cohen, Bill Beitman, our Rehearsal Accompanist, Marc Finkel, Stuart Lehman, Matthew Davis, Rachelle Goldstein, Caryn Alter, and others, as well as all the choir members who helped promote the concert and build the audience. We particularly thank Caryn Alter, who composed and shared with the choir, a beautiful and meaningful piece "Eshet Chayil" which will cap our program, and for making arrangements for the Beth El choir, led by Rachel Katz, to perform it with us.

We also wish to thank Beth El Congregation of East Windsor, led by Rabbi Jay M. Kornsgold and Assistant Rabbi Matthew Nover, for hosting the choir, and Caryn Alter and Administrative Coordinator Becky Saboski, for assisting with arrangements. Finally, we wish to express our deepest appreciation to our many donors, our sources of grant support, and to you, our audience, for joining us today for our concert "Jewish Composers of Broadway."

-Martin Rosenberg,  
President



My heartfelt appreciation to Daniel Hyman, Martin Rosenberg, the Sharim v'Sharot Board of Directors, and singers for their help this spring.

-Elayne Robinson Grossman,  
Conductor and Music Director

## About the Music

*Dr. Stacy Wolf, Professor of Theater, Princeton University and Dr. Elayne Robinson Grossman, with Allan Freedman and Caryn Alter*

### Introduction: How Jews Shaped the Broadway Musical

What does American musical theatre owe to Jewish artists? The answer, in short, is nearly everything! From the immigrant neighborhoods of the Lower East Side to the bright lights of Times Square, Jewish composers, lyricists, librettists, producers, and performers have been at the creative heart of Broadway for over a century. Jews' contribution to the Broadway musical theatre is not coincidental; it reflects a distinctly Jewish sensibility: an outsider's longing for belonging, a tradition of wrestling with justice, an instinct for storytelling and humor, and a deep well of both grief and joy.

The Golden Age of Broadway—roughly the early 1940s through the 1960s—was in many ways a Jewish Golden Age. George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Jule Styne, Harold Arlen, and dozens of others wrote shows that defined American culture while drawing quietly (and sometimes not so quietly) on Jewish textual traditions, immigrant experiences, and religious ethics. The Broadway audience, especially through the first half of the 20th century, was substantially Jewish, too. Many New York theatregoers recognized themselves in stories of striving, survival, and the complicated dream of assimilation.

The songs in today's program span nearly a century of Broadway, from the Gershwins' folk opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935) to Shaina Taub's feminist anthem in *Suffs* (2024). Some were written by Jewish artists explicitly engaging with Jewish themes. Others carry a Jewish spirit more subtly, an ethical inheritance of Torah and Talmud, filtered through the crucible of American life. In every case, we invite you to hear both layers: what makes this song American, and what makes it Jewish American.

### “Mi Shebeirach”

Debbie Friedman (1951-2011) and Drorah Setel  
Arr. Barry Brian

“Mi Shebeirach” (“May the One who blessed”) is one of Judaism's oldest prayers, recited in synagogues since at least the medieval period. Its name invokes the blessing formula offered on behalf of the sick, drawing on Moses's heartfelt five-word prayer for his sister Miriam, “O God, pray heal her” (Numbers 12:13), and on God's declaration in Exodus 15:26, “I am your healer.”

The version familiar to most American Jews today was written in 1987 by Debbie Friedman and biblical scholar and feminist theologian Drorah Setel, as members of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, an LGBTQ-affirming synagogue in San Francisco. They wrote it

for a friend who was celebrating her 60th birthday and was struggling in her life. It was also during the height of the AIDS crisis, when members of their community were dying around them. Their version makes a significant feminist change by explicitly including the matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, alongside the patriarchs in the chain of ancestral blessing. It also weaves Hebrew prayer with an English section asking for “the courage to make our lives a blessing.”

Released in 1989 on Friedman’s album *And You Shall Be a Blessing*, the song spread through Jewish summer camps, conferences, and synagogues to become the most widely sung piece of contemporary Jewish liturgy in North America. Friedman, sometimes called “the troubadour of Liberal Judaism,” transformed American Jewish worship music. In 1996, Drorah Setel was the first person in Judaism ordained by a rabbinical court (beit din) composed solely of women.

## **“Shehecheyanu”**

Music: Marvin (Moshe) Hamlisch (1944-2012)

Text: Traditional

Arr. Sheldon Levin

This is an arrangement of the traditional prayer thanking God for allowing us to live to celebrate joyous life cycle events. The Shehecheyanu blessing, “Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season,” is one of Judaism’s most elemental prayers of gratitude. Recorded in the Talmud more than 1,500 years ago, it is recited at the start of holidays, at life-cycle milestones, and whenever one experiences something joyful for the first time. It is Judaism’s way of pausing to notice that one is alive and present in a particular moment.

The setting heard today is by Marvin Hamlisch, who was born in Manhattan to Viennese-born Jewish parents whose family had fled Nazi Germany. A child musical prodigy, he was accepted into what is now the Juilliard Pre-College Division before his seventh birthday. Hamlisch became one of the most decorated composers in American entertainment history, one of only two people ever to win the Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony, and Pulitzer prizes (the so-called “PEGOT”—the other person is Richard Rodgers). He is best known for his scores for *A Chorus Line* (1975) and the film *The Way We Were* (1973). Hamlisch spoke openly about his Jewish identity and particularly enjoyed performing at Jewish events. For a man whose parents had survived persecution and displacement to reach America, giving musical form to a prayer of gratitude for being alive in this moment carried unmistakable personal resonance.

## **“Rhythm of Life” from *Sweet Charity* (1966)**

Music: Cy Coleman (born Seymour Coleman) (1929-2004)  
Text: Dorothy Fields (1904-1974)  
Arr. John Leavitt

Jewish artists—composer Cy Coleman and lyricist Dorothy Fields—collaborated on *Sweet Charity*, one of the defining musicals of the mid-1960s. “Rhythm of Life” is a comic set piece in which Charity Valentine, a dancer at a New York dance hall searching for love, stumbles upon a hippie revival meeting led by a charismatic street preacher called Daddy Johann Sebastian Brown. The number is outwardly a sendup of countercultural religion, but underneath its comedy lies a genuine Jewish theological idea. Hasidic tradition, with its charismatic Rebbe leaders, teaches that worshiping God with joy, even and especially in the face of hardship, is a supreme spiritual act. Psalm 100 commands, “Worship God in gladness; come into the divine presence with shouts of joy.” The song’s exuberant, almost reckless energy is, in this light, not just showbiz, it’s a spiritual practice.

## **“Somewhere” from *West Side Story* (1957)**

Music: Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)  
Text: Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)  
Arr. William Stickles

Four Jewish artists—Bernstein, Sondheim, librettist Arthur Laurents, and director and choreographer Jerome Robbins—created *West Side Story*, a retelling of Romeo and Juliet set amid the gang wars of 1950s New York. “Somewhere” is the musical’s heart: a dream of a world without violence, without borders, without hatred, a place where Tony and Maria might simply exist together in peace. As a vision of an idealized, impossible America, the song is tied to the Jewish immigrant experience, the longing of people who came to this country with hope and found both welcome and hostility. The Jeremiah verse, “plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a hopeful future,” was written by a prophet speaking to Jews in exile in Babylon, encouraging them (29:11) not to give up on the future. That message of hope in exile permeates every note of Bernstein’s soaring melody.

## **“Stand By Me” (1961)**

Ben E. King (1938–2015), Mike Stoller (b. 1933), and Jerry Leiber (1933–2011)  
Arr. Roger Emerson

“Stand By Me” is a crossroads song where Black gospel, secular soul, and Jewish songwriting all meet. Ben E. King, who co-wrote and originally recorded the song, drew on a long tradition of Black church music, specifically the spiritual “Stand By Me Father,” which itself reflects Psalm 43’s cry for God’s guiding presence and references the stories of Samson, Daniel, and the children of Israel. The song’s other two co-writers, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, were both Jewish. They were a Brooklyn-born songwriting duo who

helped invent rock and roll by writing hits for Elvis Presley and the Coasters, among many others. Their involvement places the song in a history of Jewish and Black musical collaboration that runs through much of American popular culture. The song gained new audiences when it appeared in Rob Reiner's 1986 coming-of-age film of the same name.

### **"Seasons of Love" from *Rent* (1996)**

Jonathan Larson (grandfather's name: Lazarson) (1960-1996)  
Arr. Roger Emerson

Jonathan Larson transformed Broadway with *Rent*, a rock musical adaptation of Puccini's *La Bohème* set among young artists and activists in the HIV/AIDS-era East Village of New York City. Larson's family background included a grandfather whose name was Lazarson, suggesting Eastern European Jewish roots. The song's insistence that love cannot be quantified, that it exceeds all accounting, echoes the Song of Songs: "Vast floods cannot quench love, nor rivers drown it." "Seasons of Love" opens the second act of the musical, and it's an unusually quiet and contemplative interlude for a show of such energy. In the show, the entire company steps forward and asks the audience directly: how do you measure a year in a life? The answer, the song proposes, is love. Larson died suddenly of an aortic aneurysm at age 35 the night before *Rent*'s first public preview. The show went on to win the 1996 Pulitzer Prize in Drama and four Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Larson's death gives every note and every word of "Seasons of Love" poignancy.

### **"For Good" from *Wicked* (2003)**

Stephen Schwartz (b. 1948)  
Arr. Mac Huff

Stephen Schwartz, who also composed *Godspell*, *Pippin*, and the scores for numerous Disney movies, wrote this duet for the two central characters of the blockbuster musical, *Wicked*. Glinda the Good Witch and Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West sing this duet as they prepare to part ways forever. The song is a meditation on how the people we love change us irrevocably, for better and for worse, and ultimately for good. This female duet is unusual in the musical theater canon because the two women switch voice parts near the end of the song, musically enacting the mutual transformation they're singing about. The Jewish resonance here comes from Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers 1:6), the Mishnaic collection of moral wisdom: "Acquire for yourself a companion." The rabbis understood that friendship is not merely pleasant but is an ethical and spiritual necessity, a relationship that shapes who we become.

## **“I Got Plenty O’ Nuttin’” from *Porgy and Bess* (1935)**

George Gershwin (1898-1937), DuBose Heyward (1885-1940), Dorothy Heyward (1890-1961), and Ira Gershwin (1896-1983)  
Arr. Douglas E. Wagner

*Porgy and Bess* holds a complex and contested place in American culture. Since its debut in 1935, it has been praised as a landmark of American opera and criticized for its portrayal of Black Southern life written largely by white creators. The Gershwin brothers, children of Jewish immigrants from Russia, collaborated with the white Southern novelist DuBose Heyward on this work set in the Gullah community of Charleston, South Carolina. In this song, the disabled and impoverished Porgy sings with remarkable equanimity—even joy—about having almost nothing materially, yet feeling spiritually rich. The lyrics, written in Black Southern dialect, carry a strong echo of Pirkei Avot 4:1: “Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot.” A 2012 revival directed by Diane Paulus, with a new libretto by playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, gave both the characters Porgy, played by Norm Lewis, and especially Bess, played by Audra McDonald, greater self-determination and complexity.

## **“You’ll Never Walk Alone” with “Climb Ev’ry Mountain” from *Carousel* (1945) and *The Sound of Music* (1959)**

Music: Richard Rodgers (born Richard Rogazinsky)(1902–1979)  
Text: Oscar Hammerstein II (Jewish grandfather) (1895–1960)  
Arr. Mark Hayes

These two anthems, one from a dark and complicated musical about domestic violence and redemption, the other from the beloved if sentimentalized story of the von Trapp family, have something important in common: both are sung by women urging the young and frightened to trust themselves and keep going. In *Carousel*, Nettie Fowler sings “You’ll Never Walk Alone” to her grieving cousin Julie after Julie’s husband Billy has died. In *The Sound of Music*, Mother Abbess sings “Climb Every Mountain” to Maria as she sends her back into the uncloistered world.

“You’ll Never Walk Alone” concludes both the Broadway musical and film versions of *Carousel*, which is based on the darker version of Hungarian playwright Ferenc Molnár’s Hungarian-language drama *Liliom*, which premiered in Budapest in 1909. *Carousel* was adapted in 1945 to present a much brighter future for its working-class lovers, carnival barker Billy Bigelow and millworker Julie Jordan, who both lose their jobs due to their relationship. In the end the couple is given a second chance at a happy life, in spite of Billy’s physical abuse of Julie, and the musical ends on a hopeful note with two of the most memorable songs of the twentieth century, “If I Loved You,” and “You’ll Never Walk Alone.”

Both songs became templates for the Broadway “I believe” anthem, a musical theatre conventional song genre that continues to this day. The Isaiah verse behind the songs describes God leading the blind “by a road they did not know . . . turn[ing] darkness before

them to light.” Richard Rodgers was the son of a Jewish immigrant physician, and Oscar Hammerstein II’s paternal grandfather, the opera impresario Oscar Hammerstein, was Jewish. Their collaboration produced some of the most enduring music in American theatrical history.

Perhaps the happy endings that are so prevalent in Broadway musicals represent the hope of American life, and perhaps the preamble of the US Constitution makes it so:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

It is also the teaching of the Great Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1776–1810): It is a great mitzvah (good deed) to always be happy, to find joy in life, and to make every effort to determinedly work to avoid gloom and depression, even during hard times.

### **“The Lady with the Lamp”**

Music: Max Helfman (1901–1963)  
Text: Emma Lazarus (1849–1887)

“The Lady with the Lamp,” by the Polish-born Jewish American composer Max Helfman, is a beautiful expression of immigrants’ hopes for freedom and opportunity. Helfman used text by the noted poet Emma Lazarus (1849–1887), who wrote the 1883 poem “The New Colossus” to raise funds for a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, a gift from France. Lazarus repurposed the Statue’s meaning, and it came to symbolize the United States of America as The Mother of Exiles, welcoming the downtrodden fleeing persecution and poverty. The pedestal was engraved and installed in 1903. Of note, Lazarus’ ancestors were among the 23 Jews fleeing Recife Brazil to New Amsterdam (New York) in 1654.

### **“Amerike di Prekhtike” (America the Beautiful)**

Music: Samuel Ward (1848–1903)  
Yiddish Text: Berl Lapin (1889–1952)  
Arr. Mark Zuckerman (b. 1948)

Arranger Mark Zuckerman notes on his website ([www.mazicmusic.com](http://www.mazicmusic.com))

Immigrants were eager to adopt the secular holidays of America, especially July Fourth, commemorating their own struggle for freedom as well as their new country’s. The Jewish immigrants often translated the American holiday songs into Yiddish, as with Samuel Ward’s famous hymn “America the Beautiful” (*Amerike di prekhtike*).

Berl Lapin, the translator, was born in the Russian Empire (now Belarus), and became known as a Yiddish poet and translator during the first half of the 20th century. He spent time shuttling between Argentina and the USA before permanently settling in the USA. His translation of Bates's poem is particularly deft, capturing exactly the essence of the English with such lines as "*zangen vi burshtin*" ([grain] stalks like amber) and "*shpreyt guts un kraft mit bruderschaft fun yam biz heln yam*" (spread goodness and power with brotherhood from sea to bright sea).

Zuckerman is an award-winning, prolific New Jersey composer of opera, chamber music, and choral arrangements. His recent works include "Civilization Cannot Go Back" (from *A Better World*), which Sharim v'Sharot premiered in May 2023, and three Yiddish Hanukkah arrangements, which are featured on *Miracle of Miracles*, a new recording by Chicago A Cappella released in Fall 2023. Zuckerman's Yiddish choral arrangements are widely performed nationally and internationally.

Zuckerman's arrangement of "Amerike di Prekhtike" has the immigrant sing "America the Beautiful" in both Yiddish and English, exemplifying their dual identity.

## **"God Bless America"**

Irving Berlin (born Israel Isadore Beilin) (1888–1989)

Few songs carry the weight of immigrant gratitude more purely than "God Bless America." Berlin was born in Tyumen, Siberia, the son of a cantor. His Jewish family fled the pogroms, and on September 14, 1893, five-year-old Israel arrived at Ellis Island. He grew up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, worked as a singing waiter, and became arguably the most prolific songwriter in American history, composing over 1,500 songs, including some of the most memorable and iconic in American music, such as "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "White Christmas," and "There's No Business Like Show Business."

Berlin became a U.S. citizen and was drafted into the Army in 1918, assigned to Camp Upton in Yaphank, New York, where he originally sketched the song for a soldiers' revue. He set it aside for twenty years. On November 10, 1938—the morning after Kristallnacht, the night Nazi mobs destroyed Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues throughout Germany—singer Kate Smith introduced the revised song on her radio broadcast. The timing was not accidental. Antisemitic groups, including the Ku Klux Klan, protested that the song had been written by a Jewish immigrant, which was precisely the point. In 1940, both President Franklin Roosevelt and his Republican opponent Wendell Willkie used it as their campaign anthem. Berlin donated all royalties to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America. Woody Guthrie, who felt the song was too complacent about America's injustices, wrote "This Land Is Your Land" partly as a rebuttal.

## **“The Bill of Rights” from *Meet the People: A Musical Revue* (1940)**

Music: Jay Gorney (1896–1990)

Text: Henry Myers (1893–1975)

Arr. Elayne Robinson Grossman

“The Bill of Rights” has been a favorite song of Sharim v’Sharot since our 2006 seminar, “American Democracy Inspires Jewish Music & Poetry: A Lecture in Word and Song,” held at Princeton University.

Composer Jay Gorney (born Abraham Jacob Gornetsky) came to America with his family shortly after witnessing the Białystok pogrom as a child. After serving in the U.S. Army during World War I, Gorney abandoned his law career to compose for theater. He is perhaps best known for “Brother Can You Spare a Dime?” Gorney wrote “The Bill of Rights” as a musical mnemonic to help his father study for his citizenship exam. It appeared in *Meet the People: A Musical Revue*, which premiered in New York City on December 25, 1940, and was recorded by Paul Robeson. When Gorney was summoned to the House Un-American Activities Committee in May 1953, he stood and answered the Committee’s questions by singing this very song, before turning and walking out of the chamber.

When we talk of the US Constitution, we think of it as “the law of the land.” But from where does that phrase originate? In Exodus 12:49 we are taught that there shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger that dwells among you. To live a Jewish life is to live a life of social responsibility. In the diaspora, Jews learned to be responsible to the civil law, as long as civil law did not reject Jewish practices. The phrase *Dina d’malkhuta dina* stems from the prophet Jeremiah’s letter to the Babylonian exiles. “Seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in the peace thereof you shall have peace” (Jeremiah 29:7). In other words, the principle that “the law of the Government [in civil cases] is law” (or “the law of the land is the law”) is a tenet of Jewish religious law. Following the Magna Carta of 1215, the phrase “law of the land” has been used in various state constitutions, eventually being used in the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, 1789.

Jews arrived in America before the Revolutionary war and fought alongside George Washington. Seeking the first promise of the Bill of Rights, freedom of religion, Jews came from various countries to “pray the way they like.” To this day, American Jews pray the prayers of their forebears, singing a new song in their daily prayers. “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land” (Leviticus 25:10) is inscribed on the liberty bell.

## **“Keep Marching” from *Suffs* (2024 Broadway)**

Shaina Taub (b. 1988)

Shaina Taub is one of the most exciting voices in contemporary musical theater, becoming the first woman to win two Tony Awards—for Best Original Score and Best Book

of a Musical—for *Suffs*. The show traces the final decade of the American women’s suffrage movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. “Keep Marching” is the musical’s rousing finale, and it does what the best Broadway finales do: it sends the audience out into the world not just entertained but energized and activated. The song’s message is urgency without despair, a call to continue work that is never fully done. The message maps precisely onto two of the most beloved passages in Pirkei Avot: Hillel’s “If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?” and Rabbi Tarfon’s “It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it.” Jewish ethics and feminist activism converge here in a song that feels urgently necessary.

## “Eishet Chayil”

Music: Caryn Alter

Text: Proverbs 31:10–13

Arr. Caryn Alter and Elayne Robinson Grossman

### *Introduction by Caryn Alter:*

I first got to know Wendy Held when I joined the Beth El Synagogue Choir back in the mid-1990s. Wendy and I were both altos and usually ended up next to each other at our rehearsals and performances.

In addition to having a lovely singing voice, Wendy was also sweet, friendly, and always ready to lend a hand to the Choir and the synagogue. My family was fortunate to get to know Wendy, her husband Bob, their children Melanie and Brian, and their grandchildren over the years.

After Wendy’s heartbreaking and untimely passing in December 2017 at the age of 62, I knew that I would someday write a musical arrangement in her memory for the Beth El Choir. The Choir, which meant so much to her, was asked to sing at the April 2025 Bar Mitzvah of Wendy and Bob’s grandson, Benjamin, and I knew that this was when I wanted to honor Wendy’s memory through music. I chose the words to the prayer Eishet Chayil (Proverbs 31), sung on Friday night to women, as the lyrics to my piece because Wendy was truly a “woman of valor.” When the Beth El Choir sang “Eishet Chayil” at the Bar Mitzvah, I was so overcome with emotion that I was almost unable to speak when introducing the piece.

Early in 2026, I showed my “Eishet Chayil” arrangement to Dr. Elayne Robinson Grossman, Conductor and Music Director of Sharim v’Sharot, a Jewish choir with which I have sung for over 25 years. Dr. Grossman went “above and beyond,” patiently sharing with me her time, her musical wisdom, and her composition talents to add a piano accompaniment and coda, and to bring the arrangement to a whole new level. To her, I give my heartfelt thanks and gratitude. *Todah rabah!*

I would also like to thank Daniel Hyman, Assistant Conductor of Sharim v'Sharot, Rachel Katz, Conductor of the Beth El Choir, and all the singers of Sharim v'Sharot and the Beth El Choir for bringing this new rendition of "Eishet Chayil" to life.

It is truly an honor to have my composition performed today. Hearing this piece will always bring back for me wonderful memories of sitting next to Wendy at choir rehearsals as we lifted our hearts through song together.



*Front row (L to R): Sally Katz, Wendy Held, Caryn Alter, Dora Schnur  
Back Row (L to R): Stuart Nagourney, Bill Weinstein  
Conductor: Janet Nagourney*

## About the Director

**Dr. Elayne Robinson Grossman** has been Music Director of Sharim v'Sharot Foundation and Conductor of Sharim v'Sharot: People of Song since its inception in 2000. She received a Doctorate of Education and Master of Arts degrees, both with an emphasis on Music and Choral Conducting, and both from New York University. Her Bachelor of Science degree in Voice was earned at Brooklyn College. From 1977–1998, she served as Conductor and Musical Director of the Rottenberg Chorale and Chamber Singers, now called Nashir: The Rottenberg Chorale, at the Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center in New York City. She has often conducted the New York University Alumni Chorale as well as the National Cantors' Choir during several CAJE conferences. For four years she served as Musical Director of Mak'helat Beth Sholom in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Dr. Grossman continues to be in demand as a conductor, voice teacher, vocal coach, and Scholar-in-Residence, having been interviewed in newspapers and on radio stations. A noted choral arranger who studied with Alice Parker z"l at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, Dr. Grossman's arrangements are performed in schools and congregations throughout the country. Dr. Grossman transcribed and edited 51 recorded songs (Altaras Recordings) of Ladino folk singer and composer Flory Jagoda z"l. Thirty nine appear in *The Flory Jagoda Songbook: Memories of Sarajevo* (Tara Publications, 1993). Her analysis contained in the *Songbook* will appear in a social studies textbook published by the New York City Department of Education titled *Hidden Voices: Jewish Americans in United States History*.

Dr. Grossman enjoyed teaching children at Abrams Hebrew Academy in Yardley, PA as the band director, teaching wind and brass instruments for 22 years. She previously served as the school's coordinator of *Jewish Music Alive and In Person: Interdisciplinary Programs*. With her husband of 42 years, Rabbi Emeritus of Adath Israel Congregation, Daniel T. Grossman z"l, she has composed, produced, and performed a collection of recorded and published Jewish songs used throughout the country, *Help Us Bake A Challah and Other Songs for Jewish Children*, re-released under the title *Penny in the Pushka*. In addition, they performed *Siman Tov*, a Jewish cultural experience using sign language for hearing and non-hearing audiences. Elayne now teaches voice, piano, woodwinds, and music theory at the Allegra School of Music and Arts in Hillsborough, New Jersey.

## About the Assistant Director

**Daniel Hyman** holds music degrees from Indiana University, Sarah Lawrence College, Queens College/CUNY, and the School For Strings Suzuki pedagogy program. He teaches at Brooklyn College/CUNY Prep Center for the Performing Arts, and Touro College, where he designed and gave the course Jewish Music. He also teaches Suzuki violin at Trevoze (PA) Day School. He sings in Sharim v'Sharot, with Monmouth Civic Chorus, and with Cantus Novus in his home town of Yardley, PA. He has recorded numerous classical and

contemporary chamber works with pianist/composer Leonard Lehrman which may be viewed on YouTube. He also premiered Kermit Moore's song cycle *Tetelestai* at NYU's Tenri Cultural Center.

For L.I. Masterworks Chorus Daniel sang section bass, baritone solos and coached diction. While teaching at Queens College/CUNY he sang in QC Vocal Ensemble and studied conducting with James John, Maurice Peress and Richard Sang. For the Port (Washington NY) Jewish Center he was a solo baritone and violinist, and choir director. He greatly enjoyed teaching music at the British International School in Kyiv and cantorial singing at Atikva Tsentz, and also taught strings, choir, and classroom music in the NYC public schools. He loves puzzles and has appeared on NPR's *Weekend Edition* Sunday puzzle. He is an avid cook, and is learning to keep houseplants alive, gradually.

## About the Pianist

Pianist **Gavin Laur** has performed across the United States and abroad, at venues including Jaani Kirik in St. Petersburg, Russia, Castle Prösels in Völs am Schlern, Italy, and the Musical Instrument Museum in Scottsdale, Arizona. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance (Summa cum Laude) from Arizona State University as well as a Master of Arts in Liberal Arts from St. John's College Annapolis. Currently based in Philadelphia, he maintains a large studio of private piano students in and around the city.

## About the Rehearsal Pianist

**Bill Beitmann** began playing piano at the age of 7 under the tutelage of his father. At ages 10–17 he continued private lessons with a piano teacher. Bill recalls playing piano in public as early as in 5th grade where he would play patriotic songs during the morning “Pledge of Allegiance.” In middle school, Bill learned to play percussion instruments in the band (the piano was definitely not a marching band instrument!), and in high school he learned to play the sousaphone. Yet, Bill continued playing the piano for his high school stage band, chorus and orchestra. He also accompanied musical productions during his high school and college years.

Bill has been accompanying Sharim v'Sharot for many years and also plays the keyboard in the Cardinal Dougherty Alumni Band. He has performed at the North American Jewish Choral Festival with choirs and assisted by playing the piano at workshops. He lends his pianistic skills at various services and programs as part of the “Mazel Tones” at Adath Israel Congregation, Lawrenceville, NJ, and has accompanied singers and instrumentalists at Beth El Synagogue, East Windsor, NJ, as well as at area churches.

Since retiring from his day job with the State of New Jersey in July 2025, Bill has spent more time accompanying various ensembles in the area.

# The Singers of Sharim v'Sharot

## **Soprano:**

Judie Adey  
Emma Cohen\*  
Gloria Feldman  
Ellen Fennick  
**Sandra Hirsch**  
**Helene Raush**  
Robyn Ultan

## **Alto:**

Caryn Alter\*  
Naomi Basicckes  
**Barbara Gronsky**  
Sally Katz  
**Anna Kitces**  
Francine Safir  
Stacy Wolf

## **Tenor:**

William Beitmann  
Seth Fishman  
**Stuart Lehman\***  
Max Yaffe

## **Bass:**

Stephen M. Cohen\*  
Marc Finkel  
Allan Freedman  
Daniel Hyman  
**Martin Rosenberg**

\* section leader  
**board member**

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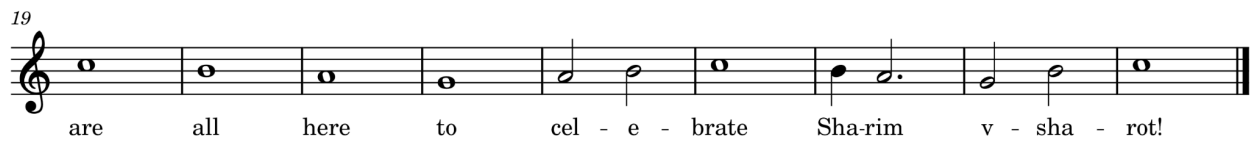
609-298-6660  
*call for appointment*

231 Crosswicks Road  
Suite #13  
Bordentown, NJ 08505

609-298-2640 fax  
office@alterdmd.com



# The Alto Section Celebrates Sharim v'Sharot!



## We're all about the bass.

*Mazel tov  
to  
Sharim v'Sharot  
on our  
2026 concert*

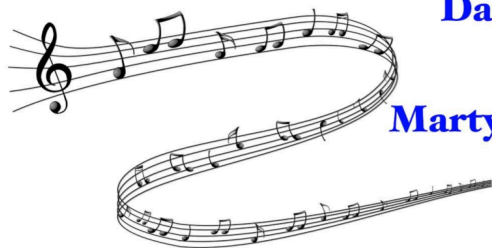
**Steve Cohen**

**Marc Finkel**

**Allan Freedman**

**Daniel Hyman**

**Marty Rosenberg**



Todah, Sharim v'Sharot, for the pleasure of singing the high notes all of these years.

—The Soprano Section:  
Ellen, Emma, Gloria, Helene, Judie, Robyn, and Sandie



Celebrating our 26<sup>th</sup> year of making great music!



The tenors are holding up our part of the score!

William Beitmann  
Seth Fishman  
Stuart Lehman  
Max Yaffe