

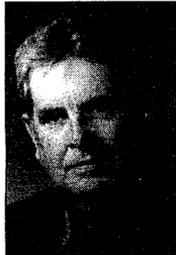


Elected officials below wish you A Joyous Passover

Happy Passover
from
Harry Lazarenko
Councillor
Mynarski Ward
986-5188



Mike O'Shaughnessy
City Councillor
OLD KILDONAN WARD
Wishing you a Happy Passover



Happy Passover to the Jewish Community



Garth Steek
City Councillor for River Heights
Ph. 986-5236

Passover feature



The Winnipeg klezmer group, Finjan, performs a lively Jewish folk song: Prokofiev, Ravel and other composers were strongly influenced by Yiddish music.

Jewish folksongs

An important part of our heritage

By PEARLE E. MANNE

What is a folksong? Bob Dylan (Zimmerman), who was Jewish and toured the country, used to say: "If I say it's a folksong, it's a folksong." It is a simple melody set to words that can say something poetic.

You don't need a great voice to sing folksongs, and do not need a big production to convey to students or listeners the intent of the songs. You don't really need words.

In Yiddish folksongs, you just sing Yiddish - you need no words, you need syllables - a word like "ya ya diddle dom" is Yiddish. A mother will sing a child to sleep. There are no words. The mother, while rocking her child, conveys to the child what she wants for the child and what is in her heart, her joy and her aspirations for him. She hopes that the child is asleep. The words are not important; the child just hears the melody.

A three month old doesn't understand the words, and it may be a good thing. How many parents will rock a child to sleep and say to the child "when you grow up, you will be a 'soyfer' - vest farkoyfen roshinkes mit mondlen". Does the child know that no mother in her right mind today will say that, as opposed to "when you grow up you will be a doctor?"

STARTED IN RENAISSANCE
Yiddish folksongs started in the Renaissance and were devoted to the

stove or sleep with brothers and sisters on the floor? This is the song Vi Azoy Trinkt A Kaiser Tay?

There are so many songs in Yiddish music. Why do we have such a wide selection? There seems to be a revival of Yiddish music, which seems to reflect the old Yiddish life and the history of the Jewish people. All this is written in the Jewish folksong. There are songs of life, love, death, pain, the anguish of joy and simcha, weddings, school, and food.

There have been changes in the folksong. In the old days, grandparents sang to their grandchildren in their own particular dialect, which somebody might have heard and brought back to his own town. (Cont. on page B7. See "Jewish folksongs".)

Almighty, the Messiah and the rabbis of that day. Secular music was not accepted. You couldn't sing of life or dancing, but only about the Messiah.

Later on, there might have been a song about a young person who was a pauper, and he sang about his life in Eastern Europe. His favorite drink of the time was tea with lemon. They drank it with a lump of sugar on one side of the mouth, and a piece of challah on the other side.

The young man was curious to know how the Kaiser drinks his tea. Does the Kaiser drink it differently? Does he get into bed to drink it? Is it prepared differently? How does the Kaiser eat potatoes, which were a staple? How does he go to sleep? Does he get into a bed or does he sleep on top of the

There is another song about a young boy who doesn't want to go to Hebrew school. He wants to stay outside and play. But learning is important. First you learn, and then you play. So the father says to Motel: "A Jew must learn in order to earn a living." Every event in Yiddish life is important.

Then there is the young man who is going off to war. Many people think that this melody is a "hopke", a lively song. "Yoshke gayt avek". But he is going to fight for the Czar, leaving behind a sweetheart. He pleads with her and she answers him with "another kiss and another kiss."

There is a song about this religious man who get up one Shabbos morning and walks to the town and sees, horror of horrors, a train with smoke coming from the top, and water dripping from the bottom, and not drawn by horses. It is a "bon". It is riding on Shabbos with its whistle blow-

Shalom

On behalf of the government and people of Manitoba, it is our pleasure to wish the Jewish community a happy and healthy Passover.

Passover is rooted in centuries of ancestral traditions - traditions that you bring to life each year at the Seder table. This celebration of your ancestors' triumph over adversity and oppression is a vital link to your history and your identity in the modern world.

As you join family and friends to remember and honour these legacies, we wish you a holiday filled with good times and fond memories.



Gary Doer
Premier of Manitoba



Becky Barrett
Minister responsible for Multiculturalism

Manitoba

Passover feature

Jewish folksongs

(Cont. from page B6.)

Some words may have been changed, and they changed from country to country and village to village. But the theme remained the same. Yiddish music is in a minor key, which is a mournful sound and which people have mourned as much as the Jewish people. Their music is plaintive.

The lifestyle is reflected in Yiddish songs. If the parents disapproved of a shidach, there is a song.

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ing. The Chassid sings a song in shock, which describes this thing that is riding on the Shabbat.

"RIDING ON SHABBS"

Another Chassid gets up on the Shabbos morning, gets dressed and starts to walk through the village and by the position of the sun, he realizes that it is late, and he decides to go through the meadow - short cut - he runs through the meadow.

The sun is high, and it is hot, and he starts to sweat, and he takes out his red handkerchief and he runs with his kapote and shtremel and he runs into a bull - he is running, and the bull is chasing him.

The bull grabs the kapote and he ends up on the horn of the great bull. What is this great tragedy? The bull is running with the Chassid, and he yells "gevalt, Yiddin, save me, I am riding on Shabbes."

When it came to life in America, one remembers the story and the song of the "boarder" who came to live with a "missus" who cooked and washed and cleaned for him while he trying to amass money to send for a ship's card for his wife and family in Europe.

Then there is the young girl who is afraid that her mother is going to punish her because Yankele came into the house and kissed her. What girl lets herself be caressed by a boy?

Her mother does chastise and reprimand her. Then she answers her mother by singing Mamma Bin Ich Farliebt (Oh Mother Am I in Love).

When one talks about composers in America, most people think about Sholem Secunda and Bei Mir Bistu Shane. But there were also many more songs. He was active in the Yiddish theatre during the '20s and '30s. The Yiddish theatre during this period was very popular.

However, classical musicians and artists and actors looked down on his work. The melodies might have been trite, but the Jewish composers had to put them out like an assembly line, because people wanted them so badly. Sholem Secunda composed together with Olshanetsky and Lichensky. Abe Ellstein was the leader of the Yiddish musical theatre. There was also Itzhak Langer, who composed "Yidel mitn Fidel".

Why do we have to recall the Yiddish musical theatre? Why was it so important to us? It is part of our heritage. It was important to the immigrants. If you wanted to cry, you went to the Yiddish theatre. If you wanted to laugh, you went to the Yiddish theatre. It was important to our parents and to our grandparents. This is our background.

The influence of Yiddish music on non-Jewish composers was strong. Prokofiev was Russian, and not Jewish. However, he

was intrigued by the uniqueness of Yiddish music. Overture On Jewish Themes For Clarinet was written in 1919. As you listen to this, can you tell where in the composition this cannot be Yiddish klezmer music?

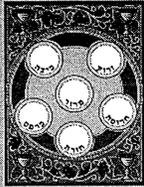
Maurice Ravel was not Jewish, yet he did set to music Jewish folksongs. He was born in the Pyrenees, and had a Spanish background.

Mahler was a Jew, but for the sake of expediency, he had to convert in order to conduct the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. You can see a lot of Jewish melodies in his work. His themes are like klezmer music.

It is possible to adapt from the classical to the Yiddish, if you change the emphasis on a note. Thus it appeared on the American theatre and the musical stage.

In America, in music theaters, most of the composers were Jewish. Gershwin said that if he were not Jewish, he could never have written The Rhapsody in Blue.

The writer lives in Monroe Township, New Jersey.



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Happy Passover to all our Family, Friends & Clients from Phil, Susan, & Josh

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