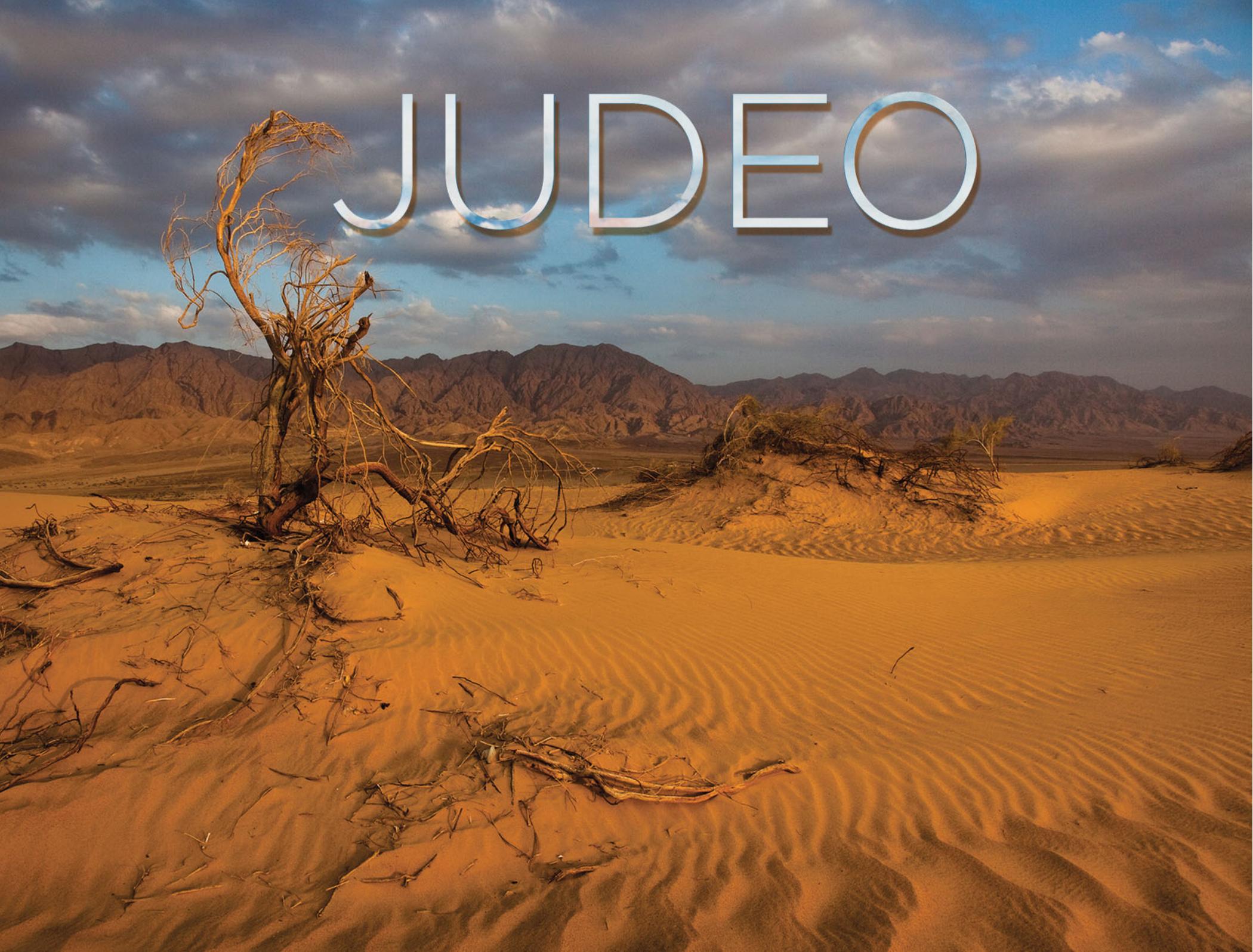


# JUDEO



# JUDEO

Music Produced and written by HILLEL TIGAY\*  
Music Co-Produced and recorded by  
ROSS LEVINSON at i ear music  
Executive Producers:  
JEFF AYEROFF; MARTY LONGBINE  
Co-Executive Producer: JULIE YANNATTA  
Mixed by BRANDON DUNCAN at  
Apogee's Berkeley Street Studio  
Cover Photo by DORON NISSIM [pbase.com/doronissim](http://pbase.com/doronissim)  
\*Suri Goali Yah: Trad/Tigay

1. Hoshia Na (prelude) 1:56
2. Hallelujah 7:14
3. Pitchu Li 6:19
4. Utzu Eitza 3:53
5. Shema 4:06
6. Baruch Hamakom 5:55
7. Suri Goali Yah 5:44
8. Kaddish 5:11
9. Hoshia Na 8:36
10. Hineh Mah Tov 4:51

JUDEO is Hillel Tigay

with ROSS LEVINSON and JACLYN BECK

and featuring  
JANINE WINKLER, LIZZI HEYDEMANN  
and JAMIE PAPISSH.



[WWW.JUDEOMUSIC.COM](http://WWW.JUDEOMUSIC.COM)

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**JUDEO** *is*

**HILLEL TIGAY:** vocals, guitars, bass, lute, oud, cumbus saz, keys

*With*

**ROSS LEVINSON:** vocals, djembe, violin

**JACLYN BECK:** vocals

*And Featuring:*

**JANINE WINKLER** and **LIZZI HEYDEMANN:** vocals

**JAMIE PAPISH:** percussion

*And Also With:*

**FRITZ LEWAK:** drums

**HAMID SAEIDI:** santur

**NORIK MANUKYAN:** duduk

**VIRGINE ALUMYAN:** qanun

**OKAY CIHANER:** ney

**MAGDA FISHMAN KEYDAR:** chatsotrah

**ELLIE CHOATE:** harp

**HOPE EASTON:** cello

**SEAN HECHT:** cello on Kaddish, Suri Goali Yah

**THE ECLIPSE STRING QUARTET:** strings on Hallelujah

**NAN LEVINSON, PAULA MAZUR:** vocals on Baruch Hamakom

**MILA TIGAY, EDEN TIGAY:** vocals on Hallelujah and Shema

**KOROUGH ZOLANI:** santur on Kaddish:

**MICHAEL BROUS, MARCIA BROUS:** Shofar

**IKAR CHOIR:** vocals Hallelujah, Pitchu Li, Hineh Mah Tov

**JESSICA KATE MEYER:** vocals on Hineh Mah Tov

**MILKEN STUDENTS "HILLEL" ENSEMBLE:** vocals on Hineh Mah Tov

**HERB ALPERT:** solo trumpet on Hallelujah

Music Produced and written by **HILLEL TIGAY\***

Music Co-Produced and recorded by **ROSS LEVINSON** at i ear music

Mixed by **BRANDON DUNCAN** at Apogee's Berkeley Street Studio

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Photo of Hillel in tweed by **MASAO INOUE**

Other Photos by **JEFF BENDER**

\*Suri Goali Yah: Trad/Tigay

Liner Notes by **HILLEL TIGAY, RABBI JEFFREY H. TIGAY**; edited by **CHANAN TIGAY**

We would like to express deep and heartfelt thanks to so many people who took on this project as a labor of love: Our main task on this endeavor was to channel that love and the enthusiasm and energy that you all shared so freely. This album would never have come to life without each and everyone of your profound contributions, for which we are eternally and humbly grateful: Jeff Ayeroff, Marty Longbine, Rabbi Sharon Brous, Beth Tigay, Mila and Eden Tigay, Jeff and Helene Tigay, Eytan, Chanan and Yis Tigay, Nan and Jamie Levinson, Allen, Eli, and Karmen Beck, Julie Yannatta, David Kohan, Larry Goetz and The Lair staff, Melissa Balaban, Todd Kelssler, Paula Mazur, Gary Greenberg, Lydia Sarno, Herb Alpert, Shiva Baum, Brandon Duncan, Matthew Ruggieri, Katya Yarotskaya, Mathieu Bitton, Sonia Dubon, Jessica Learish, C.J. Kim, Jeff Bender, Doron Nissim, the IKAR davening team, and the IKAR community.

*“These sounds transcend space and time. Each note draws closer to the place where music becomes prayer - piercing both the heart and the heavens.”*

*- Rabbi Sharon Broûs*

## MODERN MUSIC FROM THE PAST.

Judaism and Christianity today tend to look back only a few decades, a few centuries at most, for their models of spiritual practice. “Judeo” gazes back over two millennia, tracing the origins of Judeo-Christian worship to the Jerusalem Temple and exploring, musically, the spiritual nexus of these two great faiths.

In the Book of Kings, the prophet Elisha has a musician summoned to help him receive a prophetic revelation: “Now then,” he says. “Get me a musician.” As the musician played, “the hand of God came upon him.”

The ancients were keenly aware that music had a singular power to bring the presence of God into their midst. The music recorded here attempts to offer the listener, whether deeply pious, agnostic, or secular, a tangible sense of something greater than oneself.

To imagine what prayer sounded like 2,000 years back in Jerusalem at the Holy Temple, I consulted with my father, a Bible scholar. I asked what kinds of instruments were used, what texts were sung and recited. Then, I took the Psalms and biblical verses that formed the basis of the Temple worship and composed new melodies, filtering them through Peter Gabriel and U2, artists who gave my generation a ‘religious experience.’ My goal was to create something transcendent, something that would unlock the way our ancestors accessed prayer, and re-animate the way we experience it today.

It is my hope as well that by focusing the audience on those things that were common to our faiths in those formative days of both religions (the Hebrew Bible, liturgical music, religious holidays, synagogue worship, the Hebrew and Aramaic languages, the conviction that God’s primary commandment is morality (“you shall love your neighbor as yourself”), this music can remind us of all that we still share and hold sacred, which far outweighs our differences.

If I have learned nothing else at IKAR, where I have led services in song over the course of the past seven years as Hazzan, it is that music is indeed the universal language. If this is true, then through it we can learn and share universal truths. This record was made with love by Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Los Angeles from 2010 to 2012.



*Sharon Broûs*

## 1. HOSHIA NA (PRELUDE) (Psalm 118:25)

Ana Adonai hoshia na! Ana Adonai hoshia na!  
Ana Adonai hatzlichah na! Ana Adonai hatzlichah na!

O Lord, please save us! O Lord, please save us!  
O Lord, let us prosper! O Lord, let us prosper!

We wanted an opening track that immediately transported the listener to first century Israel. The haunting instrument that plays the plaintive theme is an Armenian woodwind instrument called a duduk, played here expressively by Norik Manukyan, and which I imagine resembles the biblical reed instrument known as the abbu.

This track, like many on the album, employed the talents of several wonderful Middle Eastern musicians. I vividly recall them struggling at times to play melodies that to Westerners were as simple as "Mary Had a Little Lamb." We had to do many takes and dubs of these, as the phrases we suggested that seemed so simple to Americans were highly unidiomatic to their ears and their instruments. At times, as the studio clock ticked, Jac, who is sensitive and good at easing tension, saw me growing red-faced and exasperated. So she'd jump in and say, "Just improvise!" Some of the most exquisite playing on the album flowed out of those improvisations. Sometimes our mistakes and mis-takes create our most inspired moments.

## 2. HALLELUJAH (Psalm 150)

Hallelujah  
Halelu Eil bekodesho; haleluhu birkia uzo.  
Haleluhu bigevurotav; haleluhu kerov gudlo.  
Haleluhu beteika shofar; haleluhu beneivel vechinor.  
Haleluhu betof umachol; haleluhu beminim ve-ugav.  
Haleluhu betsiltsei shama; haleluhu betsiltselei teru-ah.  
Kol haneshamah tehaleil Yah, Hallelujah.  
Kol haneshama tehaleil Yah, Hallelujah.

Hallelujah  
Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the sky, His stronghold.  
Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him for His exceeding greatness.  
Praise Him with blasts of the shofar; praise Him with harp and lyre.  
Praise Him with timbrel and dance; praise Him with lute and pipe.  
Praise Him with resounding cymbals; praise Him with loud-clashing cymbals.  
Let the entire soul praise Yah, Hallelujah.  
Let the entire soul praise Yah, Hallelujah.

Hallelujah, a word very common in the Psalms, means "Praise God." This Psalm, attributed to King David, calls upon all living beings to sing God's praises, accompanied by musical instruments and dance, as he sits enthroned in his heavenly sanctuary.

Most songwriters will tell you their better songs come to them very quickly and in their completed form... immaculate conceptions of sorts. This was the case with Hallelujah. Almost. My daughter, Eden, was weepy because I had written a song for her older sister, Mila, and she dispatched me to the doghouse to come up with one for her. I headed into the garage, sat down at the piano, and the chorus came rather quickly. Eden leaned in and gave a thumbs up. But after an hour of humming, I realized it wasn't done; I had chords, but I needed a melody for the verse, which mentioned all the instruments used for worship in the ancient Temple service and which we ultimately used in the recording. I tinkered for a while and nothing happened. I tried again the next day and the next, but still nothing. My muse had abandoned me. Frustrated, and late for work, I hopped on my Yamaha Zuma scooter and headed north. I was stopped by a red light in front of the 20th Century Fox studios. And then the verse melody came, in its entire form. I pulled out my iPhone, flipped up my helmet, sang into the recorder app, the light turned green, and I zoomed off with a finished song.

We introduced the melody to the IKAR congregation over the 2011 high holidays. By the end of Yom Kippur, during the concluding Neilah service, the congregation was exhausted and spent, having fasted and prayed constantly over the last 25 hours. But just as the sun was setting, I pulled out my guitar. Ross, Jac, Rabbi Sharon, the crew, and I started singing Hallelujah. As kids sat on their parents' shoulders holding light sticks, swaying, singing along, the intensity built. Pass after pass it continued. After a few minutes we tried to wrap it up so we could leave and break the fast. But we couldn't. People kept singing. The song went on for 40 minutes after the fast had ended; people were caught up in the power of this moment. I will never forget that.

## 3. PITCHU LI (Psalm 118:19-20)

Pitchu li sha-arei tzedek,  
Avo vam odeh Yah.  
Zeh hash-a-ar laAdonai,  
Tzaddikim yavo-u vo.

Open the gates of righteousness for me,  
That I may enter them and praise Yah.  
This is the gateway to Adonai,  
The righteous shall enter through it.

These two verses are from Psalm 118, the final psalm of the Hallel service, which is recited in the Temple on holidays. These verses refer to the gates of the Temple: the psalmist (perhaps the king), who has been saved from military defeat, now approaches the Temple to give thanks to God and calls on the gatekeepers to open the gates to admit him.

In Jewish tradition, gates are also used metaphorically, representing access to God himself or to one or more of His qualities—the liturgy speaks of gates to God's mercy, repentance, prayer, and wisdom.

I wrote this one in Ensenada, Mexico after a night of carousing with my great friend, Greg Apt. We went back to the trailer home we were staying in overlooking the craggy cliffs of the Pacific and sang the night away. Greg had the good idea to record the night on his phone for posterity. I wrote a batch of tunes that night. Sadly, Greg dozed off late into the night and rolled over onto the phone, shutting it off. I never recovered everything I wrote that night, but this version of Pitchu Li stuck with me.

## 4. UTZU EITZAH (Isaiah 8:10)

Utzu eitzah, vetufar, dabru davar, velo yakum, ki immanu El.

Devise a plot, it will be foiled, agree on a plan, it will not succeed  
Because God is with us.

This passage is addressed to a coalition of armies (northern Israel and Damascus) that marched on Jerusalem circa 735 BCE in an attempt to depose King Ahaz of the House (Dynasty) of David and replace him with a puppet king. Isaiah addressed them, saying that their plot against Ahaz would fail because God would thwart their plans. Like all of the songs on this album, this one has a folk underpinning. I recorded a version that was all ancient sounding acoustic instruments: lute; oud; ney (a wood flute); hand drums. It sounded charming, but something wasn't working. Around that time, I had been listening to a lot of The Smiths and just loved the atmosphere and, of course, Johnny Marr's guitars. So we did a version in that style as well. It was really popping, but then I was worried it would sound too contemporary and would stray from the theme of the album. So we started adding in pieces from the original version, one by one, auditioning them to see what worked. As soon as we added in the ney, played by a shy and gentle Turkish student named Okay, everything gelled. I think this one highlights the great variety of vocal qualities we have on the album: Ross's powerful clear and emotive tenor; Jac's lilting, angelic, almost flute-like mezzo soprano; Janine's breathy, pure alto; Lizzi's high-octane, joy-seeped chest voice.

Around the time we were recording, my voice stopped cooperating. Months of overuse had taken its toll. I called the UCLA Ear Nose and Throat department on the advice of my doctor and spoke to a receptionist. I told her I was a singer and that I needed to see a specialist. "Well you can see doctor so-and-so in a week," she told me. "Or, if it can wait a month, they can see you at the UCLA Singer Center." I was impressed. I had no idea they had a department that specialized in helping singers. "Great," I told her. "I'll wait." After a long month, I arrived in the waiting room at the Singer Center. But something didn't feel right. The people lurking around were very old or very young and they didn't look like they could hit a note if it was in a barrel and they had a cricket paddle. After 30 minutes of waiting, they called me into the exam room and my confusion quickly made sense. I passed by a small plaque on the far wall: "E.N.T. Center made possible by a grant from Ruth and Murray Singer." I can still hear my voice cracking in the final chorus...

## 5. SHEMA (Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 34:4; 1 Chronicles 29:11)

Shema Yisra-el, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.  
Echad Eloheinu, gadol adoneinu, kadosh shemo.  
Gadlu LaAdonai itti, uneromemah shemo yachdav.  
Lecha Adonai, hagedulah, vehagevurah, vehatif-eret, vehaneitsach Vehahod, ki chol bashamayim uva-aretz.  
Lecha Adonai, hamamlachah, vehamitnasei, lechol Ierosh.

Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai alone.  
One is our God, Great is our Lord, Holy is His name.  
Exalt Adonai with me, let us extol His name together.  
Yours, Lord, are greatness, might, splendor, triumph, and majesty—yes, All that is in Heaven and on earth.  
To you, Adonai, belong kingship and preeminence above all.

The Shema is the central credo of Judaism, declaring that the Lord alone is Israel's God. It is considered to be so important that a child must be taught the Shema immediately upon learning to speak. It is also recited on one's deathbed. The Shema was recited in the Temple following the daily sacrifice, and to this day it forms part of the personal prayers recited in the morning and evening. Today, the Shema (with the additional lines) is chanted as the Torah scroll is removed from the Ark and paraded through the congregation prior to its public reading on Sabbaths and Festivals.

I wrote this on my 16<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, while relaxing in a hot tub at the hotel where my wife, Beth, and I had stayed over our wedding weekend all those years before. Beth is my self-proclaimed muse (actually, it's true!). Remembering our incredible wedding surrounded by all those we loved, and 16 years later sitting beside my amazing wife, and the awesome products of our marriage, our daughters, well, I was inspired. I kept humming versions to the gals asking, "do you like it this way or that way...?" The great moment for me with this song was bringing it full circle and having my daughters join me on Rosh Hashana a couple of years later and singing it with us during services. They have stunning voices, much more natural than mine (they are on the recording). All I can say is, if you don't have daughters who sing, get some, write a song and have them sing it. Though I did have to bribe Eden. I told her I'd give her five bucks. She demanded six, and we shook on it.

## 6. BARUCH HAMAKOM (Siddur and Haggadah)

Baruch Hamakom-baruch-hu. Baruch shenatan torah le-amno yisra-el, Baruch hu.

Blessed be the Omnipresent-blessed-be-He. Blessed be the One who has Given the Torah to His people Israel, blessed be He.

In this blessing, God is called "Ha-Makom," which is often translated as "the Omnipresent," the One who is everywhere. "Ha-Makom" literally means "The Place." It probably referred originally to the Temple in Jerusalem, where God was believed to reside, enthroned between the wings of cherubs sculpted on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. As a result, the term was adopted as a name for God himself, meaning "He who resides in the Temple." It is best known from the Passover Haggadah, but among Sephardim and Middle Eastern Jews, a slightly shorter form of this blessing is chanted when the Torah is taken out of the Ark.

This one to me is Like Gary Numan's 80's hit, "Cars." It's mantra-like, dark and persistent riff, played over and over until it becomes almost hypnotic. Several years back, I had been hired as the Artist-in-Residence at Milken Community High School. I decided to buy a whole bunch of Middle Eastern instruments on eBay and pass them around the room to a bunch of hormonal adolescents and see what would happen. One morning as I was in the shower getting ready for work, I had the sinking feeling that I had nothing to teach the kids, and I was set to see them first period—so I started humming...

Within ten minutes of my arrival at school, we were playing this version of the ancient Hebrew blessing like we were the Sex Pistols circa 1977. There is no energy in the world like adolescent boys rocking out with hand drums and stringed instruments. We demolished a dumbek or two and upset the math teacher who used the classroom after us. It looked like a hurricane had hit the room when we were done playing.

We recorded one of our sessions a few weeks later, and this became the basis for the first version of this song.

## 7. SURI GOALI YAH (based on Psalm 19:15)

Suri goali Yah, suri goali Yah,  
Maher vehachesh pedut,  
Ya-aleh yefeifayah.

O Yah, my rock and my redeemer,  
Make haste and bring redemption,  
Let it rise up beautifully.

The beginning of this prayer for redemption is based on the last verse of Psalm 19: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." This verse may be familiar to some as the lyrics to the Rastafarian song, "Rivers of Babylon." Jews recite this verse as part of the ancient Amidah prayer in the morning, afternoon and evening.

After a college friend's brother died, I was asked to play the classical guitar at the memorial service: my friend, whom I had barely seen in two decades, remembered me as the long-haired guy who sat in the stairwell, playing a flurry of notes from a Bach fugue to impress girls. Hopelessly out of practice playing this complex music, but wanting to do the right thing, I qualified my "yes." I would play what I was familiar with: The Jewish prayers that I regularly led as Cantor at IKAR.

Fast Forward. The church's music director, also called a Cantor (who knew?), finished his hymn and returned to his pew. In truth, what he'd sung sounded like soft pop circa 1988. I wondered to myself if this was what they are expecting from me? Uh oh.

I put the quill to my instrument, an Egyptian Oud, closed my eyes, and sang in Hebrew: "Suri Goali Yah" (the Lord is my rock and my redeemer, hurry and bring redemption, let it rise up beautifully). The words were adapted from an ancient biblical psalm first sung by King David. The church was still. I opened up my eyes to a sacred silence and saw faces that were haunted—touched. The Cantor's eyes were glassy.

"What was that," he asked, "a Tibetan chant?" No one in the church that day really understood what it was, but the arc of the traditional melody and the texture of the words had resonated spiritually. "It was beautiful," they said in chorus. As I explained the origin of the words, the mourners were shocked and intrigued.

"Is this what Jesus sang?" they wanted to know. "Is this what he heard?"

No. Not exactly. But...

This got me thinking about early Jewish spiritual music and I wondered what the Levites and the priests were chanting as they addressed God on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. What was the sound, lost forever during exile, that emanated from the lips of our Hebrew prophets? And what were the songs of prayer at the time before the Temple was destroyed by Rome, and at the time Christianity was born, when there was a nexus of interconnectedness, when the focus of both was a spiritual quest for God and redemption. The best music doesn't divide; it unites.

And so this collection is an homage to that which unites us all: our quest to have a meaningful spiritual engagement with God through music.

## 8. KADDISH (siddur)

Yitgadal veyitkadash shemei raba,  
B-alma divera kir-utei, veyamlich malchutei.  
Bechayeichon uveyomeichon  
Bvechayei dechol beit Yisra-el,  
Ba-agala uvizman kariv,  
Ve-imeru: Amen.  
Yehei shemei raba mevorach  
Lealam ulealmei almaya.  
Yitbarach veyishtabach,  
Veyitpa-ar veyitromam veyitnasei,  
Veyithadar veyit-aleh veyithalal, shemei dekudsha, berich hu,  
Le-eila min kol birchata veshirata,  
Tushbechata venechemata, da-amiran be-alma,  
Ve-imeru: Amen.

Exalted and hallowed be God's great name,  
Throughout the world that He created as he willed.  
May He establish His kingdom  
In your lifetime and during your days,  
And within the life of the entire House of Israel,  
Speedily and soon, and say: Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and for all time.  
Blessed and praised,  
Glorified and exalted, extolled  
And honored, elevated and lauded be the name of the Holy One,  
Blessed be He,  
Beyond all the blessings and hymns,  
Praises and songs that are uttered in the world,  
And say: Amen.

Kaddish is written in Aramaic, which was one of the languages Jews spoke in the days of the Talmud, the great anthology of Jewish law and lore. The Kaddish prayer is the most repeated text of the Jewish prayer service, with different versions for different occasions. Best known as the prayer of mourners, it is not a mournful text but an appeal for the speedy establishment of God's kingdom on earth and for universal acknowledgement



of His supreme holiness. It had redemptive value, guaranteeing a place in the world-to-come; Kaddish reflects the growing focus within first century Judaism on the afterlife.

I remember being in my car on Venice Boulevard in Los Angeles, humming a melody I had written for the Shema (not the version on this album). I reversed the notes, a trick Bach used in his fugues, and, voilà! Something old is something new. I decided to set the tune to Kaddish, a prayer of key importance that is recited multiple times daily, but usually in a perfunctory, non-melodic manner, like recitative in opera. Part of our mission at IKAR was to enforce a 'use it or lose it' motto: either make even the most mundane prayers meaningful or eliminate them.

For me, the high point in this piece is the high, wordless melodic cry that we build up to at the end—a section that Ross, Jac, and I sang with real passion, as though we were trying to pry the heavens open. It is a Hasidic device to use the 'niggun,' (a wordless melody) to achieve a heightened sense of spiritual awareness. After writing this tune, I remember realizing that this was the spiritual sound I had long been searching for. In my mind this was the new watermark for all our future work: everything had to have this depth and intensity. I consciously modeled the feel of rest of the album after this niggun.

#### 9. HOSHIA NA (Psalm 118:25)

Ana Adonai hoshia na! Ana Adonai hoshia na!  
Ana Adonai hatzlichah na! Ana Adonai hatzlichah na!

O Lord, please save us! O Lord, please save us!  
O Lord, let us prosper! O Lord, let us prosper!

This verse is from Psalm 118, the last psalm of the Hallel service. On Passover, Hallel (which means praise) was recited by the Levites while the paschal lambs were being slaughtered. In its original context, "Hoshia," or "save," referred to deliverance or protection from danger, such as battle, enslavement, oppression, exile, illness, famine and other natural disasters.

In ancient times, the psalm's most prominent use was in the Temple on Tabernacles as people marched in procession around the altar. In that context it was part of a prayer for security and material prosperity in the coming year. The sound builds to a frenetic climax, which in my mind would accompany the sacrifices that formed the basis of Temple worship. My brother, Chanan, who is pretty docile (he wouldn't kill a mosquito as the blood would make him pass out), told me that the ending of this song makes him want to put a knife between his teeth and go out and start a war. I can picture frenzied dancing, called "machol," which was also part of ancient worship, carried out as the animals were slaughtered. Sadly, movement has been largely erased from western worship, but getting your whole body into it really does get your heart into it.

#### 10. HINEH MAH TOV (Psalm 133:1)

Hineh mah tov umah na-im, shevet achim gam yachad!

Behold — how good and how pleasant it is, brothers sitting together!

This verse celebrates the ideal of Israelites sitting together and getting along, for example when the whole nation comes together at the Temple in Jerusalem for Passover, Tabernacles and Shavuot.

Like many of the melodies on this album, this one is composed in a major scale. Though we may assume old Middle Eastern melodies are darker arabesques, musicologists have fingerprinted what they deem the oldest surviving Jewish melody: The Song of the Sea from the book of Exodus, which is also in the major mode. It is the only old melody that is nearly identical in both Ashkenazic European communities and Sephardic Eastern communities, which suggests its ancient origin from the days before these communities split.

"How good it is for brothers to sit together!" This was the first melody I composed at IKAR. I remember after a particularly spirited and joyous Sabbath morning service, lounging in the atrium of the JCC on a vinyl chair with this melody circulating in my head. I went home and picked up a guitar and tried to find words that worked. That's almost always how it works—melody first, then combing through a prayer book, page after page, to find the text that jibes. It's like a puzzle: I feel like I have been given a puzzle piece, and my job is to find the other piece to click into it. First, I sang the tune to Ma Tov, another service opener, but a few days

later, I absent-mindedly started singing Hineh Mah Tov, thinking that was what I had been doing all along, and...kismet! A perfect fit. What's more, I loved the prosody, how well the melody emphasized the meaning of the words. Almost every kid who has been to Jewish summer camp or Temple knows the standard minor key melody of this song, which always sounded like a dirge to me, more of a Volga boatsman's folk song. To my ear, the old melody said, "How SAD it is for brothers to be sitting together IN EXILE." It's okay to express a little joy in our prayers. As the psalmist writes: "Worship the Lord with happiness!" Mel Brooks always said, "Look at Jewish history: unrelieved lamenting would be intolerable. So, for every ten Jews beating their breasts, God designated one to be crazy and amuse the breast-beaters." I'm with Mel on this one.

We recorded this like we sing a lot of prayers in services: first one voice slow, then another enters a little faster, more urgent, and by the end, the wailing wall of sound kicks in. I remember when I first played this for my adolescent daughter, who was going through an "everything Mom and Dad do is uncool" phase. I asked the family to come to the car, which was parked in front of our house, to check out the mix. I really cranked the volume. Midway through the first chorus, Mila jumped out of the back seat, bounded into the middle of our street and started dancing. She shouted, "It sounds like the whole world is holding hands and singing!" I broke into a broad smile, and then shouted to her to get the heck out of the street—and wondered why she didn't have a seat belt on.



