SINGING FOR Peace & Freedom

A CONCERT BY
A Besere Velt Yiddish Chorus

8:00 PM - 9:30 ET
IN PERSON AND LIVESTREAMING
SATURDAY 6.18.22
ELIOT CHURCH
474 CENTRE ST.
NEWTON, MA

WITH GUEST ARTISTS
Polina Shepherd &
Lorin Sklamberg

circleboston.org/peace-freedom
Greetings and welcome to A Besere Velt’s Spring Concert, “Singing for Peace & Freedom”!

Tonight is an extraordinarily special night for us as we’ve faced monumental challenges as both a chorus, a community, and a society. From the beginning of our season, we have sung masked and spread out. We have sung as a group of many, and sometimes as small as 12 people. We have been in person and hybrid. We have battled our way through delta and omicron, while simultaneously triumphing our way through learning new music and fighting for our beliefs in social, racial, and economic justice. I’d like to quote my colleague Carol Marton of Koleinu (who just celebrated their 20th anniversary a week ago) in saying that “singing here tonight is no less than a miracle.”

I have served as the music director of A Besere Velt for four years and can say without hesitation that it’s both an honor and a privilege to lead a group whose members are filled with endless passion, dedication, love, and musicality. From the bottom of my heart, I’d like to extend a personal Mazel Tov and Shkoyekh to the bravery and tenacity of the chorus and their accomplishments this year. I am greatly proud to be your director and so fortunate to be celebrating and living Yiddishkayt with you all.

I would additionally like to extend a great thanks to the steering committee, concert committee, host committee, as well as the entire team at Boston Workers Circle for their endless efforts this year. A special shout out to Norman Berman, our steering committee chair, Peter Rhodes, chair of the concert committee, and Linda Gritz, our meyvn working behind the scenes, whose tireless efforts have made today possible.

Tonight, we are beyond honored to have the great Polina Shepherd and Lorin Sklamberg as our featured artists, two giants of the Yiddish music world who have traveled from across the globe to be with us tonight. Tonight’s concert was originally planned from May 2020, so we are beyond thrilled to finally be here together to sing for you all!
ARTISTS

**Polina Shepherd (guest artist)** is an internationally renowned performer, bringing traditional Yiddish songs up to date with passion and haunting soul. Her singing cuts a unique sound deeply rooted in east European Jewish folk sound. Growing up in Tatarstan also placed her close to Islamic ornamentation and timbre which can be heard in her unique vocal style and four octave range.

**Lorin Sklamberg (guest artist)** is lead singer of the Grammy-winning Klezmatics, a leading exponent of Yiddish song and traditional Jewish vocal techniques. Since co-founding the legendary klezmer group in 1986, he has received countless tributes to his crystalline, expressive vocalizing, which never fails to have an emotional impact on all within its range.

Polina and Lorin perform around the world individually and as a duo, presenting Yiddish and Russian songs ranging from folk songs to original material exploring the connection between the Steppes and the Shtetl.

**Derek David (conductor and musical director, A Besere Velt)** is a composer, conductor, and music educator based in Boston, Massachusetts. His dramatic and vibrant chamber music has been performed in both Europe and the United States and has received great recognition from audiences and critics alike.

As an enthusiastic educator, Derek has taught theory and musicianship at the New England Conservatory, The Boston Conservatory at Berklee, at The Walden School, and was previously a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University. He is currently Lecturer in Music at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**A Besere Velt (A Better World)** is proud to be a voice for justice. This intergenerational community chorus weaves the heartache and irrepressible idealism of Yiddish music into a vision of justice and humanity for the 21st century.

Derek and A Besere Velt were thrilled to collaborate with Polina and Lorin on four songs for their recent recording project, 150 Voices, Yiddish and Russian folk and art songs and newly composed originals sung by five choirs in the UK and USA and this amazing duo of international cultural activists. CDs will be for sale at the concert. The recording is available digitally at [https://www.polinashepherd.co.uk/cds/150-voices-cd/](https://www.polinashepherd.co.uk/cds/150-voices-cd/)
A BESERE VELT MEMBERS

Some singers are not able to attend this evening’s concert.

**ALTOS:** Sarah Axelrod⁵, Ava Cheloff, Laura Derman⁴, Norma Finkelstein, Marcia Goldensher, Debbie Goodman, Kathy Harris, Beth Karp¹, Marsha Lazar¹², Beth Lovell, Margery Meadow⁵, Kim Meyers¹, Debra Poaster¹, Helen Raizen, Barbara Ruskin, Sandy Sachs, Dana Schaul-Yoder¹, Ilana Shotkin¹⁴, Julie Silberman, Jenny Silverman, Susan Sommer, Mae Tupa

**BASSES:** Bob Follansbee¹²⁴, Mike Felsen¹⁶, Michael Furstenberg, Richard Goldberg, Michael Katz⁴, Tim McKenna, Steve Ostrow, Larry Rich¹, Joel Schwartz, Richard Segan, Mitchell Silver, Andy Strauss⁴, Brent Whelan⁶, Michael Zimmer

**SOPRANOS:** Beth Altman, Maia Brumberg-Kraus, Alison Cameron, Anne Chamberlain¹, Judy Ehrlich¹, Laurie Goldman, Tolle Graham, Debbie Katz, Susan Leskin, Peri Levin McKenna, Paulena Papagiannis¹³, Mona Pollack, Ruby Poltorak¹³⁴⁶, Judith Schwartz¹²⁴, Donna Southwell, Linda Stern, Lily Weitzman

**TENORS:** Robin Barnes, Norman Berman¹³⁴*, Ed Brody, Barbara Brown⁴, Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus, Fredi Dworkin, Max Friedman¹, Linda Gritz¹²⁴*, Renee Kasinsky, Pauli Katz¹³, Renee Miller, Dianne Perlmutter⁴, Steve Perlmutter, Peter Rhodes³⁴*, Roberta Rosenberg, Stephen Zisk¹, Marcia Zuckerman

1: Chamber Ensemble
2: Section leader
3: Narrator
4: Concert and/or Steering Committee
5: Infrastructure Committee
6: Script Committee
* Chair
HOST COMMITTEE

Thank you to our Host Committee for supporting this celebration, showing gratitude for A Besere Velt, and sustaining our vibrant, progressive, secular Jewish community.

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Ava Cheloff
Frank Hornstein & Marcia Zimmerman
Iris & Bruce Feinberg & Family

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Andy Strauss
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Mike Felsen & Tolle Graham
Norm Berman & Sheri Abrams
Sarah T. Axelrod
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The Boston Workers Circle Center for Jewish Culture and Social Justice is a multigenerational community where Jewish identity is rooted in cultural heritage and the pursuit of a better world.

We are

- A community and spiritual home for secular Jewish life
- A voice for progressive Jewish values and social change
- An arts and education center celebrating Yiddish, Jewish, and progressive culture.

Find out more and join us at https://circleboston.org.
ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Supertitles
Mona Pollack
Norman Berman

Sound engineer
Eric Kilburn

Digital program
Bob Follansbee
Mona Pollack
Linda Gritz

Photo Credits
A Besere Velt: Derek Kouyoumjian
Polina Shepherd and Lorin Sklamberg: Kristine Barrett

Livestreaming/Recording
Peter Rhodes, director and editor
Nikki Bramley, videographer
Rich Stroshane, technician
Jessica Leonard, closed captions

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In Memoriam: We remember all our dear, departed friends who sang with A Besere Velt over the years. Their voices and spirits are firmly fixed in our memories, and they continue to inspire us.
SET ONE: A BESERE VELT

LOMIR ZINGEN (Let’s sing...)
Music: William Byrd
Yiddish Lyrics: Derek David
Choral arrangement: Derek David

YIDDISH LYRICS
Lomir zingen dos naye lid
A naye lid fun frayhayt
A naye lid fun yoyshe

ENGLISH LYRICS
Let’s sing a new song
A song of freedom
A song of justice

VAKHT OYF (Wake Up)
Lyrics: Dovid Edelstadt
Composer unknown
Choral arrangement: Zalmen Mlotek, adapted by Lisa Gallatin

YIDDISH LYRICS
Vi lang, o vi lang vet ir blaybn nokh shklafn
Un trogn di shendlekhe keyt?
Vi lang vet ir glentsnde raykhtimer shafn Far dem vos baroybt ayer broyt?
Vi lang, vi lang vet ir shteyn ayer rukn geboygn
Derniderikt, heymloz, farshmakht?
Es togt shoyn, vakht oyi
Un tse'efnt di oygn
Derfilt ayer ayzerne makht!

Un ales vet lebn, un libn, un blien
In frayen, in goldenem may.

Brider, genug far tiranen tsu knien
Shvert, az ir muzt vern fray
Shvester, genug far tiranen tsu knien
Shvert, az ir muzt vern fray.

Mir muzt vern fray
Mir muzt vern fray!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
How long will you remain slaves
And wear degrading chains?
How long will you produce riches
For those who rob you of your bread?
How long will you stand with your backs bent
Humiliated, homeless, weak?
It's daybreak, wake up
And open your eyes!
Feel your iron strength!

And all will live, and love, and bloom
In freedom's golden May.

Brothers, enough of kneeling to tyrants.
Swear you must be free!
Sisters, enough of kneeling to tyrants.
Swear you must be free!

We must be free
We must be free!
VILNE (Vilna)
Lyrics: Efraim-Leyb Wolfson
Music: Alexander Olshanetsky
Choral arrangement: Mark Zuckerman

YIDDISH LYRICS
Vilne, shtot fun gayst un tmimes, 
Vilne, yidishlekh fartrakht, 
Vu es murmlen shtile tfiles, 
Shtile soydes fun der nakht.

Oft mol ze ikh dikh in kholem, 
Heys-gelibte vilne mayn, 
Un di alte vilner geto 
In a neplidikn shayn.

REFRAIN
Vilne, vilne, undzer heymshtot, 
Undzer benkshaft un bager. 
Akh, vi oft es ruft dayn nomen 
Fun mayn oyg aroyos a trer.

Kh'ze dem veldele zakreter 
In zayn shotn ayngehilt. 
Vu geheym es hobn lerer, 
Undzer visndursht geshtilt.

Vilne hot dem ershtn fodem 
Fun der frayhayts-fon gevebt. 
Un di libe kinder ire 
Mit a tsartn gayst balebt.

ZOG NIT KEYNMOL (Never Say)
Poem/Lyrics: Hirsh Glick
Music: Dmitri Pokras
Choral Arrangement: Searle Friedman

YIDDISH LYRICS
Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem lestn veg 
Ven himlen blayene farshetln bloye teg. 
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkto sho 
Svet a payk ton undzer trot, mir zaynen do!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Vilna, city of innocence and spirit.
Vilna, where Jewish ways were conceived.
Quiet secrets of the night.

I often see you in dreams,
My fiercely beloved Vilna
And the old Vilna ghetto,
In a foggy glow.

REFRAIN
Vilna, Vilna, our hometown, 
Our longing, our desire. 
Oh, how often your name 
Brings a tear to my eye.

Vilna’s streets, Vilna’s rivers, 
Vilna’s forests, mountains and valleys. 
Something aches, something yearns 
For the days of long ago.

Vilna wove the first thread 
Of our freedom flag. 
And inspired our dear children 
With a gentle spirit.

REFRAIN
Never say that there is only death for you 
Though leaden skies may be concealing 
days of blue, 
Because the hour we have hungered for is near 
Beneath our tread the earth shall thunder, 
we are here.
Fun grinem palmen land biz vaysn land 
fun shney
Mir zaynen do mit undzer payn mit 
undzer vey,
Vu gefaln s'iz a shpritz fun undzer blut 
Vet nokh a shprots ton undzer gvure 
undzer mut!

Geshribn iz dos lid mit blat 
un mit blay,
S'iz nit kayn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray 
S'hot a folk ts'vishn falndike vent 
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent.

Repeat verse 1

From land of palm trees to the far off land 
of snow
We shall be coming with our torment and 
our woe
And everywhere our blood has sunk into 
the earth
Shall our bravery, our vigor blossom forth.

This song was written with our blood and 
not with lead
It's not a song that birds sing overhead. 
It was a people among toppling barricades 
That sang this song of ours with pistols 
and grenades.

Repeat verse 1

PEACE CANON
Composer: Clemens non Papa
Lyrics & choral arrangement: Derek David

LYRICS
Sholem, shalom, salaam, paz, pace, 
nabada

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Peace

DI ARBUZN (The Watermelons)
Lyrics: Mendl Abarbanel
Music: Ben Yomen
Choral arrangement: Ethel Raim

YIDDISH LYRICS
S’iz der step shoyn opgeshorn, 
Un shoyn alts tsunoyfgenumen. 
Libster mayner, kum tsu forn, 
Ikh vel vartn oyf dayn kumen, hey!

Di arbuzn zaynen tsaytik, 
S'geyt di zaft fun zey ariber, 
Ful mit ziskayt ongegosn, 
Vi mayn harts iz ful mit libe.

Un di karshn, libster mayner, 
Zaynen shvarts vi dayne oygn. 
Ongeshotn oyf di beymer 
Un di tsvaygn zikh azh boygn.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
The steppes have been mowed, 
And everything has been gathered. 
My dearest, come visit me - 
I await your arrival.

The watermelons are ripe, 
Their juice is overflowing, 
They’re full of sweetness, 
As my heart is full of love.

And the cherries, my dearest, 
Are black like your eyes. 
The trees are loaded 
And the branches are bending.
Kum tsu forn, libster mayner,  
Un genug shoyn undz tsu troymen,  
Rayf un tsaytik iz mayn libe,  
Vi s’iz tsaytik mayne floymen!

Come visit me, my dearest,  
And enough of this dreaming.  
My love is ripe and ready,  
Ready as my plums are!

**MAYN RUE PLATS (My Resting Place)**  
Lyrics: Morris Rosenfeld  
Composer unknown  
Choral arrangement: Mark Zuckerman

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Nit zukh mikh vu di mirtn grinen,  
Gefinst mikh dortn nit, mayn shats.  
Vu lebns velkn bay mashinen,  
Dortn iz mayn rue plats.

Don't look for me where the myrtle grows,  
You won't find me there, beloved.  
Where lives are withered by machines,  
That is my resting place.

Nit zukh mikh vu di feygl zingen,  
Gefinst mikh dortn nit, mayn shats.  
A shklaf bin ikh vu keytn klingen,  
Dortn iz mayn rue plats.

Don't look for me where the birds sing,  
You won't find me there, beloved.  
I am a slave where chains clang,  
That is my resting place.

Nit zukh mikh vu fontanen shpritsn  
Gefinst mikh dortn nit, mayn shats.  
Vu trern rinen, tseyner kritsn,  
Dortn iz mayn rue plats.

Don't look for me where fountains spray  
You won't find me there, beloved.  
Where tears flow and teeth gnash,  
That is my resting place.

Un libstu mikh mit varer libe,  
To kum tsu mir, mayn guter shats,  
Un hayter oyf mayn harts dos tribe,  
Un makh mir zis mayn rue plats.

And if you love me truly,  
Then come to me, my dear beloved,  
And lighten my gloomy heart,  
And make it sweet, my resting place.

**YUGNT HIMEN (Anthem of Youth)**  
Lyrics: Shmerke Kaczerginski  
Music: Basye Rubin  
Choral arrangement: Zalmen Mlotek, adapted by Lisa Gallatin

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Yugnt geyt foroys!  
Undzer lid is ful mit troyer  
Dreyst is undzer muntergang.  
Khotshe der soyne vakht baym toyer,  
Shturemt yugnt mit gezang!

Youth marches forward!  
Our song is full of sorrow,  
But bold is our cheerful step.  
Though the enemy guards the gate,  
Youth storms forth with song!
REFRAIN
Yung is everyone who wants to be
Years have no meaning,
The old can be children too
In a new, free time.
Youth marches forward!

REFRAIN
Mir gedenken ale sonim,
We remember all of our enemies.
We recall all of our friends.
We will forever connect
Our yesterday with today.

REFRAIN
MAY LID (Song of May)
Lyrics: M. Sorerives
Music: M. Posner
Additional arrangement: Derek David

YIDDISH LYRICS
Whose voice do I hear ringing?
Let us sing new songs.
All our troubles have passed
With the long, cold winter.
Rich in colors, rich in sounds,
The first of May arrives.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Whose voice do I hear ringing?
Let us sing songs of freedom.
Slavery will end.
Sounds will lighten, chains will loosen.
Brightly adorned with fresh blossoms,
The first of May arrives.

Whose voice do I hear ringing?
Let us sing loudly and strongly.
Let our song carry openly and freely from all corners.
Awakening us to a new life,
The first of May arrives.
SET TWO: POLINA SHEPHERD & LORIN SKLAMBERG

Medley

OYFN YAM VEYET A VINTELE (A Breeze Blows on the Sea)
FUN VANEN HEYBT ZIKH ON A LIBE? (Where Does Love Come From?)

Lyrics and music: unknown

YIDDISH LYRICS

Oyfn yam veyet a vintele,
Un di khvalyes yogn,
Ikh hob zikh farlibt in a sheyn meydele,
Kh’shem zikh ir nomen tsu zogn.

Mayn gelibter boyet a shtibele,
Arum un arum mit fenstzer,
Fun ale meydlek vos ikh hob gezen,
Bistu bay mir di shenste!

Tsu libstu mikh fun tifn hartsn,
Tsu libstu nor mayn sheyn ponim?
Du host mikh gor avekgekoylet
Azoy vi di rekhte gazlonim!

Az a gazlen koylet a menshn,
Koylet er im mit a meser.
Du host mikh gekoylet, un nit derkoylet,
Du bist fun a gazlen nokh greser!

Fun vanen heybt zikh on a libe?
Fun redn, fun shmiesn, fun lakhn.
Undzer libe hot zikh ongehoybn,
Oy, gor fun andere zakhn.

Ot shteyen dort taybelekh tsvey,
Ot shteyen dort taybelekh tsvey.
Oy, libn zib zeyk zikh zeyer
Nito keyn glaykhn tsu zey.

Genug shoyn mit mir tsu redn,
Genug shoyn mit mir tsu shmiesn.
Oy, fir mikh op aheym,
Der tate vet di tir farshlishn.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

On the sea the breezes are blowing,
The waves they roll on the main.
I’ve fallen in love with a fair maiden
I’m embarrassed to tell you her name.

My beloved built me a cottage,
With windows on every side.
Of all the young girls that I’ve ever seen,
You’re the one that I choose for my bride. 

Tell me you love me with all your heart,
Not alone for my pretty young face.
Oh, you have slain me, with love you have slain me
If you leave me I’ll be in disgrace!

When a killer murders his victim,
He stabs him and leaves him to lie.
You’re worse than a murderer,
You kill me and kill me, you kill me but I never die.

Tell me where in the world does love come from?
From the talking and flirting of lovers.
But our love is something very special,
So different from all of the others.

Just see how those two doves are cooing,
Just see how those two doves are cooing.
Their love for each other is unequalled,
There’s nothing compares to their wooing.

Enough of your talking and flirting,
It’s getting too late for your shmoozing.
My parents will lock the door at midnight,
Take me home now for they’ll soon be sleeping.
**KEYNER VEYST ES NISHT** *(No One Knows It)*
Lyrics: Rokhl Korn
Music: Polina Shepherd

**YIDDISH LYRICS**
Keyner veyst es nisht, afile du aleyn —
Nokh zayt dem tog, vos kh'bin in ot der shtot,
Geyt di benkshaft um do iber ale gasn
Un ale beymer zenen griner mit a nayem sod.

Keyner veyst es nisht, afile du aleyn —
Az vu ikh zol nisht geyn, trog ikh mit zikh dayn blik,
Vi a kameye mit an ayngekritstn shprukh,
Dem shprukh tsum goyrl azoy noent un azoy vayt fun glik.

Keyner veyst es nisht, afile du aleyn —
Az, ven es eynzamen mit mir di shoen shtile,
Dan fir ikh mit di fingershpitsn iber mayne lipn
Un nem fun zey arop dayn nomen, vi a tfile.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS**
No one knows it, not even you
But since the day when I came to this town
Longing has been roaming on all the streets
And all the trees have been greener with a new secret.

No one knows it, not even you
That wherever I go, I carry your glance with me,
Like an amulet with an engraved spell,
The spell for a fate so near and so far.

No one knows it, not even you
That when I am alone in my quiet hours,
Then do I run my fingertips over my lips
And take from them your name, like a prayer.

**GIB A KUSH** *(Kiss Me)*
Lyrics and music: Polina Shepherd

**YIDDISH LYRICS**
Oy gevalt, mayn gelibter iz a sheyner man,
Ikh volt far im opgeb'n di velt di gantse.
Ven er kukt af mir mit zayne oygn di shvartse,
Klapt mayn harts vi a baraban!

Gib a kush, gib a kush,
Gib mir a fargenign.
Gib a kush, gib a kush,
Un zing mit mir a nign.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS**
Hot damn, my beloved is a nice man,
I would give up the whole world for him.

When he looks at me with his black eyes,
My heart pounds like a drum.

Kiss me, kiss me,
Give me some pleasure.
Kiss me, kiss me,
And sing me a tune.
Oy gevalt, mayn man shpilt a nigndl
Un ale meydlekhey geyen tantsn.
Ikh volt far im opgeb'n di velt di gantse.
Aza mekhaye iz mayn man!

Gib a kush, gib a kush,
Gib mir a fargenign.
Gib a kush, gib a kush,
Un zing mit mir a nign.

Medley

KHVALYES SHLOGN AFN YAM (Waves Are Rolling on the Sea)
FUN A FELDELE A FRAYS (From a Free Little Field)
Lyrics and music: unknown
Yiddish translation: Asya Fruman

YIDDISH LYRICS
Khvalyes shlofn afn yam,
Shlofn afn yam, shlofn afn yam.

Fun di hoykhe berg aroys iz a shener falk arroys,
A shener falk arroys

Flit der falk un git a ruf, zayn gelibte ruft er uf
Ruft er uf, ruft er uf.

Af di khvalyes, afn yam,
Afn yam, afn yam.

S’kumen shifn shtilerheyt, trogn simkhe,
trogn freyd,
Trogn freyd, trogn freyd.

Khvalyes shlofn afn yam,
Shlofn afn yam, shlofn afn yam.

Fun a feldele, fun a feldele,
Fun a feldele a frays, fun a feldele a frays.

Flit a taybele, flit a taybele
Oy, dos kleyne taybele, oy dos kleyne taybele.

Ruft zayn dashenyu, ruft zayn dashenyu,
Di getraye taybenyu, di getraye taybenyu.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Waves are crashing on the sea,
On the sea, on the sea.

From the high mountains, comes a handsome falcon.
A handsome falcon, a handsome falcon.

The falcon flies and gives a call, calling to his lady love.
Calling to his lady love, calling to his lady love.

On the waves, on the sea,
On the sea, on the sea.

Ships come quietly, bringing happiness and joy.
Bringing happiness and joy, bringing happiness and joy.

Waves are crashing on the sea,
On the sea, on the sea.

From a little field, from a little field,
From a free little field, from a free little field.

Flies a little dove, flies a little dove,
Oh, a little dove, oh, a little dove.

Calling his beloved, calling his beloved,
His lovey-dovey, his lovey-dovey.
“Come, come here, come, come here,  
On your agile wings, on your agile wings.

You’re my sweetheart, you’re my sweetheart,  
With your sweet little walk, with your sweet little walk.

You carry yourself, you carry yourself  
Like a stately peacock, like a stately peacock.

The sound of your voice, the sound of your voice  
Is like a dear nightingale, like a dear nightingale.”

From a little field, from a little field,  
From a free little field, from a free little field.

MIT HALB FARMAKHTE OYGN (With Half-Shut Eyes)  
Lyrics: Anna Margolin  
Music: Polina Shepherd

YIDDISH LYRICS
Zitsndik baym tish in groyen zal,  
foyl un umruik zikh  
viklendik in shal,  
kuk ikh den af dir?

Ruf dikh den tsu mir?  
Nor royter iz mayn moyl atsind,  
un di halb farmakhte oygn  
mit a roykh fartsoygn.

Nor farfleytst bin ikh fun roysh un likht,  
un dayn gezikht ze ikh  
durkh nepl un flam,  
un af di lipn iz sharf der tam  
fun zun un vint.

Nor ikh tsi zikh aruf  
mit farshikttn geshrey,  
ikh vaks flaterdik, fiberdik azoy [azey],  
un dos vaksn tut vey.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Seated at a table in the gray hall,  
Idle and anxious,  
wrapping myself in my shawl,  
I don't look at you, do I?

I don't call you to me, do I?  
But my mouth is redder now,  
And my half-shut eyes  
Are smoky.

But I am flooded with sound and light,  
And I see your face  
through fog and flame,  
And on my lips the taste  
Of sun and wind is sharp.

But I pull myself up  
With a choked cry,  
I grow trembling, feverish,  
And this growing hurts.
Removed to a corner of the gray hall, 
In the long flaming folds of my shawl, 
I don't look at you, do I? 
I don't call you to me, do I? 
But a little painfully and deeply and blindly, 
With half-shut eyes 
I have taken you into myself.

**A GEZANG FUN A TRAKTORIST** *(Song of a Tractor Driver)*  
Lyrics: Leyb Morgentoy  
Music: Unknown

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Bin ikh mir a traktorist,  
Iz mir gut – a khiyes.  
Ikh ken firn mayn mashin  
Mit farmakhte viyes.  
Ven ikh for aroys in feld,  
Kveln ale yatn,  
Vayl es folgt mir mayn mashin,  
Vi a kind – a tatn.  
Yedes shrayfl lebt bay mir  
In dem mashinerye.  
Hey, ver vil farmestn zikh?  
Kumt un zayn a berye.  
Ven ikh for aroys in feld  
Akern tsi zeyen,  
Veysn mayne redlekh eyns,  
Az men darf zikh dreyen.  
Un az reder dreyen zikh,  
S’royshn di motorn,  
Veys ikh, az dos land vet zayn  
Zat mit veytsn korn!

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**  
I’m a tractor driver, 
It’s good for me – a pleasure.  
I can drive my machine  
With my eyes closed.  
When I drive out on the field  
All the guys are proud.  
My machine obeys me  
Like a child with a father.  
Each little screw lives with me  
In the machinery.  
Hey, who wants to compete?  
Come and be an expert!  
When I drive out  
To plow the field  
The little wheels know  
That they now must turn.  
And as the wheels turn  
The motor hums along.  
I know that soon the land  
Will be rich with wheat and rye!
Un az zat vet zayn dos land,
Zayn vet shtol un ayzn.
Veln mir in zeks-yor plan
Vunder fil bavayzn!

Bin ikh mir a traktorist,
Helf ikh un ikh lern,
Mayn brigade flaysik zayn
Veltn iberkern.

Tsi in droysn shaynt di zun,
Tsi es hengt a khmare,
S’trogt mayn traktor zikh foroys -
Hit zikh, makht a vare!

Kh’bin der ershter oyfn feld,
Ven es nemt nor togn.
S’ken nisht keyner mayn mashin
Keynmol iberyogn.

Kh’kum der ershter fun feld,
Keyn mol nisht farmatert.
Un derfar a shlogler-fon
Oyf mayn traktor flatert!

As the land will be rich,
Rich with steel and iron,
With the Six-Year Plan,
Wonderful things we’ll see.

I’m a tractor driver,
Help me and I learn.
My brigade will diligently
Revolutionize the world.

Whether the sun is shining
Or if it’s cloudy,
My tractor carries on -
Watch out, make way!

I’m the first one on the field
When the day is dawning.
There’s no one else
Who can overtake my machine!

I’m the first one on the field
And I never get tired.
That’s why a Stakhanovite flag
Waves upon my tractor!

AHEYM (Homeward)
Lyrics and Music: Polina Shepherd
Yiddish version: Asya Fruman

YIDDISH LYRICS

Gey ikh mir tsu der heymisher shayn,
S'tsit di vanderung durkh ale teg,
Gey ikh pavolye, gey tsu mayn dolye,
Dertapndik mayn veg -

Aheym...

Loz ikh op ale pkhodim un payn,
S’gantse shverkeyt vos hot mir gehert,
Her ikh dem ruf [un] fli ikh aruf,
Aruf fun fremde erd –

Aheym.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I walk at a slow, quiet pace.
Each breath brings me closer to peace.
Softly and steadily
I feel my way -

Home...

Strangely, painfully and with sadness
A faraway light glimmers.
I quicken my steps, let my fear go
And fly up -

Home.
SET THREE:
A BESERE VELT WITH
POLINA SHEPHERD
& LORIN SKLAMBERG

GRIS BAGRIS (Welcome)
Lyrics: Leibush Lehrer (third verse by Martie and Musia Lakin)
Music: Lazar Weiner
Choral Arrangement: Derek David

YIDDISH LYRICS
Gris, bagris zey mit gezang,
Ven di zun fargeyt,
Shpreyt zikh undzer loyb-gezang,
Iber vayt un breyt.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Welcome them with singing
When the sun goes down.
Our song of praise spreads
Far and wide.

REFRAIN
Zingt, zingt, ale tsuzamen,
Ale, ale, kleyn un groys,
Brengt, brengt, mit freyd un lider,
Likht in undzer hoyz.

REFRAIN
Sing, sing, all together,
All, all, little and big.
Bring, bring, with joy and songs,
Light into our house.

Shpreyt dayn varemen fligl oys
In dem ovnt-vint,
Vayse likht in undzer hoyz,
Ven der tog farshvindt.

REFRAIN
Spread your warm wing
In the evening breeze,
White candlelight in our house
When the day disappears.

REFRAIN
Lomir eyn mishpokhe zayn,
Sholem in der velt,
Dort in heln zunenshayn,
Dort vu keyner felt.

REFRAIN
Let’s be one family,
Peace in the world,
There in the bright sunshine,
There where no one is in need.
**SHNIRELE PERELE** *(Little String, Little Pearl)*  
Lyrics and music: unknown  
Choral arrangement: Lisa Gallatin/Klezmatics

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Shnirele perele, gilderne fon,  
M’shiekh ben Dovid zitst oybn on.  

Er halt a bekher in der rekhter hant  
Un makht a brokhe oyfn gantse land.  

Oy, omeyn v’omeyn, dos iz vor  
M’shiekh vet kumen hayntiks yor.  

Vet er kumen tsu forn,  
Veln zayn gute yorn.  

Vet er kumen tsu raytn,  
Veln zayn gute tsaytn.  

Vet er kumen tsu geyn,  
Veln ale mentshn tsuzamen ufshteyn.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**  
String of pearls, golden flag,  
Messiah, son of David, sits above us.  

He holds a goblet in his right hand  
And makes a blessing over the whole land.  

Amen, amen, this is the truth,  
Messiah will come this year.  

If he comes riding on a wagon,  
There will be good years.  

If he comes riding on a horse,  
There will be good times.  

If he comes by foot,  
Everyone will rise together.

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**UN DU AKERST** *(And You Plow)*  
Lyrics: Chaim Zhitlowsky, based on a German poem by Georg Herwegh  
Composer unknown  
Choral arrangement: J. Schaefer, adapted by Derek David

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Un du akerst, un du zeyst,  
Un du fiterst, un du neyst  
Un du hamerst, un du shpinst,  
Zog, mayn folk, vos du fardinst?  

Nor vu is dayn tish gegreyt?  
Nor vu is dayn yontef kleyd?  
Nor vu is dayn sharfe shverd?  
Velkhes glik iz dir bashert?  

Man fun arbet, oyfgevakht,  
Un derken dayn groyse makht!  
Ven dayn shtarke hant nor vil,  
Shteyen ale reder shtil.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**  
And you plow and sow,  
Feed and sew,  
And you hammer and spin,  
Tell me, my people, what do you earn?  

Where is your table set,  
Your holiday clothes?  
Where is your sharp sword?  
What happiness is in store for you?  

Worker, wake up  
To your great power!  
Whenever you want,  
All wheels will stand still.
ES BRENT (It’s Burning)
Mordechai Gebirtig
Choral arrangement: L Weiner, adapted by Lisa Gallatin

YIDDISH LYRICS
Es brent, briderlekh, es brent,
Oy undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent.
Beyze vintn mit yirgozn
Raysn blekhn un tseblozn
Shtarker nokh di vilde flamen
Alts arum shoyn brent!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hant,
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Undzer shtetl brent!

Es brent, briderlekh, es brent,
Oy undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent
S’hobn shoyn di fayer-tsungen
[Dos] gantse shtetl ayngeshlungen!
Un di beyze ventn hudzhen,
Undzer shtetl brent!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hant,
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Undzer shtetl brent!

Es brent, briderlekh, es brent,
Es ken kholile kumen der moment,
Undzer shtot mit undz tsuzamen
Zol oyi ash avek in flamen,
Blaybn zol vi nokh a shlaht
Nor puste, shvartse vent!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh,
Mit farleygte hant,
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Undzer shtetl brent!

Es brent, briderlekh, es brent,
Di helf iz nor in aykh aleyn gevent
Oyb dos shtetl iz aykh tayer
Nemt di keylim lesht dos fayer
Lesht mit ayer eygn blut
Bavayst az ir dos kent!
Shteyt nit brider ot azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hant
Shteyt nit brider lesht dos fayer,
undzer shtetl brent!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
It’s burning, it’s burning,
Our poor little town is burning.
Angry winds, with rage
Rip, break, and fan the flames,
Ever stronger the wild blaze,
Everything’s on fire!
And you stand and watch
With folded arms,
And you stand and watch,
Our little town burns!

It’s burning, it’s burning,
Our poor little town is burning.
Tongues of fire have swallowed
The whole little town,
And the angry winds buzz,
Our little town is burning.
And you stand and watch
With folded arms,
And you stand and watch,
Our little town burns!

It’s burning, it’s burning,
The time is coming,
Our little town along with us
Will be ashes
Like after a battle,
Just empty black walls.
And you stand and watch
With folded arms,
And you stand and watch,
Our little town burns!

It’s burning, it’s burning,
Our only help depends on you.
If our little town is dear to you,
Grab the buckets, put out the fire.
Put out the fire with your own blood,
Show that you can do it!
Don’t just stand and watch
With folded arms,
Don’t just stand there, put out the fire,
Our little town is burning!
**UTUSHKA** *(Little Duck)*  
Russian folk song  
Arrangement: Polina Shepherd

**RUSSIAN LYRICS**  
Na mori utushka kupalas’a,  
Na mori s’eraya palaskalas’a, palaskalas’a.

Vyshidshi na bireg, fstripinulas’a,  
Fstripinuvshis’, utushka vaskliknula, vaskliknula:

-Kak-ta mn’e s morim rasstatis’a?  
Kak s krutykh birigof padn’atis’a, padn’atis’a?

Prid’ot marozy zhhistokiy,  
vypadut sn’egi glubokiy, glubokiy.

F t’erimi F’oklusha umuvalas’a,  
Gar’uchimi slizami ablivalas’a, ablivalas’a.

Kak-ta mn’e s bat’ushkai rasstatis’a,  
Kak-ta mn’e s matushkai prashatis’a, prashatis’a…

Na mori utushka kupalas’a,  
Na mori s’eraya palaskalas’a, palaskalas’a

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**  
On the sea a little duck was bathing,  
On the sea a little duck was splashing.

Coming onto the shore,  
She shook herself and cried:

“How do I part with the sea?  
How do I rise from the steep shore?”

Cruel frosts will come soon,  
Deep snow will fall soon.

In a hut, a fair Fyokushka was washing her face  
And tears were streaming down her face.

“How do I part with my father,  
How do I say farewell to my mother?”

Naum will come with his wedding train.  
He will take Fyokla, lovely soul, by the right hand  
And lead her to God’s court  
And then to his house.

On the sea a little duck was bathing,  
On the sea a little duck was splashing.

**MAKHETONIM GEYEN** *(The In-Laws Are Coming!)*  
Lyrics adapted from Mark Warshawsky  
Music: Saul Berezovsky  
Choral arrangement: Derek David

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Di makhetonim geyen shoyn!  
Lomir zikh freyen, shat nor, shat!  
Der khosn iz gor a parshoyn!  
Shpilt a lidl dem khosns tsad!

Ay, ay, ay, tshi-ri-bam....

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**  
The in-laws are coming!  
Let’s greet them - shhh!  
The groom is quite a big shot!  
Play a song for the groom’s side!

Ay, ay, ay, tshi-ri-bam....
The groom’s sister Freydl
Spins like a dreydel - shhh!
Bring her into the circle,
Play a song for the groom’s side!

Here comes Uncle Mindik
Whom we have wronged - shhh!
He is puffed up like a red turkey!
Play a song for the groom’s side!

Ay, ay, ay, tshi-ri-bam....

KH’HOB DEM KHEYSHEK (I Am Yearning)
Based on “I Am Willing” by Holly Near
Yiddish Lyrics: Yuri Vedenyapin
Choral arrangement: Derek David

YIDDISH LYRICS
Kh’hob dem gloybn, kh’hob dem kheyshek,
Zayn fartsveyflt tor men nit,
Mir gedenken doyres kemfers
Far banayung un far likht.
Mayn mishpokhe filt a veytik,
Un mayn shtot iz ful mit tsar,
S’iz dos gantse land dershrokn,
Es filt di velt a shvern gzar.

Zoln kinder zen alts klorer,
Un di firers kligier zayn,
Blozt shoyln, vinfn fun banayung,
Zol es baysn, s’iz keday.

Helf mir, boym, un halt mayn dayge,
Helf mir, midber, halt mayn shrek,
Mikh farkishef, royte shkie,
Nem, du yam, mayn trer avek.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
I have faith, I have yearning,
To be despondent is not allowed,
We remember generations of activists
For renewal and for light.

My family feels pain,
And my town is full of sorrow.
The whole country is frightened,
The world feels a hard decree.

May children see more clearly
And the leaders be wiser;
Blow, winds of renewal,
Let it bite, it’s worth it.

Help me, tree, and stop my worry,
Help me, desert, stop my fear,
Enchant me, red sunset,
Ocean, take my tears away.

ORIGINAL ENGLISH REFRAIN
I am open and I am willing,
To be hopeless would seem so strange,
It dishonors those who go before us,
So lift me up to the light of change.
**DER YOKH (The Yoke)**

Based on “L’Estaca” (The Stake) by Lluis Llach

Yiddish lyrics: Yuri Vedenyapin
Choral arrangement: Klezmatics

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**YIDDISH LYRICS**

Mir zaynen geshtanen in tsveyen,
Es hot nokh nisht getogt,
A ferdl farbay un a vogn,
Un kh'hof dem zeydn gezogt.
"Tsiete af undzere ruks,
Dem shvern ayzerne yokh?
Ken men nisht geyn, nisht flien,
Krigt men a bis un a shtokh."

**REFRAIN**

Tzuzamen kenen mir aroyss,
Zol zayn a sho, a tog, a vokh,
Er vet shoyn faln, faln, faln
Der tsefoylter alter yokh.
Az ikh zol tsien in der mit
Un du zolst tsien in der zayt,
Er vet shoyn faln, faln, faln,
Demolt vern mir bafrayt.

Shoyne lange yorn shteyen mir,
Aropgedrikt fun dem brokh,
Es minert zikh mayn koyekh,
Es vert alts shverer der yokh.
Vayl khotsh tsefoylt un farzhavert,
Dokh halts er vi a tsvang,
Nor ven ikh halts shoyn baym faln,
Her ikh dem zeydns gezang.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

We stood together, the two of us.
It was not yet day
A horse passed by, and a wagon
And I spoke with my grandfather:
"Can you not see on our backs
That heavy iron yoke?
We can't go, we can't fly,
We get a bite and a sting."

**REFRAIN**

Together we can escape,
Be it an hour, a day, a week,
Soon it will fall, fall, fall -
That rotten old yoke.
If I pull from the middle,
And you pull from the side,
It will fall, fall, fall,
And we will all be free.

We've stood by for many years,
Beaten down by the calamity.
My strength is reduced,
The yoke becomes all the more heavy.
Although it's rotten and rusty,
It grips us like tongs.
Just when I'm about to fall,
I hear my grandfather's song.

**REFRAIN**

Der zeyde iz shoyn lang avek,
Me'hert shoyn nisht zayn kol.
Es hot im avekgetrogn a vint,
Nor ikh shtey do vi a mol.
Es geyen naye yinglekh farbay,
Shtrek ikh tsu zey di hent,
Un zing far zey dem zeydns lid
Vos er hot mikh gelernt.

My grandfather is long gone.
His voice can no longer be heard.
He was carried away by the wind
And I remain here as before.
As new youngsters pass by,
I reach out my hand to them
And sing them my grandfather's song,
The one he taught me.
**DI BEKHERS MIT VAYN** *(The Goblets of Wine)*

Lyrics: Hirsh Bloshstein  
Music: Polina Shepherd  
Arrangement: Polina Shepherd, Linda Gritz, and Steven Lipsitt

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Khaveyrim, heybt hekher di bekers mit vayn,  
Zol lebn di libshaft, gezunt zol zi zayn.  
Di libshaft fun yokhed tsum yokhed - dem mentsh,  
Di frayndshaft fun felker zol zayn undz gebentsht.

**REFRAIN**  
Mir zaynen ale ot do af der erd  
Vayl s'hot undz a libshaft, A groyse bagert.  
Vos blondshet in harts vi farborgene shayn,  
Biz s’gist zikh in eybikn nign arayn!

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**  
Friends, raise your glasses of wine.  
Long live love in good health.  
Let us be blessed  
With friendship between peoples.

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Der velt iz in gantsn af libshaft geshtelt,  
Der gortn, der vald un dos veytsene feld,  
Zey shteyen in grins, un in bloy un in gold.  
Der far nor? Der far vos di zun hot zey holt.

**REFRAIN**  
Es vert bloyz durkh libshaft dos lebn gemert,  
Iz zol zi gebentsht zayn, di muter di erd,  
Di muter – di zun un di muter – di froy!  
Dos lebn on libshaft iz kalt un iz groy.

**REFRAIN**  
We are all on this earth  
Because we have a great love  
That wanders lost in our hearts  
Like a hidden light  
Until it bursts out into an eternal melody.

**YIDDISH LYRICS**  
Der far nor? Der far vos di zun hot zey holt.

**REFRAIN**  
The world is based entirely on love,  
The garden, the forest, and the wheat fields.  
They stand in green, in blue, in gold.  
Why? Because the sun loves them.

**REFRAIN**  
Life grows only through love.  
Bless my mother--the earth,  
My mother—the sun and my mother—the woman!  
Life without love is cold and gray.