

NUSAKH VILNE MEMORIAL

The Secrets of the Great Synagogue of Vilna



YIVO INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH RESEARCH September 27, 2023 | 6:30pm

YIVO's annual Nusakh Vilne program commemorates the Jewish community of Vilna through poetry and music. This year we feature the American premiere of *The Secrets of the Great Synagogue of Vilna*, a new documentary by Loïc Salfati.

Comprising many interviews, the film follows the 2019 and 2021 excavation campaigns of the Great Synagogue of Vilna day by day. Both an archaeological adventure and a historical investigation, *The Secrets of the Great Synagogue of Vilna* highlights the Lithuanian Jewish community's intellectual effervescence and the reputation of Vilnius, regarded as one of the most important Jewish cultural centers in Eastern Europe.

Tonight's screening of this documentary will be followed by a Q&A with director Salfati. As a part of the evening, Rita Glassman, Maria Krupoves, and Zalmen Mlotek will perform a selection of music.

Co-sponsored by Nusakh Vilne, the Lithuanian Culture Institute, and the Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania in New York. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.







MUSICAL PROGRAM

Vilna | ווילנע

Under Your Starry Heaven | אונטער דײַנע װײַסע שטערן

Let Our Salvation Come | זאַל שוין קומען די גאולה

Springtime | פֿרילינג

Never Say | זאָג ניט קיין מאָל

Vilna Vilne | ווילנע

Words by A. L. Wolfson, Music by Alexander Olshanetsky

Vilne — shtot fun gayst un tmimes, Vilne — yidishlekh fartrakht, Vu es murmlen shtile tfiles, Shtile soydes fun der nakht. Oft mol ze ikh dir in kholem, Heys gelibte vilne mayn, Un di alte vilner geto In a nepldikn shayn.

Refreyn:

Vilne, vilne, undzer heymshtot, Undzer benkshaft un bager. Akh, vi oft es ruft dayn nomen Fun mayn oyg aroys a trer. Vilner geslekh, vilner taykhn, Vilner velder, barg un tol. Epes noyet, epes benkt zikh Nokh di tsaytn fun amol.

Kh'ze dem veldele zakreter In zayn shotn ayngehilt, Vu geheym es hobn lerer Undzer visndursht geshtilt. Vilne hot dem ershtn fodem Fun der frayheytsfon gevebt Un di libe kinder ire — Mit a tsartn gayst balebt. ווילנע — שטאָט פֿון גײַסט און תּמימות,
ווילנע — ייִדישלעך פֿאַרטראַכט,
וווּ עס מורמלען שטילע תּפֿילות
שטילע סודות פֿון דער נאַכט.
אָפֿט מאָל זע איך דיר אין חלום,
הייס געליבטע ווילנע מײַן,
און די אַלטע ווילנער געטאָ
אין אַ נעפּלדיקן שײַן.

:רעפֿריין

ווילנע, ווילנע, אונדזער היימשטאָט, אונדזער בענקשאַפֿט און באַגער; אונדזער בענקשאַפֿט און באַגער; אַך, ווי אָפֿט עס רופֿט דײַן נאָמען פֿון מײַן אויג אַרױס אַ טרער. ווילנער געסלעך, ווילנער טײַכן, ווילנער וועלדער, בערג און טאָל, עפּעס נויעט, עפּעס בענקט זיך נאַך די צײַטן פֿון אַמאַל.

כ'זע דעם װעלדעלע זאַקרעטער אין זײַן שאָטן אײַנגעהילט, װוּ געהיים עס האָבן לערער אונדזער װיסנדורשט געשטילט. װילנע האָט דעם ערשטן פֿאָדעם פֿון דער פֿרײַהײַטספֿאָן געװעבט און די ליבע קינדער אירע — מיט א צארטן גײַסט באלעבט. Vilna — city of spirit and innocence.

Vilna — conceived in Jewish ways,

Where quiet prayers murmured

Soft secrets of the night.

I often see you in my dreams,

Dearly beloved Vilna of mine,

And the old Vilna ghetto

In a foggy glow.

Refrain:

Vilna, Vilna, our hometown,
Our longing and desire.
Ah, how often your name calls forth
A tear from my eye.
Vilna streets, Vilna rivers,
Vilna forests, mountains and valleys.
Something gnaws at me,
Makes me yearn for the days of long ago.

I see the Zakret forest,
Enveloped in its shadows,
Where teachers secretly slaked
our thirst for knowledge.
Vilna sewed the first thread
Of our flag of freedom,
And inspired its children
With a gentle spirit.

Translation from Songs of Generations: New Pearls of Yiddish Song by Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek

Under Your Starry Heaven Unter dayne vayse shtern | אונטער דײַנע װײַסע שטערן

Words by Abraham Sutzkever, Music by Abraham Brudno

Unter dayne vayse shtern
Shtrek tsu mir dayn vayse hant.
Mayne verter zaynen trern
Viln ruen in dayn hant.
Ze, es tunklt zeyer finkl
In mayn kelerdikn blik.
Un ikh hob gor nit keyn vinkl
Zey tsu shenken dir tsurik.

Un ikh vil dokh, got getrayer, Dir fartroyen mayn farmeg. Vayl es mont in mir a fayer Un in fayer — mayne teg. Nor in kelern un lekher Veynt di merderishe ru. Loyf ikh hekher, iber dekher Un ikh zukh: vu bistu, vu?

Nemen yogn mikh meshune
Trep un hoyfn mit gevoy.
Heng ikh — a geplatste strune
Un ikh zing tsu dir azoy:
Unter dayne vayse shtern
Shtrek tsu mir dayn vayse hant.
Mayne verter zaynen trern
Viln ruen in dayn hant.

אונטער דײַנע װײַסע שטערן שטרעק צו מיר דײַן װײַסע האַנט. מײַנע װערטער זײַנען טרערן װילן רוען אין דײַן האַנט. זע, עס טונקלט זייער פֿינקל אין מײַן קעלערדיקן בליק, און איך האָב גאָר ניט קיין װינקל זיי צו שענקען דיר צוריק.

און איך וויל דאָך, גאָט געטרײַער, דיר פֿאַרטרױען מײַן פֿאַרמעג. ווײַל עס מאָנט אין מיר אַ פֿײַער, און אין פֿײַער — מײַנע טעג. נאָר אין קעלערן און לעכער וויינט די מערדערישע רו. לויף איך העכער, איבער דעכער און איך זוך: וווּ ביסטו, וווּ?

נעמען יאָגן מיך משונה טרעפּ און הױפֿן מיט געװױ. הענג איך — אַ געפּלאַצטע סטרונע און איך זינג צו דיר אַזױ: אונטער דײַנע װײַסע שטערן שטרעק צו מיר דײַן װײַסע האַנט. מײַנע װערטער זײַנען טרערן װילן רוען אין דײַן האַנט. Under your white starry heaven
Offer me your pale white hand.
All my words are flowing teardrops,
I would place them in your hand.
Gone the luster from their brightness,
Seen through morbid cellar view —
And I no longer have my own space
To reflect them back to you.

My devoted God I offer
Everything that I possess.
As the fire that I suffer
Fills each fiery day I pass.
Only in the holes and cellars
With deadly rest my days I share.
I run higher — over spire
Searching where are you, oh where?

I am chased by phantom beings
Stairs and courtyards goad me too.
There I hang a broken bowstring —
And I sing once more to you:
Under your white starry heaven
Offer me your pale white hand.
All my words are flowing teardrops,
I would place them in your hand.

Translation from
WE ARE HERE: SONGS OF THE HOLOCAUST by Malke Gottleib and Chana Mlotek

Let Our Salvation Come Zol shoyn kumen di geule | זאָל שוין קומען די גאולה

Words by Shmerke Kaczerginski, Music by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook

Ongezolyet afn hartsn, makht men a lekhayim. Oyb der umet lozt nit ruen — zingen mir a lid. lz nito keyn bisl bronfn — lomir trinken mayim, Mayim-khayim iz dokh khayim vos darf nokh der yid?

Refreyn:

Zol shoyn kumen di geule Meshiekh kumt shoyn bald!

S'iz a dor fun kule-khayev, zayt nit keyn naronim — Un fun zindikn — Meshiekh gikher kumen vet! Akh, du tatele, in himl, s'betn bney-rakhmonim; Ze, Meshiekh zol nit kumen a bisele tsu shpet. . .

S'tantsn beymer in di velder, shtern afn himl. Reb Yisroel der mekhutn dreyt zikh in der mit, S'vet zikh ufvekn Meshiekh fun zayn tifn driml Ven er vet derhern undzer tfiledike lid. אָנגעזאָליעט אױפֿן האַרצן, מאַכט מען אַ לחיים. אױב דער אומעט לאָזט ניט רוען — זינגען מיר אַ ליד. איז ניטאָ קיין ביסל בראָנפֿן — לאָמיר טרינקען מים, מים-חיים איז דאָך חיים — װאָס דאַרף נאָך אַ ייִד?

> רעפֿריין: זאָל שוין קומען די גאולה, משיח קומט שוין באלד!

ס'איז אַ דור פֿון כּולו חייבֿ, זײַט ניט קיין נאַראָנים — און פֿון זינדיקן — משיח גיכער קומען וועט!
 אַך, דו טאַטעלע אין הימל, ס'בעטן בני-רחמנים:
 זע, משיח זאָל ניט קומען אַ ביסעלע צו שפּעט —

ס'טאַנצן ביימער אין די װעלדער, שטערן אױפֿן הימל. ר' ישׂראל דער מחותן דרייט זיך אין דער מיט. ס'װעט זיך אױפֿװעקן משיח פֿון זײַן טיפֿן דרימל װען ער װעט דערהערן אונדזער תּפֿילהדיקע ליד. When we're feeling low, we raise a glass.

If the melancholy won't leave us be, we sing a song.

If there is not a bit of liquor, then let us drink water.

Fresh water is aqua-vitae, what more does a Jew need?

Refrain:

Let the Redemption come already, The Messiah is coming soon.

It's a completely wicked generation, don't be fools, And through sinning – the Messiah will come faster. Oh, You, dear Father in heaven, we children of mercy pray, See to it that the Messiah does not come just a little too late.

Trees are dancing in the woods, stars in the sky,
Reb Israel, father of the bride, is dancing in their midst.
It will wake up the Messiah from his groggy nap,
When he hears our prayerful song..

Translation from
MIR TROGN A GEZANG: FAVORITE YIDDISH SONGS by Eleanor Gordon Mlotek

Springtime Friling | פֿרילינג

Words by Shmerke Kaczerginski, Music by Abraham Brudno

lkh blondzhe in geto
Fun gesl tsu gesl
Un ken nit gefinen keyn ort:
Nito iz mayn liber,
Vi trogt men ariber? —
Mentshn, o zogt khotsh a vort.
Es laykht af mayn heym itst
Der himl der bloyer —
Vos zhe hob ikh itst derfun?
lkh shtey vi a betler
Bay yetvidn toyer
Un betl — a bisele zun.

Friling, nem tsu mayn troyer, Un breng mayn libstn, Mayn trayen tsurik. Friling, af dayne fligl bloye, O, nem mayn harts mit Un gib es op mayn glik.

lkh gey tsu der arbet
Farbay undzer shtibl,
In troyer — der toyer farmakht.
Der tog a tsehelter,
Di blumen farvelkte,
Zey vyanen — far zey iz oykh nakht.
Far nakht af tsurik vegs,
Es noyet der troyer,
Ot do hostu, libster, gevart.
Ot do inem shotn
Nokh kentik dayn trot iz,
Flegst kushn mikh liblekh un tsart.

Friling, nem tsu mayn troyer. . .

איך בלאָנדזשע אין געטאָ פֿון געסל צו געסל און קען ניט געפֿינען קיין אָרט: ניטאָ איז מײַן ליבער, װי טראָגט מען אַריבער? — מענטשן, אָ זאָגט כאָטש אַ װאָרט. עס לײַכט אױף מײַן היים איצט דער הימל דער בלױער — װאָס זשע האָב איך איצט דערפֿון? איך שטיי װי אַ בעטלער בײַ יעטװידן טױער

פֿרילינג, נעם צו מײַן טרױער, און ברענג מײַן ליבסטן, מײַן טרײַען צוריק. פֿרילינג, אױף דײַנע פֿליגל בלױע, אָ נעם מײַן האַרץ מיט און גיב עס אָפּ מײַן גליק.

איך גיי צו דער אַרבעט פֿאַרבײַ אונדזער שטיבל, אין טרויער — דער טויער פֿאַרמאַכט. דער טאָג אַ צעהעלטער, די בלומען פֿאַרװעלקטע, זיי װיאַנען — פֿאַר זיי איז אױך נאַכט. פֿאַר נאַכט אױף צוריק װעגס, עס נויעט דער טרױער, אָט דאָ האָסטו, ליבסטער, געװאַרט. אָט דאָ אינעם שאָטן נאָך קענטיק דײַן טראָט איז, פֿלעגסט קושן מיך ליבלעך און צאַרט.

פֿרילינג, נעם צו מײַן טרױער. . .

S'iz hayyor der friling
Gor fri ongekumen,
Tseblit hot zikh benkshaft nokh dir,
lkh ze dikh vi itster
Balodn mit blumen,
A freydiker geystu tsu mir.
Di zun hot fargosn
Dem gortn mit shtraln,
Tsheshprotst hot di erd zikh in grin.
Mayn trayer, mayn libster,
Vu bistu farfaln? —
Du geyst nit aroys fun mayn zin.

Friling, nem tsu mayn troyer. . .

I roam through the ghetto
From alley to alley
Useless, no haven I find;
Gone my beloved,
Oh how can I bear it? —
Won't somebody say something kind?
My house is aglow now,
The sky so much bluer —
What does that mean in my life?
I stand like a beggar,
I huddle at gateways
And beg for a handful of light.

Springtime, dispel my sorrow,
Bring my beloved,
My dear one to me.
Springtime, blue wings for me you'll borrow,
Oh, take my poor heart,
And return my joy to me.

I go to my labor
I pass by our dwelling,
Bereaved now — the gate is shut tight.
The day bathed in sunshine,
Sad flowers are fading,
They weep — for them too it is night.
At night when returning,
With deep sadness gnawing,
Right here, love, you waited for me.
Right here in the shadow
I still hear your step fall,
Your arms held me so tenderly.

ס'איז הײַיאָר דער פֿרילינג
גאָר פֿרי אָנגעקומען,
צעבליט האָט זיך בענקשאַפֿט נאָך דיר,
איך זע דיך װי איצטער
באַלאָדן מיט בלומען,
אַ פֿרײִדיקער גײסטו צו מיר.
די זון האָט פֿאַרגאָסן
דעם גאָרטן מיט שטראַלן,
דעשפּראָצט האָט די ערד זיך אין גרין.
צעשפּראָצט האָט די ערד זיך אין גרין.
מײַן טרײַער, מײַן ליבסטער,
װוּ ביסטו פֿאַרפֿאַלן? —
דו גײסט ניט אַרױס פֿון מײַן זין.

פֿרילינג, נעם צו מײַן טרױער. . .

Springtime, dispel my sorrow . . .

This year the springtime
Is with us so early,
My longing for you burst in bloom,
I see you as now, dear,
All covered with flowers,
With gladness you'll come to me soon.
The sun has now showered
The garden with sunshine,
The earth is all covered in green.
My darling. my loved one,
Are you lost lor all time?
My mind cannot bear what that means.

Springtime, dispel my sorrow . . .

Translation from
We Are Here: Songs of the Holocaust
by Malke Gottleib and Chana Mlotek

Never Say Zog nit keyn mol | זאָג ניט קיין מאָל

Words by Hirsh Glik, Music by Dmitri Pokrass

Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg, Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg. Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho, Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zaynen do!

Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney, Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey, Un vu gefaln s'iz a shprits fun undzer blut, Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.

Es vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt, Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynd, Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem kayor — Vi a parol zoI geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.

Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay, S'iz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl af der fray, Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!

To zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg, Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg, Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho — Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zaynen do! זאָג ניט קײן מאָל, אַז דו גײסט דעם לעצטן װעג, כאָטש הימלען בלײַענע פֿאַרשטעלן בלױע טעג. קומען װעט נאָך אונדזער אױסגעבענקטע שעה, עס װעט אַ פּױק טאָן אונדזער טראָט — מיר זײַנען דאָ!

פֿון גרינעם פּאַלמענלאַנד ביז װײַסן לאַנד פֿון שניי, מיר קומען אָן מיט אונדזער פּײַן, מיט אונדזער װי, און װוּ געפֿאַלן ס'איז אַ שפּריץ פֿון אונדזער בלוט, שפּראַצן װעט דאַרט אונדזער גבֿורה, אונדזער מוט.

עס װעט די מאָרגנזון באַגילדן אונדז דעם הײַנט, און דער נעכטן װעט פֿאַרשװינדן מיטן פֿײַנד. — נאָר אױב פֿאַרזאַמען װעט די זון אין דעם קאַיאָר װי אַ פּאַראַל זאָל גיין דאָס ליד פֿון דור צו דור.

דאָס ליד געשריבן איז מיט בלוט און ניט מיט בלײַ, ס'איז ניט קיין לידל פֿון אַ פֿױגל אױף דער פֿרײַ, דאָס האָט אַ פֿאָלק צװישן פֿאַלנדיקע װענט דאָס ליד געזונגען מיט נאַגאַנעס אין די הענט.

טאָ זאָג ניט קיין מאָל, אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן װעג, כאָטש הימלען בלײַענע פֿאַרשטעלן בלױע טעג. קומען װעט נאָך אונדזער אױסגעבענקטע שעה — עס װעט אַ פּױק טאָן אונדזער טראַט — מיר זײַנען דאַ!

Never say this is the final road for you,
Though leadened skies may cover over days of blue.
As the hour that we longed for is so near,
Our step beats out the message — we are here!

From lands so green with palms to lands all white with snow,
We shall be coming with our anguish and our woe,
And where a spurt of our blood fell on the earth,
There our courage and our spirit have rebirth.

The early morning sun will brighten our day,
And yesterday with our foe will fade away.
But if the sun delays and in the east remains —
This song as password generations must maintain.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead, It's not a little tune that birds sing overhead, This song a people sang amid collapsing walls With grenades in hands they heeded to the call.

Therefore never say the road now ends for you,
Though leadened skies may cover over days of blue.
As the hour that we longed for is so near —
Our step beats out the message — we are here!

Translation from
We Are Here: Songs of the Holocaust by Malke Gottleib and Chana Mlotek

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Loïc Salfati is a French engineer who was born in 1974 and moved to Lithuania in 2002. After working in the lighting sector in France, he became a photographer and film director. Loïc Salfati has also worked in the cultural sector since 2005. He is currently deputy director and cultural attaché at the French Institute in Lithuania, where he developed cultural relations between France and Lithuania.

Cantor RITA GLASSMAN is is the Cantor of Temple Israel of New Rochelle in New York. She previously served as Cantor of Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco, California. In addition to being an ordained Cantor, she is a composer and a Board Certified Chaplain. She has produced seven CD recordings with original music both liturgical and secular on the themes of healing, hope and peace (www.RitaGlassman.com). Cantor Glassman is the daughter of Holocaust survivor Isaac Glazman, z"l, who daringly escaped from the Vilna Ghetto one day before its liquidation. The details of his escape and survival in Vilna were recorded in letters he wrote to a brother in New York which were published in the Yiddish Forward newspaper in 1945. Rita travelled to Vilnius for the first time in the summer of 2019, arriving at the excavation site of the Great Synagogue of Vilna the day the Bima was located. Her rendition of the prayer "El Maleh Rachamim" captured in the film "The Secrets of the Great Synagogue of Vilna" was from that very moment.

DR. MARIA KRUPOVES, an artist and folklorist, is internationally acclaimed as a singer and interpreter of the folksongs of Eastern Europe, especially those of her native Vilnius with its multicultural heritage. In 2001, Dr. Krupoves was awarded a Vladimir and Pearl Heyfetz Fellowship at YIVO (Institute for Jewish Research) in New York. While in the United States, she has lectured and performed at YIVO and various universities. The singer has published seven albums with a multicultural repertory in collaboration with klezmer, jazz and classical musicians. Her album Without a Country: Songs of Stateless Peoples got an enthusiastic review in the Billboard Magazine. Recordings from her album Songs of the Vilna Ghetto have been used in the numerous documentaries about Vilna's Jewish history.

ZALMEN MLOTEK is an internationally recognized authority on Yiddish folk and theater music as well as creator of new musicals such as *The Golden Land* which toured Italy under the sponsorship of Leonard Bernstein and *Those Were The Days*, nominated for two Tony Awards. As the artistic director of the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene (NYTF) for the past twenty years, Mlotek helped revive Yiddish classics, instituted simultaneous English and Russian supertitles at performances and brought leading creative artists of television, theatre and film, such as Itzhak Perlman, Mandy Patinkin, Sheldon Harnick, Ron Rifkin and Joel Grey to the Yiddish stage. His vision has propelled classics, including NYTF productions of the world premiere of Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Yentl* in Yiddish (1998), *Di Yam Gazlonim* (The Yiddish *Pirates of Penzance*, 2006), the 1923 Rumshinky operetta *The Golden Bride* (2016), and the critically acclaimed *Fidler Afn Dakh* (*Fiddler on the Roof* in Yiddish, 2018). During his tenure at the NYTF, the theatre company has been nominated or received over ten Drama Desk Awards and four Lucille Lortel Awards.

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