

National Days of Remembrance

MUSICAL SELECTIONS FOR A DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE COMMEMORATION

Music can be one of the elements of a Days of Remembrance commemoration, and these three selections have been performed at commemorative observances since the immediate postwar period. Recordings of these songs and corresponding sheet music can be found online for purchase and downloaded through an Internet search by title.

More information about music created and performed during the Holocaust can be found on the Museum's website at www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/music/.

MUSICAL SELECTION 1

Our Town Is Burning! (*Undzer Shtetl Brent!*)

MUSICAL SELECTION 2

Ani Ma'amin (I Believe)

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Hymn of the Partisans (Never Say You're Traveling Down the Final Mile; *Zog nit keyn mol!*)

MUSICAL SELECTION I

Our Town Is Burning! (*Undzer Shtetl Brent!*)

Date: Krakow, Poland, ca. 1938

Lyrics: Mordechai Gebirtig

Music: Mordechai Gebirtig

Language: Yiddish

Translation: Bret Werb

A carpenter by trade, Mordechai Gebirtig (1877–1942), was also a folk poet and songwriter, the celebrated “troubadour of the Jewish people.” During World War II, he used the medium of song to chronicle his experiences in the Krakow ghetto. He was killed by German soldiers after refusing to comply with a deportation order. Originally created in response to a pogrom in a small Polish town, “Our Town Is Burning” seems prophetic of the Holocaust. During the war, Gebirtig was gratified to learn that his “call to action” had become the anthem of the underground resistance in Krakow.

[Yiddish:]

S'brent, briderlekh, s'brent!
Oy, undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent.
Beyze vintn mit yirgozn,
Raysn, brekhn un tseblozn,
Shtarker nokh di vilde flamen,
Alts arum shoyn brent!!—
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hent,
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh—
Undzer shtetl brent.

S'brent, briderlekh, s'brent!
Oy, undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent,
S'hobn shoyn di fayertsungen,
Gantse hayzlekh ayngeshlungen,
Un di beyze vintn huzshen,
S'gantse shtetl brent!!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hent,
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh—
Undzer shtetl brent.

S'brent, briderlekh, s'brent!
Oy, s'ken kholile kumen der moment,
Undzer shtot mit undz tsuzamen
Zol oyf ash avek in flamen,
Blaybn zol vi nokh a shlakht,
Nor puste, shvartse vent—
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hent!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh—
Undzer shtetl brent.

S'brent, briderlekh, s'brent!
Di hilf iz nor in aykh aleyn gevent,
Oyb dos shtetl iz aykh tayer,
Nemt di keylim, lesht dos fayer,
Lesht mit ayer eygn blut,
Bavayzt, az ir dos kent!!
Shteyt nisht brider ot azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hent,
Shteyt nisht brider, lesht dos fayer—
Undzer shtetl brent.

[English translation:]

It's burning, brothers! It's burning!
Our poor village, brothers, burns!
Evil winds, full of anger,
Rage and ravage, smash and shatter;
Stronger now the wild flames grow—
All around now burns!
And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms,
And you stand there looking on—
While our village burns!

It's burning, brothers! It's burning!
Our poor village, brothers, burns!
Soon the rabid tongues of fire
Will consume each house entire,
As the wild wind blows and howls—
The whole town's up in flames!
And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms,
And you stand there looking on—
While our village burns!

It's burning, brothers! Our town is burning!
God forbid the moment should arrive,
That our town, with us, together,
Should go up in ash and fire,
Leaving when the slaughter's ended
Charred and empty walls!
And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms,
And you stand there looking on—
While our village burns!

It's burning, brothers! Our town is burning!
And salvation hangs on you alone.
If our town is dear to you,
Grab the buckets, douse the fire!
Douse it with your very blood,
Show that you know how!
Don't stand there, brothers, looking on
With futile, folded arms,
Don't stand there, brothers, douse the fire!—
Our poor village burns!

Our Town Is Burning!

Mordechai Gebirtig

The image displays a musical score for the song "Our Town Is Burning!" by Mordechai Gebirtig. The score is written on three staves in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. The second staff continues the melody, featuring a prominent eighth-note pattern. The third staff concludes the piece with a final note and a double bar line. The notation is clear and legible, typical of a standard musical score.

MUSICAL SELECTION 2

Ani Ma'amin (I Believe)

Lyrics: Anonymous

Music: Anonymous

Language: Hebrew

Translation: Adapted from Eleanor Mlotek and Malke Gottlieb, eds., *We Are Here* (New York: Workmen's Circle, 1983)

Sung by religious Jews during the Holocaust, the text to "Ani Ma'amin" was adapted from the "Thirteen Principles of Faith" by the medieval philosopher Maimonides. An affirmation of unwavering faith through great adversity, the hymn has become a mainstay of commemoration ceremonies worldwide.

[Hebrew:]

Ani ma'amin, ani ma'amin,
Ani ma'amin,
B'emuna sheleima,
B'viat hamoshiach,
B'viat hamoshiach ani ma'amin.
V'af al pi she'yismamaya
Im kol zeh ani ma'amin.

[English translation:]

I believe, I believe,
I believe,
With reassuring faith,
He will come, he will come,
I believe Messiah will come,
I believe, although he may delay,
I believe he will come.

Ani Ma'amin

Words: After Maimonides
Melody: unknown



MUSICAL SELECTION 3

Hymn of the Partisans (Never Say You're Traveling Down the Final Mile; *Zog nit keyn mol!*)

Date: 1943

Lyrics: Hirsh Glik

Music: Dmitri and Daniel Pokrass

Language: Yiddish

Translation: Irving Greenberg

News of the Warsaw ghetto uprising of April 1943 inspired this song by the Vilna (present-day Vilnius) poet and partisan Hirsh Glik (1922–1944). Set to a popular Soviet melody, it quickly spread beyond the ghetto and was soon adopted as the partisans' official anthem. Glik is presumed to have lost his life while attempting to escape from an Estonian forced-labor camp.

[Yiddish:]

Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene fashteln 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 zol 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 oyf der fray,
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent,
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!

To, zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene fashteln bloye teg.
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho—
Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot—mir zaynen do!

[English translation:]

Never say you are going on your last road,
[Not even] when leaden skies block out days of blue.
The hour we long for will yet come,
The tread of our footsteps will pound out—We are here!

From lands green with palms to lands white with snow,
We come, bearing our pain and our woe,
And wherever a spurt of our blood fell,
There will blossom our courage and our strength!

The rising morning sun will yet light up our today,
And yesterday—with our foe—will fade away.
But if the sun be delayed and the dawn held back,
Let this song go forth as a password from generation to
generation!

This song was written with blood, not with lead,
It is not the melody of a bird soaring free,
A people, standing between collapsing walls,
Holding gun in hand, sang this song!

Never say you are going on your last road,
[Not even] when leaden skies block out days of blue.
The hour we long for will yet come,
The tread of our footsteps will pound out—We are here!

Hymn of the Partisans

(Never Say You're Traveling Down the Final Mile)

Words: Hirsh Glik

Music: Dmitri and Daniel Pokrass

