

Lo V'Chayil

Lo V'Chayil is a Chanukah song written by Elliot Z. Levine. This article is divided into the following sections:

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Lyrics

Lo v'cha-yil v'lo v'cho-ach
ki im b'ru-chi a-mar A-do-nai tz'va-ot

Not by might nor by power but My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts

I. Lo V'Chayil

Transcontinental brings this popular piece, touted yearly on National Public Radio, to the masses in printed form. Our new publication of this setting by the Western Wind's Elliot Levine, often regarded as a Chanukah standard, works well all year round, enumerating an important Jewish theme: Not by might, not by power!

(From the chorus Sheet Music)

Even though today we celebrate Chanukah as a remembrance of the Maccabees' conflict with King Antiochus, the early Rabbis who established the traditions of Chanukah were troubled by the violent model of warrior priests.

In choosing this portion of the book of Zechariah to be chanted as the haftarah on the Shabbat of Chanukah, the Rabbis were reminding us that, through their special lens, the truest way to salvation must be via the spirit of God, and not exclusively the use of force. (Rabbi Gerald Skolnik)

II. Elliot Z. Levine

Elliot Z. Levine: baritone, Western Wind Vocal Ensemble since its inception in 1969. M.M. Manhattan School of Music, B.A. Queens College. Orff School, Salzburg; conducting: Robert Hickok; composition: Robert Starer, Brooklyn College; five Meet-the-Composer Grants. Conductor and coach at Western Wind Workshops: Dartmouth, Penn State, U. Mass & Smith College, national and statewide ACDA Conferences. Composer-in-residence, Church of St. Thomas More, N.Y.C. Video and film scores.

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Elliot Z. Levine has been the baritone for the [Western Wind Vocal Ensemble](#) since its inception in 1969. He has appeared as a soloist with such groups as Musica Sacra, the Rome Opera, La Fenice, the Mannes Camerata, Music at Ascension, the Ensemble for Early Music, the Folger Consort and the Kalamazoo Bach Festival.

He received his M.M. from the Manhattan School of Music, his B.A. from Queens College, and has also studied at the Orff School in Salzburg. He has trained in conducting with Robert Hickok and in composition with Robert Starer at Brooklyn College. He has been awarded five Meet-the-Composer Grants and has had compositions commissioned by the Harmonium Choral Society, St. Mary the Virgin Church, Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble, the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, Temple Israel Center and the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble.

Since 1980, he has been a conductor and coach at Western Wind Workshops at such institutions as Dartmouth and Smith Colleges, University of Massachusetts, and ACDA choral conferences around the country. He has taught at CCNY and Upsala College. Levine is the cantor at Temple Emanuel of Great Neck, N.Y. and sings at the Church of St. Luke in the Fields in New York City.

Levine is published by Shadow Press, Harold Flammer Inc., E. Henry David, Plymouth, Colla Voce, and Willis Music.

Testimonials

“In my experience, Elliot Levine’s music has proven itself to be sophisticated and expressive; engaging for performers and audience alike. Whether in his Christmas oratorio *The Cantata of the Animals* or in a short psalm setting, Levine’s hallmark is his ability to get to the core of a text and to set it in a way which crosses the footlights magnificently.”

“Elliot Z. Levine’s choral music is at once always original and always accessible. In selecting his texts and choosing his musical materials, he has an unfailing ear for his audience, tailoring his commissions very personally to their interests, concerns, and abilities. Whether designed for young amateurs or adult professionals, his scores combine sophisticated musical challenges with moments of simplicity that invite the sheer pleasure and joy of singing together.”

“He writes both religious (all denominations) and secular (all sizes, traditional to contemporary) works which find a special place in the hearts of the groups who sing them. He has focused particularly on writing works that encourage international understanding, peacemaking, community building, and celebration of the multi-cultural worldview.”

“They are well crafted and gratifying to sing; ... *Raslo Dervo* and *Lo V'Chayil* are truly beautiful, and *Al Hanissim* is as exciting as it gets!”

“All my professional and amateur choristers love to sing Elliot’s compositions and arrangements which benefit from his skills as an ensemble singer. Everyone has something interesting and vocally rewarding to sing. His intelligence, warmth, humor and deep understanding of the text/music relationship are evident to the listening audience as well. His stunning arrangements illuminate older material with insight and respect. His music works for large groups and chamber ensembles. Elliot’s music is a joy to sing!”

Audio/Video Links

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNKlgVavRFE>

References:

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<http://www.ehenrydavid.com/cgi-bin/ehdcatalogue.pl?person=levine>