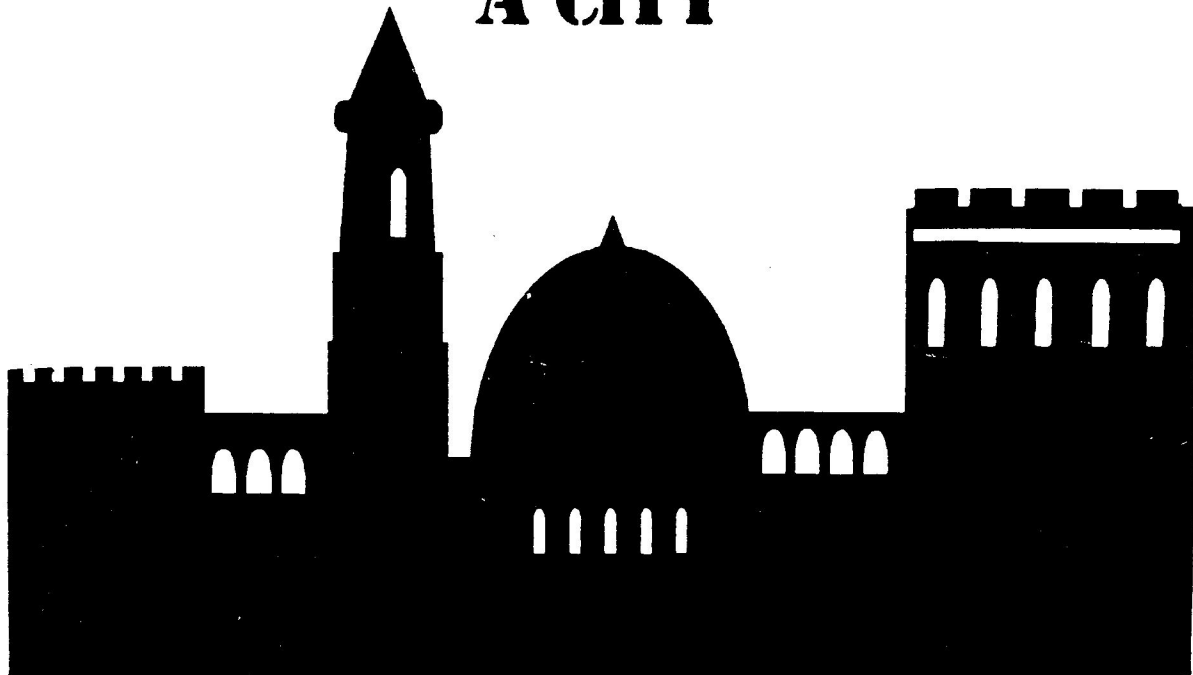


THE SONG THAT TOOK A CITY



Women's League for Conservative Judaism
48 East 74th Street, New York, NY 10021

NARRATORS

THE SONG THAT TOOK A CITY

by Linda Gottlieb

from an article in Reader's Digest (Dec. 1967)

Adapted for Women's League by Susan F. Lodish

CAST:

4 Narrators

(2 at each microphone (SR) STAGE RIGHT & (SL) STAGE LEFT

MUSIC:

(Yerushala'yim Shel Zahav) can be played very softly in the background. Use someone playing a guitar seated down center (DC) or use a tape. End with everyone singing. Duplicate the words and music and pre-place on each chair or on the tables.

TIME

15 minutes

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NARRATORS

- #1 It was written as a personal song, a song of longing and nostalgia. But for a desperate nation it became a hymn of victory.

(MUSIC VERY SOFT IN BACKGROUND)

- #2 In Israel today, from one end of the country to the other, one song is sung: "*Yerushala'yim Shel Zahav*," "Jerusalem of Gold." Within three weeks it became both national hymn and prayer. "Jerusalem of Gold" has penetrated the very marrow of every Israeli and lives on as a reminder of the Six-Day War.

- #3 In Tel Aviv, Naomi Shemer, long black hair framing a face from a Gauguin painting, sits and ponders her latest creation. For her, it was a miracle which began on May 15, 1967. Some 3500 people had crowded into National Hall in modern Jerusalem to attend the annual song festival commemorating Israeli Independence Day. This year, five of the country's top composers had been commissioned to create songs. The festival director had explained that they were free to write about anything they wanted, but Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem had expressed a strong wish that one of the five compose a song about Jerusalem. Four were not interested. Naomi Shemer, 35, popular composer of more than 200 songs, accepted.

(MUSIC OUT)

- #4 For two months she wrote nothing at all. But as she went about her daily activities, she thought about the Jerusalem she had known as a girl. She remembered how her Polish parents spoke of their own birthplace of Vilna as "the Jerusalem of the Diaspora" - as if every other city could only be second-best. She remembered the colors, the sounds, the silent mood of Jerusalem, her childhood visits to biblical places, closed forever to her since 1948. She thought, too, of a story from the Talmud in which the wife of the great Rabbi Akiva lived in poverty for years so that her husband might pursue his studies. When Rabbi Akiva became a famous and learned man, he rewarded his wife with a "Jerusalem of gold," a gold brooch hammered out in the shape of the ancient city, to be worn as a symbol of her devotion.

- #1 Naomi Shemer took the Talmudic phrase, "*Yerushala'yim shel zahav*," "Jerusalem made of gold," and used it as the title for her song. It was to be a song of nostalgia, an intimate regret for a city she had personally lost. "Jerusalem of gold, of copper and of light," went the refrain; then, quoting from the medieval Hebrew writer, Yehuda Halevi, she continued, "Let me be a violin for all your songs ..." For the first time in modern song, she referred to the "ancient wall" which Jerusalem "carries around her heart," and talked of the sights of the old city, sights Jews of today would never see:

The water cisterns are dry,
The marketplace is empty.
We cannot visit our temple in the ancient city,
Where winds wail in the rocky caves.

Over the mountains.
We cannot go to the Dead Sea
By way of Jericho.
Your name burns my lips like a
seraphim's kiss
Let me not forget thee, O Jerusalem
of gold!

#2 At National Hall in Jerusalem, it was already close to midnight when the song was sung. Fourteen other melodies had already been performed to full orchestral accompaniment and polite applause. Then a young girl, discovered by the composer herself only a few days before, and unknown to the general audience, walked out on stage. Her only accompaniment was her guitar. As she sang *Yerushala'yim Shel Zahav*", the audience grew hushed. When the girl finished there was a second of silence, then earsplitting applause for nearly seven minutes. Naomi Shemer's personal sense of loss, it turned out, was every Israeli's. "Jerusalem of Gold" had to be played once more, by popular demand. This time - the second time the song had ever been performed - the entire audience joined in the refrain.

#4 On the same night that the Jewish audience was singing of a Jerusalem they would never see, Gamal Abdel Nasser was moving his troops into the Sinai Peninsula. In the days after Naomi Shemer's song was premiered, the soldiers of Israel began to leave their homes and prepare for battle.

(MUSIC STARTS UP VERY SOFTLY)

They took with them almost no personal belongings, but somehow - as the song was played over and over on the radio during the early days of mobilization - they took the song.

#1 Then the telephone calls and letters began. Soldiers wrote to tell Naomi Shemer how they sang her song in the fields during the evening. Performers called to ask if they might begin and end their programs for the military with her song, since the soldiers inevitably requested it. A high member of the armed forces called to invite Miss Shemer to sing her song for the troops stationed around Jerusalem. Although she does not often perform, she accepted.

#2 Many of the faces in her audiences she recognized - doctors, lawyers, people she saw every day in the small country of Israel. Some, she remembered, had fought in 1948 and 1956. They stood about her in a circle, with only the headlights of a truck breaking the blackness of the night, and she sang to them.

(MUSIC UP)

Loudly, with determination in their voices, the soldiers joined in the refrain.

(MUSIC OUT)

- #1 Late the night of June 4 the men moved out and, on Monday morning, radios announced that war had broken out. Naomi Shemer set out to help in the only way she knew. On Tuesday, she joined the troops outside Raza, singing for them in the evening. On Wednesday they moved to El Arish, where scattered infantry fighting was still going on. She and several other entertainers were huddled around a column built, ironically, by the Egyptians to commemorate their 1956 "victory" over the Israelis in Sinai.
- #4 Someone had a transistor radio. Suddenly an announcer broke into the music. "The city of Jerusalem has been taken!" The program switched to Jerusalem itself. Gunfire could be heard behind the announcer's voice, as he described the paratroopers' block-by-block fight into the heart of the old city. Now some of the troops were advancing toward the Western Wall, he said. (MUSIC UP SOFTLY) Then, in the background, indistinctly at first, there was the sound of a song - or a hymn, rather - sung by what sounded like hundreds of men, in hoarse voices, gasping for breath between lines: *Yerushala'yim shel zahav, v'shel n'hoshet v'shel or, Halo l'khol shirayikh ani kinor.* ("Jerusalem of gold, of copper and of light, Let me be a violin for all your songs!")
- #3 Naomi Shemer, crouched by the side of an Egyptian wall, listened to the broadcast. She heard the announcer's description of the tanks and trucks coming into the city, many of them plastered with banners reading, *Yerushala'yim shel zahav*. Tears ran down her cheeks.
- #2 Then, in the middle of the sounds of battle in El Arish and in Jerusalem, a very small, personal, professional thought occurred to her: she would have to rewrite the second stanza of her song. There was no longer any need for nostalgia; Jerusalem was theirs!
- #4 Later that evening, when the Israeli soldiers had gathered in their camp in the desert, the young woman got up before them. "I shall sing for you a stanza I have just added to Jerusalem of Gold," she told them. "Because when I first wrote the song, Jerusalem was just a beautiful dream for all of us. And now," she added, "it belongs to us!" And as the soldiers listened, she sang:

We have come back now to the water cisterns.
Back to the marketplace.
The sound of the shofar is heard
From the Western Wall in the ancient city.
And from the rocky caves in the mountains,
A thousand suns are rising.
We shall go now to the Dead Sea,
Go by way of Jericho!

(EVERYONE SINGS TOGETHER)

JERUSALEM OF GOLD by Naomi Shemer

Avir harim zalul kayayin
Ve-rei'ah oranim
Nissa be-ru'ah ha'arbayim
Im kol pa'amonim

U-ve-tardemat ilan va-even
Shvuyah ba-halomah
Ha-ir asher badad yoshevet
U-ve-libbah homah

Yerushalayim shel zahav
Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or
Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh
Ani kinnor.

Eikhah yavshu borot ha-mayim
Kikkar ha-shuk reikah
Ve-ein poked et Har ha-Bayit
Ba-ir ha-attikah

U-va-me'arot asher ba-selah
Meyallelot ruhot
Ve-ein yored el Yam ha-Melah
Be-derekh Yeriho

Yerushalayim shel zahav
Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or
Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh
Ani kinnor.

Akh be-vo'i ha-yom la-shir lakh
Ve-lakh likshor ketarim
Katonti mi-ze'ir bana'ikh
U-me-aharon ha-meshorerim

Ki shemekh zorev et ha-sefatayim
Ke-neshikat saraf
Im eshkakhekh Yerushalayim
Asher kullah zahav

Yerushalayim shel zahav
Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or
Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh
Ani kinnor.

Hazarnu el borot ha-mayim
La-shuk ve-la-kikkar
Shofar kore be-Har ha-Bayit
Ba-ir ha-attikah

U-va-me'arot asher ba-selah
Alfey shemashot zorhot
Nashuv nered el Yam ha-Melah
Be-derekh Yeriho

Yerushalayim shel zahav
Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or
Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh
Ani kinnor.

The mountain air is clear as water
The scent of pines around
Is carried on the breeze of twilight,
And tinkling bells resound.

The trees and stones there softly slumber,
A dream enfolds them all.
So solitary lies the city,
And at its heart — a wall.

Oh, Jerusalem of gold,
and of light and of bronze,
I am the violin for all your songs.

The wells ran dry of all their water,
Forlorn the market square,
The Temple Mount dark and deserted,
In the Old City there.

And in the caverns in the mountain,
The winds howl to and fro,
And no-one takes the Dead Sea highway,
That leads through Jericho.

Oh, Jerusalem of gold,
and of light and of bronze,
I am the violin for all your songs.

But as I sing to you, my city,
And you with crowns adorn,
I am the least of all your children,
Of all the poets born.

Your name will scorch my lips for ever,
Like a seraph's kiss, I'm told,
If I forget thee, golden city,
Jerusalem of gold.

Oh, Jerusalem of gold,
and of light and of bronze,
I am the violin for all your songs.

The wells are filled again with water,
The square with joyous crowd,
On the Temple Mount within the City,
The shofar rings out loud.

Within the caverns in the mountains
A thousand suns will glow,
We'll take the Dead Sea road together,
That runs through Jericho.

Oh, Jerusalem of gold,
and of light and of bronze,
I am the violin for all your songs.



Y'RUSHALAYIM SHEL ZAHAV

N. Shemer

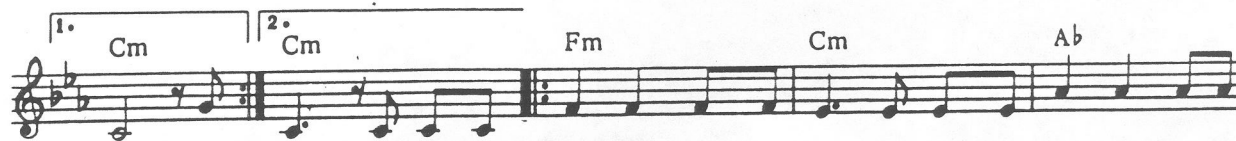
With conviction



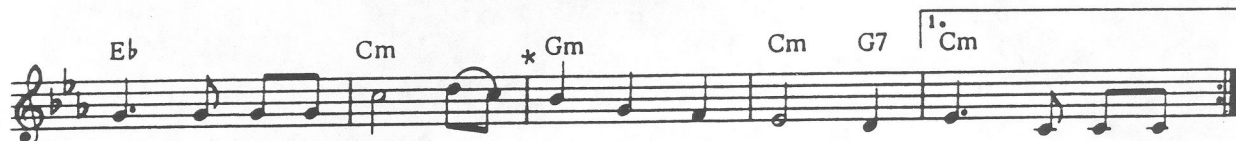
A - vir ha - rim tsa - lul ka - ya - yin v' - ré - ach o - ra -
-tar - dé - mat i - lan va - e - ven sh'vu - ya ba - cha - lô -



- nim ni - sa b' - ru - ach ha - ar - ba - yim im kōl pa - a - mō -
- ma ha - ir a - sher ba - dad yō - she - vet u - v' - li - ba chō -



- nim uv' - ma Y' - ru - sha - la - yim shel za - hav v' - shel n' - chō - shet v' - shel



ōr ha - lō l' - chōl shi - ra - yich a - ni ki - nōr Y' - ru sha -



- nōr ra - yich a - ni ki - nōr ki - nōr

Jersusalem of Gold, of copper and of light I shall accompany all the songs dedicated to you.

א. אִוִּיר הָרִים צְלוּל כֶּיֶן וְרִיחַ אוֹרָנִים
וְיֵשָׁא בְרוּחַ הָעֶרְבִים עִם קוֹל פְּעֻמוֹנִים.
וּבְתַדְמַת אֵילָן וְאֶבֶן שְׁבוּיָהּ בְּחִלּוּמָהּ
הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּדָד יוֹשְׁבֶת וּבְלִבָּהּ חוּמָהּ.

יְרוּשָׁלַיִם שֶׁל זָהָב וְשֶׁל נְחֹשֶׁת וְשֶׁל אוֹר
הֵלֵא לְכֹל שִׁירֶיךָ אֲנִי כְנוֹר

ב. חֲזָנוּנוּ אֶל בּוֹרוֹת הַמַּיִם לְשׁוֹק וְלִכְכָּר
שׁוֹפָר קוֹרָא בְהַר הַבַּיִת בְּעִיר הַעֲתִיקָה
וּבְמַעְרֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּסֻלַּע אֶלְפֵי שְׁמֹשׁוֹת זֹרְחוֹת
וְשׁוֹב נִרְדֵּ אֶל יַם הַמֶּלַח בְּדֶרֶךְ יְרִיחוֹ
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם שֶׁל זָהָב.....

ג. אֶךְ בְּבוֹאֵי הַיּוֹם לְשִׁיר לְךָ
וְלְךָ לְקֶשֶׁר כְּתָרִים
קִטְנָתִי מִצְעִיר בְּנִיךָ
וּמֵאֲחֵרוֹן הַמְשׁוֹרְרִים
כִּי שָׁמַךְ צוֹרֵב אֶת הַשְּׁפָתַיִם
כְּנֹשִׁיקַת - שְׁרָף
אִם אֲשַׁכְּחֶךָ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם
אֲשֶׁר כָּלָה זָהָב.

יְרוּשָׁלַיִם... כְּנוֹר...