

LAZAR WEINER (1897-1982) is widely remembered today as an outstanding composer of Yiddish art songs. He was born in Ukraine and emigrated to the USA at the age of 17. Weiner eventually became a pianist for the studio of a well-known voice teacher, Lazar Samoiloff, where he acquired a reputation as a brilliant accompanist. Later, Weiner accepted a job as a pianist for the Mendelssohn Symphony Orchestra in Brooklyn, where he learned conducting skills and eventually became the orchestra's music director. The culmination of Weiner's career was his appointment as the Music Director of the Central New York Synagogue. Finding himself in a Yiddish cultural circle in New York triggered Weiner's lifelong love affair with this language, its serious literature, and poetry. After his retirement from the Synagogue, Weiner dedicated himself almost exclusively to composing Yiddish art songs. Weiner's songs are outstanding and distinctly Jewish first and foremost because of the Yiddish language itself, and because of the way he instinctively understood and interpreted its sound, little nuances, tonality, inflections, accentuations, spoken rhythms, and idioms.