

# Settler Songs

*Nine duets for two violins  
Based on traditional Hebrew melodies*

**RUSSELL NADEL**

(2004)

*Duration: c. 9'00"*

### **Program Notes:**

The inspiration and source material for this work comes directly from a small blue book titled (in Hebrew) *Songs of the Land of Israel*, published in Hebrew and German in Berlin in 1935. Its preface states that it presents, with thanks from the Conservatory of Tel Aviv, perhaps the first-ever musical transcriptions of the traditional, ancient songs of Jewish settlers and pioneers in the land of Israel (then called Palestine). Primarily, it features engravings of musical settings of various texts, some of which contain passing religious references, but most of which are entirely secular in nature. It also features an extended addendum with traditional and newly-composed *nigunim*, or "tunes," wordless vocalises usually sung with the syllable "lai" or "loo" and meant to increase devotion and spirituality through singing outside of (or in the middle of) a religious service. I found these vocalises and settler songs, often with origins hundreds of years in the past, to be both fantastically beautiful and extremely musical, with a range of expression and an emotional immediacy easily felt and understood by members of all religions and nationalities. Therefore, I purposely avoided tampering too much with these original tunes in my settings, and tried to complement the original melodies with music that would bring out their wonderful emotions.

This piece features my adaptations of five *nigunim* (the odd-numbered movements) and four songs (the even-numbered movements), the translations of which are provided on the next page.

– *Russell Nadel*  
*April 2005*

Original texts from *Songs of the Land of Israel*:  
*translations by Nimrod Weisbrod*

**II. Zam'ri Li (Sing to Me)**

Sing to me,  
Sing, innocent dove,  
Sing to me a tune from Yemen.  
Come forth east to Zion.

**IV. M'chorati (Homeland, My Homeland)**

Homeland,  
View of my homeland,  
The roar of the waves and sea  
And the shadow of the mountains around, around.  
The voice of the jackal in the meadow.  
Hurray! Homeland, my homeland!  
A field of reeds is sleeping  
And the voice of a flute at midnight.  
Desert, mountains and wind!

**VI. Leilot Kayitz (Summer Nights)**

Summer nights are magnificent - nights;  
Summer nights are clear - nights;  
And how enchanting are the stars  
And how pale is the moon  
In the summer nights, nights.

**VIII. Gamal, g'mali (Camel, My Camel)**

Camel, my camel,  
You are my friend on the sand.  
How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,  
Thy dwelling places, Israel.

*(The nigunim - movements I, III, V, VII and IX - are wordless.)*

Source: Rabbi Yaakov Shinberg (?), *Shiri Eretz Yisrael* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1935).  
This publishing house was closed by the Gestapo in 1938 and its warehouse confiscated.

### **Performance Notes:**

Accidentals apply for the entire measure.

Arpeggiations should take place on the beat; grace notes should take place before the beat.

Do not re-attack the note at the end of a *glissando*.

All dynamic changes are *subito* unless otherwise indicated,  
and should be exaggerated appropriately.

A guitar or mandolin pick is required for the fifth movement.

Utilize open strings whenever possible to enhance the “folk” flavor of the original melodies.



# Settler Songs

## I. Nigun

RUSSELL NADEL

Allegro molto e leggero (♩ = 100)

Violin I

Violin II

*f*

*ff*

6

sul pont.

*p legato*

sul tasto

*mf*

11

*sfz*

*p*

16

ord.

*f*

ord.

*f*

21

*mf*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for two violins, Violin I and Violin II, in 3/2 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The tempo is 'Allegro molto e leggero' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The score is divided into five systems. The first system (measures 1-5) features a dynamic range from *f* to *ff*. The second system (measures 6-10) includes performance instructions 'sul pont.' and 'sul tasto' with dynamics *p legato* and *mf*. The third system (measures 11-15) features a dynamic range from *p* to *sfz*. The fourth system (measures 16-20) includes the instruction 'ord.' and a dynamic of *f*. The fifth system (measures 21-24) concludes with a dynamic of *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

## II. Zam'ri Li

Andante (♩ = 66)

First system of music (measures 1-3). Part I (Violin) starts with a *pizz.* (pizzicato) instruction and a dynamic of *mp*. Part II (Cello/Double Bass) starts with a *con sord.* (con sordina) instruction and a dynamic of *p*. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Con moto (♩ = 80)

Second system of music (measures 4-7). Part I features a *f* (forte) dynamic and an *arco* (arco) instruction. Part II features a *f* dynamic and a *pizz.* instruction. Both parts include triplet markings. The time signature changes to 4/4 at the end of measure 7.

Tempo I

Third system of music (measures 8-12). Part I includes a *gliss.* (glissando) instruction and a *poco* (poco) dynamic marking. Part II includes an *arco* instruction and a *legato* marking. Dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *mp* (mezzo-piano). The time signature changes to 3/4 at the start of measure 9.

Fourth system of music (measures 13-16). Part I includes an *Ossia: sul tasto* instruction and a *gliss.* instruction. Part II includes a *pizz.* instruction and dynamics of *pp*, *f*, *mp*, and *p*. The system concludes with a *p* dynamic and a *legato* marking. The time signature is 3/4.

## III. Nigun

Moderato, sempre legato (♩ = 50-52)

(arco)

I *mf espr.*  
 II (senza sord.) *p* *mf* *mp*

5 *cresc...* *f* *pp* *p* *mf* *Fine*  
 1. 2., 3. *p sub.* *iv.*

11 *gloss.* *sfp* *sfp*

16 1. 2. *l.v.* *f* *ff* *f*

19 1. 2. *D.C. al Fine* *8va* *f* *pp* *f* *p*

1'47"

# IV. M'chorati

Allegro (♩ = 120)

I *f* *mp*

II *f* *p*

5 *=sfp* *ff* *pp* *<sfp*

*mp* *sfz* *pp* *<sfz* *pp*

To Coda

9 *ff* *mf* *<sfp* *<sfp* *mf* *f*

*f* *mf* *p* *<sfp* *<sfp* *sfp*

13 *ff* *ff*

*f* *ff*

D.C. al Coda

♢ CODA

*pp* *pp*

47"

## V. Nigun

Con moto (♩ = 112)

I *mf*

II *f* pizz. con plectro\*

3 *p* *ff* *f* *mf* **Fine**

*p* *ff* *f* *mf*

(seconda volta: (rit.))

*f*

9 *più p* *ff* *mp* **D.S. al Fine**

*più p* *ff* *mp*

35"

\* Perform this movement with a hard plastic guitar pick, strumming over the fingerboard. Leave the bow on the music stand.

# VI. Leilot kayitz heim adirim

**Cantabile** (♩ = 63) (ord.)

I (arco) sul tasto *mp espr.* *poco f* *mp* *mp espr.*

II *p* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

6 *poco f* *p* *ord.* *p* *pp*

11 *poco mf* *f* *f*

16 *p* *f espr.* *poco mf*

21 *rit.* *A tempo* *p* *ppp* *p*

# VII. Nigun

Andante (♩ = 90)

I *p legato*

II *f*

*molto*

*f*

*p legato*

7

*mf*

*molto*

*f*

*p*

*f*

15

*ff*

*p*

*sfp*

*sfp*

*sfp*

*sfp*

22

*molto*

*f*

*sfp*

*sfp*

*ppp*

*rit.*

*A tempo*

*III.*

*p legato*

*II.*

*gliss.*

*p legato*

31

*molto*

*sfz*

*f*

*molto*

*sfz*

50"

# VIII. Gamal, g'mali

Andante (♩ = 72)

I *mf espr.* \*

II *f*

4 *mf* *p* *f* *mf* *mp* *poco rit.*

*mf* *f* *mf* *f*

10 *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *A tempo*

*f*

14 *p* *f* *sfp* *p* *mf*

18 *mf* *f* *mp* *pp* *p* *rit.*

*fp* *p* *pp* *p*

\* Glissando down to an indeterminate pitch.

## IX. Nigun

Vivo (♩ = 84, ♪ = 168)

The musical score for "IX. Nigun" is written in 2/2 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two staves, I and II, with various dynamics and articulations.

**Staff I:**

- Measures 1-2: *p* (piano), accented notes.
- Measures 3-4: *ppp* (pianissimo).
- Measures 5-6: *mf* (mezzo-forte), accented notes.
- Measures 7-8: *mp* (mezzo-piano), accented notes.

**Staff II:**

- Measures 1-4: *ppp* (pianissimo).
- Measures 5-6: *p* (piano), accented notes.
- Measures 7-8: *ppp* (pianissimo).

**Measures 4-8:**

- Staff I: *mf* < *p* < *mf* (mezzo-forte, piano, mezzo-forte), accented notes.
- Staff II: *ppp* (pianissimo), *mf* < *p* < *mf* (mezzo-forte, piano, mezzo-forte), accented notes.

**Measures 9-12:**

- Staff I: *ppp* (pianissimo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), accented notes.
- Staff II: *p* (piano), *ppp* (pianissimo), accented notes.

**Measures 13-16:**

- Staff I: *ppp* (pianissimo), accented notes.
- Staff II: *f* (forte), accented notes.

The score concludes with a first ending (I. II.) in the final measure of the second system.