

The Magen David

A Transactional Analytic Approach
to the Arts in Judaism"
(Delivered in Jerusalem, January 1991)

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If you're an artist and Jewish you will inevitably be asked at one time or another to put aside your own individualism and become a spokesperson for all Jewish artists; the eternal question being: "What is Jewish art?"

Rather than taking the usual accommodation of grasping at a definition of "what is Jewish about Jewish art?" and then proceeding to advocate its perpetuation, you might like to call upon the law of permutation and combination to analytically dissect the component parts of the artistic experience and then comment upon them from a Jewish artist's point of view.

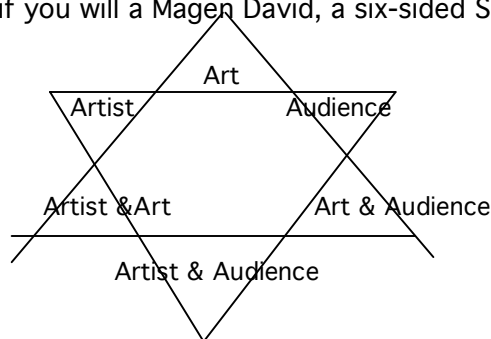
I, myself, am reticent about offering a definition of Jewish art simply because any definition only serves to exclude more than it includes. But perhaps this transactional approach will suggest a strategy for each artist here in formulating his own working definition.

Throughout this chapter, for the sake of stylistic continuity I'll refer to the artist in the masculine; I speak, of course, of both sexes.

The law of permutation and combination shows us how many different ways one can arrange components; for example, three elements factored ($3 \times 2 \times 1$) gives us six relationships inherent in any tripartite phenomenon.

In the arts the three fundamental components are the artist, the audience, and the art. The six relationships are: **1. the art 2.the artist 3.the audience 4.the artist & the art 5. the art & the audience and 6. the artist & the audience.**

ILLUSTRATION: Imagine, if you will a Magen David, a six-sided Star of David with the following labels:



To address the issue of art in general, and Jewish art in particular, an analysis of these six relationships within the dimensions of past, present and future may prove helpful. In the first part of this talk, I'll discuss the fundamental elements of the artist, the audience and the art.

1. The artist

a. The artist is a repository of past culture.

One of the great ironies concerning art is that when "something new and different" is requested, the surest way to fill the bill is to recycle ideas from the past. Since our collective ego and arrogance most often assumes that we are the first to inhabit this earth, old ideas, proven dramatically or theatrically effective, and reshaped by the fashion of the times, serve us

well in fulfillment of the contemporary exotic. With this in mind, knowing what came before is more than an educational nicety; it is vital to the survival of the professional artist; for it takes

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a great burden off of his shoulders. After he realizes that all things have already been created, he can, in the truest Zen terms, begin to create in an original way.

In Jewish terms this means cutting through an ignorant expedience often rationalized by the labels "traditional" or "anonymous" and discovering the truth about an artist, a time, a place, its sociopolitical dynamics, and the surrounding Jewish communal life that encouraged the artist to create.

When I was in music school, Donald Grout's text was the prevailing comprehensive history of western civilization's music. It said nothing about Jews or Jewish music and their considerable contribution to the larger society. If I had not made the concerted effort to personally research these Jewish musical achievements, I would have gone through my career thinking Jews and Jewish music were obviously inferior to their Christian counterparts by their exclusion from the mainstream histories. I suspect this discounting of Jewish philosophy and art across the board by both Jewish and non-Jewish artists is perpetuated by a similar ignorance.

b. The artist is a reflection of his present society.

While no one would argue with the worth of this statement, the problem, in Jewish terms is: which aspect of Jewish society do we, as artists, reflect? Are we to be Chassidic, Sephardic, Yemenite, Ethiopian, Liberal Orthodox, Classic Reform, Suburban Conservative, or Displaced Holocaust Survivors?

The answer to our presence, in part, lies in the way in which we deal with our past. Since art is very often a child's dream embraced with the insight of an adult, no other person can come in touch with our initial, intuitive feelings and perceptions about things Jewish more intimately than we, ourselves, can. By going back to our formative years, whatever that Jewish milieu, we can reflect upon where we started and from where we've journeyed since that beginning; and in doing so we will chronicle our contemporary society's odyssey as well.

What we have to say about our own Judaism is the Midrash or commentary that makes the central text come alive. The Torah has been called a compilation of dreams; and we, as Jews, must plug in our own personal dreams to those collective dreams of our ancestors. One need not be a "professional Jew" or even wholly sympathetic with his tradition in order to create meaningful commentary; he must only have a desire for its exploration.

c. The artist is a creator of future values and perceptions.

As I grow older, I'm amused by how I've become an authority figure. After struggling for years to squeeze that one additional insight from my teacher or seek his validation for my efforts as a devoted student, I've somehow, almost mystically, turned a corner overnight, assumed a new identity, and become the "tree of knowledge" rather than the squeezer of its fruits.

Happily and lamentably, this is how culture moves on. Even though we often feel inadequate and incomplete ourselves, the children become the parents and a people's values are transmitted and transmuted from one generation to the next; an awesome process indeed.

What this means to us as mature Jewish artists, who have crossed over the twilight zone between student and teacher, is that through our work, we now can emphasize the best Jewish values that have elevated us, and rewrite our history with the de-emphasis of others who demean us. This selective forming of the future by our forefathers has always happened in the past, and will either degenerate here with our own anxious ambivalence, and cynical alienation or creatively regenerate our children's future through our concerted efforts to pass on the best of our legacy.

Judaic study reveals dramatic flashes of brilliance and insights that change one's entire being. In communicating these "crowns of Torah" to future generations, we ennoble ourselves in the present as well.

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2. The audience

a. The audience comes to art with past experiences perceived as either successful or unsuccessful.

In the 20th century, more so than ever before, there has been a huge spectrum within the phenomenon of what we call an audience. Pillars of the community who establish symphonies, lower income immigrants who yearn for a folk theatre, sophisticated cosmopolitans who spurn ethnic association, academic enclaves who laud technique over emotional result, suburban commuters who ask little but surrogate family circle meetings, electronic audiophiles who listen alone, or video watchers who view in isolation; all this is an audience. And all of this audience has honed its sense of what is desired through repetition and comparison of its past experiences. They profoundly matter in the trinity of Art, Artist & Audience.

Even though the profile of an audience may change, there are still constants to be found and generalizations to be made. With the huge expense of producing art today, artists can no longer create their art discounting the importance of the audience's impact upon the survival and durability of their creative efforts. Artists no longer have the luxury of working in a vacuum. For good or bad they are in partnership with the audience. The sensitivity and reciprocity of this partnership determines the art's viability.

The artist should never underestimate an audience's intelligence. While not artists, themselves, the people who view, read and listen have vast experience and know what works for them and what doesn't work. They may not be able to verbalize it, they may not have the expansive palette of the artist, but intuitively they know and their reception of the artist's work will be a fundamental integer in its success quotient.

Understanding where an audience comes from and how far you can take them along with you on your personal artistic journey is, by far, the ultimate craft an artist can learn and practice. Jerry Herman, composer of musicals has been comically accused of writing songs which audiences hum going **into** the theatre; but what this is really saying is that he understands how to use the audiences' history to shape their present experience.

b. The audience ascribes importance to the art it is presently experiencing.

I once asked a successful musical librettist how one knows if an audience ascribes as much importance to a subject as the writer does. He replied:

"If they've gotten a baby-sitter, saved for weeks to afford and obtain a ticket, battled traffic and the hassle of parking, and finally managed to arrive in their seats without collapsing, you can be sure at that moment that they will initially ascribe as much or more importance to the subject than you, as the writer, do."

Knowing the audience cares enough to show up to share your dream is a humbling awareness. How can one not take into account their past experiences, developed skills, rate of assimilating information, and desire for clarity, structure, and closure; if for no other reason, it is simply *hachnasat orchim* ; welcoming the stranger warmly through your artistic hospitality.

This is not to be interpreted, in any fashion, as an advocacy for pandering to the lowest tastes of an audience. On the contrary, it is only when the artist respects the highest abilities of an audience that he may begin to trust them to understand and appreciate his highest abilities as an artist.

c. The audience updates its future value system based on the success or failure of its present experience.

An artist must always consider his present work the most important work of his life. I sometimes hear artists admit something to the effect of:

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"I know this audience, I needn't give them my all; I'll save my best efforts for more discerning audiences in the future."

Sometimes this is said to ward off the evil eye, however, if expressed in earnest nothing could be more self-defeating or antithetic to worthwhile artistic goals or their realizations.

The artist continually validates his past training and experience and hopes for future high regard each time he sits down to create. If he eschews shallow solutions and struggles to dig a bit deeper towards the innate truth of each piece, his audience will reward him tenfold with its devotion and loyalty.

Concomitant to this strategy of excellence is the awareness by the artist that, each time he creates, he is an educator and inspirer of audiences. If an audience is elevated by the elegance of one artist's work, it will bring this new found breeding to the next artist's efforts and all art will, thereby, be enriched.

In Jewish circles, this means updating, and upgrading perceptions of who the audience is and what they've already experienced countless times before. From the cloning of multi-generational novels, through the worn visual icons of old Jewish men in *tallit* and *tefillin*, to the horrendous rehashing of Second Ave Yiddish melodies, nothing kills Jewish art more than creating on "automatic pilot".

3. The art

a. The best art has roots in the past.

As we spoke of the artist as a repository of past culture, and the audience having past experience, something can now be said about the art, itself, having an authentic feel of roots in the past; or to put it another way, the organic sense that it evolved inevitably from its predecessors. Through artful, judicious inclusions of names, quotes, recollections, descriptions, and discussions of past information commonly known to the collective audience, the artist creates this continuum in his work.

It is a simple device that psychologically allows the audience to feel that, even though this is their first exposure to an artist's work, they are visiting with an old friend and all will be well. One can even go on to suggest that an artist's style is based wholly on repetition of former gestures that similarly put the audience at ease.

In the artist's own terms, each new piece must also be an extension of his previous works and derive its roots from his entire oeuvre. Artistic issues that may not have received the most elegant solution in a former piece have a new chance at being realized with each new piece (or variation) that is begun.

b. The best art is a presence which clearly structures times, space, and attention in an engrossing way.

I hope I won't offend some of you when I say that a work of art is a game, an elegant game, but with goals, rules, moves, and strategies; or at least it should be. For if the artist has done his job correctly, the audience will formulate its expectations by the clarity of the communicated structure and allow itself to feel the particular joy, grief, anger, or surprise that the work seeks to elicit.

Jewish art has always been very clever in this regard; sometimes too clever. In an effort to keep its structure so clear, it often becomes transparent and forgets that a desirable texture needs, at times, to be momentarily enigmatic and diffuse to contrast the clearer moves.

What distinguishes the best Jewish art from the mediocre is the audience's momentary sense of wonder and surprise at the deviations from the clarity of the work's structure. Ironically, when this mesmerizing wonder allows the audience to forget about their present reality and sensibilities; a profound artistic presence has been achieved.

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c. The best art is a continuum; the past generates the present, and the present enables the future.

If art is made to have an engaging past and a riveting present, it will undoubtedly generate great future expectations; or to phrase it another way: "Once they've drunk from the sweetness of the promised land, they will never again be quenched by the aridness of the desert"

This continuum of past-present-future gives the art multi-dimensional aspects that allow for meanings to be made from so many more levels of understanding.

The future aspect of art is the hardest to describe because it deals with an intangible expectation between the artist and his audience, but both parties definitely know when a work has changed and ennobled their lives; both in its creation and in its reception.

Ultimately the audience, when given a future projection that offers a promise of survival, justice, equity, or beauty, is grateful for that gift and responds with affection and approval.

ILLUSTRATION: - The three-celled PAST/-PRESENT/-FUTURE

A rule of thumb that I think about constantly and use in my own work, and which I commend now to you; is: whenever you introduce an idea in your work, ask yourself three questions:

**"What former idea has it evolved from? - What is its Past?
How does it illuminate the moment? - What is its Present? &
What energies does it project? - What is its Future?"**

Answering and dealing with these questions will create an organic, inevitable flow to your creative work.

In the second part of this talk I'll go on to discuss the relationships of The artist & the art, the artist & the audience and the art & the audience

END OF FIRST PART OF TALK

During the first part of this presentation, I drew a *Magen David*, a six-sided Star of David and discussed the initial three components of a six-sided understanding of the art experience. Sub-categorized by the dimensions of the past, present, and future, individual aspects of the artist, the audience, and the art itself were addressed.

To briefly recap, the three comments made about the artist were:

- a. The artist is a repository of past culture.**
- b. The artist is a reflection of his present society.**
- c. The artist is a creator of future values and perceptions.**

I went on to observe three characteristics of an audience:

- a. The audience comes to art with past experiences evaluated as either successful or unsuccessful.**
- b. The audience ascribes importance to the art it is presently experiencing.**
- c. The audience updates its future value system based on the success or failure of its present experience.**

Finally, I addressed the art itself by noting that:

- a. The best art has roots in the past.**
- b. The best art is a presence which clearly structures times, space, and attention in an engaging way.**
- c. The best art is a continuum; the past generates the present, and the present enables the future.**

In the second half of this presentation, I'll expand upon each of these components by discussing their three complimentary relationships; the artist & the art, the artist & the audience, and the art & the audience.

4. The artist & the art

a. The artist creates art to understand his personal, communal, and aesthetic past.

If the best art has roots in the past, it follows that the best artists know something about their subject matter & art form's past and the intellectual milieu that nurtured it.

When I read Chaim Potok's novels, especially the *Asher Lev* trilogy, there is a spiritual authenticity which could only have been achieved through the author's first hand intimacy with both the religiosity and the artistic struggle about which he writes. Saul Bellow achieves that same reality but without the religious reverberations. Neil Simon's humor is Brighton, Broadway, and Borscht Belt (even Biloxi) because he knows these environments; to re-coin a well-known axiom, one must write of what he knows or cares deeply about learning to know.

Learning is of the greatest value to Art & to Judaism. Here in Jerusalem men & women continually come to rediscover and recreate themselves, to study, to validate, and to form a nexus with their people, their culture and their art.

For the artist, there is no greater way of discovering, learning, validating or forming that spiritual bond than by creating a new work that calls into play these issues; earning; if you will, by creating.

I've been asked why I've composed several musical sacred services using the same liturgy. My reply is that musically setting these words over and over again is my most effective way of mastering an understanding of that liturgy and the reasons it has spiritually sustained the Jewish people over the ages. "Ethics of the Fathers" suggests *Hafawch ba, v'hafawch ba* -continually turn the Torah over & over again; for all you need to know is there to behold. It is also a form of unconscious artistic "*davening*".

b. The artist is defined in his present society by his art.

We live in an age of abbreviations and short sound bytes. As much as we would prefer to be known by a plethora of other traits, the bottom line is that most frequently we are (or, at least, we are perceived to be) what we do. And if we do it well, what we do is certainly what we believe in; ergo, what we do well is what we are. While this may seem to be an oversimplification, in the course of our work on a daily basis, we associate with a certain community, share common values, and communicate through a distinct vocabulary; our work is, for the most part, our identity.

However, the artist goes a step further. He is further defined by the type of art he creates. Compare the heavy metal rock persona with the Bonsai floral arrangement artist and you'll get an exaggerated, but dramatic, sense of what I mean.

Art, if its created right, is so all consuming that it is certain to shape our lives around it. It may also follow that the kind of life we seek may be gratified by the type of art we create.

My cousin Bert Solomon grew up in the same community as I did in Brooklyn. While I attended a Yeshiva, he had little religious training and even went on to become a plebe at West Point (a notoriously gentile achievement in those days). Dropping out after his first year in search of spirituality, through his wanderings, he found Sh'lomo Carlebach, at the West Coast House of Love & Prayer, who suggested that he study at Jerusalem's Diaspora Yeshiva.

Bert, now known by his Hebrew name Ben-Zion, who always played the guitar and banjo, formed a band with other musical Yeshiva students and they became internationally known as The Diaspora Yeshiva Band. When that group broke up he joined the community of Breslover Chassidim and now spends his time performing and producing recordings of the *nigunim* of Reb Nachman, the founder of the Breslover movement; his art and his life organically allied.

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I recount this anecdote to illustrate that while our art often directs other aspects of our life, a desire to live a certain way among certain people can also define and enable your art... You are what you create and for whom you create it.

c. The artist's future potential is realized through his art.

I know of no artist who doesn't suffer from moments of extreme despair and anxiety. There are times when either for project or performance reasons, or state of his contemporary society, an artist periodically questions the validity and durability of his work. It is, perhaps, the hardest sacrifice to bare one's soul and not receive, in return, the validating strokes from those whose love and respect you most desire.

It is at these darkest hours that hope triumphs. What saves the artist is a well-grounded belief that the future will vindicate him and that his art will be justly recognized for its finest virtues.

The future also come into the present when an artist achieves a breakthrough in his art and a vision of where he can go in the future becomes lucidly clear. It is the license to soar like an eagle.

Does anyone or has anyone ever created for posterity? I don't think so. It is a nice fantasy for an artist to pipe dream about audiences hundreds of years in the future applauding his works, but posterity is a durability ascribed to art by others; not the artist. His energies are confined to the finite future of the next concert or gallery showing or performance.

From a Jewish point of view, using art as a means of learning about one's heritage is so exhilarating and filled with ancillary roads that one artistic project usually explodes with several subsequent ideas and directions for future exploration.

The legacy of traditions, stories, melodies, and plot possibilities are so vast within the Jewish heritage that an artist need never worry about writer's block. Given health, living necessities and time, the Jewish artist's future is filled with potential.

5. The artist & the audience

a. In past Jewish life, the artist was either an entertainer or a provider of goods; other motives were suspect.

Our ancestors didn't think about art with the same world-view that we bring to it. Traditions and laws dictated how to live one's life. Making *kiddush* over the wine was a necessity so *kiddush* cup makers and artisans were a utilitarian part of the community. Sacred texts needed to be memorized so Hazzanim put melodies to these words and lead the people in sweet

renditions of the holy texts. *Badchens* (singers and storytellers who entertained at weddings) were the first stand up comedians because the wedding ceremony and celebration were long and elaborate and someone was needed to provide diversion for the guests.

Symphonic composers, or ballet choreographers were not necessary to the practice of daily Judaism so their art or even their very presence was enigmatic and suspect; and I suspect-still are. They were considered crazy fringes of an impinging gentile world one that threatened Jewish survival.

In the minds of Jewish societies before the 19th century enlightenment, if the artist did not entertain at life cycle events, or provide ceremonial objects for worship or life cycle events his purpose was unclear and unnecessary.

This is why Jewish art is celebrating a profusion of possibilities in the 20th century. Aside from continuing the functional and ceremonial art of the past, we can now begin to relate in non-threatening ways to the larger non-Jewish world and take from both realities in forging our personal artistic expressions.

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The very existence of this art workshop is testimony to a growing need in Jewish life for world-class artistic efforts, (not necessarily religious oriented), which will illuminate the contemporary Jewish experience.

b. The present media technology has created the greatest audience and opportunity that the Jewish artist has ever enjoyed.

I am most grateful for our time and place in history. "Electronic Judaism", a term I coined several years ago to describe new modes of celebrating Judaism that utilize high technology, has provided artistic forums never before imagined.

Did our grandfathers ever imagine driving their horse and wagon from the fields or the market and hearing a great Hazzan accompanied by a symphony orchestra serenading them en route? and yet when we flip a CD into our car systems during rush hour that is exactly what we are capable of enjoying.

Did our grandmothers ever imagine calling out the window to their neighbors and hearing a revered Jewish scholar responding with a moment of Jewish insight & wisdom? Yet, when we get Torah messages delivered to our telephone answering machines or E-mail, that is precisely what we are enjoying.

Did our ancestors ever dream that in their shtetl home, huddled around the fireplace, they could see visions of other Jews from around the world and hear their finest stories, dances and music? Yet our satellite dishes and cable provide this and more on a regular basis.

Consider the advent of television in the last fifty years. Not only did TV sets proliferate (even among the poorest of families), but television events were almost as plentiful. Long forms, short forms, episodic forms, games, news, sports; the list is endless and all had to be created for the medium. With hardware, comes an insatiable need for software. The artist is the software creator in the 21st century and the need will surpass anything ever dreamed of in the past.

c. The artist's future relationship with his audience is recession proof.

When I read about the Yiddish folk theatre, I'm always struck by the devotion of the struggling immigrants. Even though they hardly had sufficient table money they managed to eke out the pennies necessary for admission to see the latest Olshanetsky musical, Jacob Adler adaptation of the classics or Thomashefsky melodrama.

During the depression when banks were going under on a daily basis, the motion picture and theatrical industry flourished; people desperately needed hope and relief from their reality.

Today, in relatively affluent times, when people are working less hours a week than ever before in history, entertainment systems, personal computers, and theatrical and concert events of Roman proportions are thriving. New musical theatre productions are budgeted at 12 million dollars or more, tickets climb to \$100 and up and business is active.

What this all means, is that in the best of times and the worst of times people need to be entertained, enlightened, ennobled, given hope, and shown a vision of something larger than themselves.

In good times there is always money available for an appropriate, well- conceived project. In bad times there are always devoted audiences to nourish the artist's spirit.

Either way, being an effective artist today and into the future is recession proof and deeply valued in society.

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6. The art & the audience.

a. In past Jewish life, the art was inextricably allied with religious ceremony.

I spoke about the Jewish artist's role in the past as a life cycle and ceremonial functionary. Now lets address the audience's relationship to Jewish art in the past.

The Jews have been known as "the people of the book". While this literally means the eminence of the Torah in Jewish life, I believe that certain literary skills in the process of this relationship were honed and passed on from Jewish generation to generation.

In other words, Jewish people understand books. They know how to read them, write them, and buy & sell them. This might also be extended to include poetry, and theatre. Words are comfortable communicative symbols within the Jewish experience.

Not so, to the same extent, with abstract visual graphics, music, or body movement. Unless it has Jewish words on it, in it, or about it, Jews, in the past, and to a great extent today, feel uncomfortable with art.

This is why the bulk of Jewish music is vocal, dance is relegated to celebrating a folk song with words, and visual art often contains a biblical quote within it. Because deep within the Jew is the mandate to always study Torah, turning the words over and over, he feels that investing emotional time and energy in non-textual artistic expressions to be time and energy taken away from Torah.

If there's one issue that will divide past and present Jewish art from future efforts it will be a new trust and reliance on other communicative symbols besides words.

b. What distinguishes the past from the present vis-a-vis Jewish art and its audience is art's potential reception by today's larger non-religious and non-Jewish audience as well. Religion is now only a part of the spectrum.

Another issue that is as viscerally threatening as non-textual Jewish art is the possibility that Non-Jews will invade our artistic shtetl. Consider the assimilative potential. Jewish artists become seduced by Christian art, use icons that Christians understand, and soon are accepted

and lauded by the larger non-Jewish community. How could this be anything but terrifying to the collective Jewish psyche?

Yet, the greatest irony of Jewish art in our time is that the Jewish artist and his art who is most revered by the Christian community is the most revered by his fellow Jews.

Consider Leonard Bernstein and his "MASS". After the Kennedy family embraced him and he reciprocated with this Christian offering of good will, his fees and availability for Jewish charitable events became prohibitively expensive. He was inaccessible to Jewish causes; and yet he was still considered and celebrated by the international Jewish community as the great American Jewish musical hero.

Consider Paul Muni, one of the greatest Yiddish actors we had. Once Hollywood beckoned he chose never to do Yiddish theatre again. Yes, he always associated and supported old friends and fellow actors, but the seduction was complete. Yet, the Jews of his time who went to see Scarface and The Good Earth went out of the movie theatre *kvelling* "He's one of us, now there's a Jewish actor!"

Please don't misunderstand. I'm not denigrating these fine artists' contribution to their larger society; but I must question value systems that assigns minimal worth to their own people's art and so much more value on assimilative non-Jewish art. The gamut of my inquiry spans "A Light Unto The Nations" all the way to the opposing "Jewish Self Hate".

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Many wonderfully accomplished Jewish artists who struggle to sustain their involvement in Jewish creativity are often bypassed and overlooked because of a misguided desire by many of today's Jews to be more Christian than the Christians.

We need more artists like I.B. Singer and Chaim Potok (both People of the Book), who in spite of their larger success never relinquished their responsibilities as Jewish artists. And we need more Jewish consumers of art who will recognize the Jewish artistic contribution for what it is rather than by how many non-Jews buy it.

c. The future depends upon the best documentation of our present art.

I mentioned in the first part of this presentation that when I was a student I never read about Jewish music in my college history books. From the writer's viewpoint these musical works were probably omitted because there was insufficient documentation to study and give as examples.

Today with CDs, DVDs, videos, and interactive computers, there is no reason why our best efforts cannot be documented in the finest fashion. This documentation is paramount to the survival and success of Jewish art in the 21st and succeeding centuries. Remember, the Jewish artist in the next century will be a supplier of software.

When Jewish pride assures the awareness, study, and preservation of our own people's art then we can share, as we always have in the past, our best efforts with the nations of the world will be realized.

In this regard, I'd like to share some news about a new position I was recently appointed to which typifies what I've been advocating for the last twenty-five years; namely the primacy of developing, studying, preserving and documenting our Jewish art.

Last year I was appointed Founding Artistic Director of The Milken Archive of 20th Century American Jewish Music. In this capacity, I've been mandated to produce a minimum of 20 CDs during the next ten years that will document the most important Jewish musical creativity in

America during the 20th century. The recorded archives as I envisioned it will be completed on January 1, 2000.

Already recorded is the Jewish music of Robert Starer, Walter Scharf, and Charles Fox active today in the nineties, and in bookend fashion, a recording called Minhag America that documents the synagogue music in America from approximately 1890 - to 1920 bridging 19th century Europe with 20th century America. The reason I join you a day or two later is that I just completed recording Alberto Mizrahi performing the historical synagogue music of the German Emigres.

Other CD titles will include Yiddish art and theatre music as well as labor movement choral music, and commissions by cantors throughout the country. American Jewish folk music of the sixties and seventies, experimental Jazz and synthesized services, chamber and symphonic music will also be documented.

When the Milken Archive is completed it will achieve something that never has been done before; that is the creation of a comprehensive chronicle of Jewish artistic creativity in any one period of our history.

You might wonder why this archive concentrates on American Jewish achievement rather than a world-view that would naturally include Israeli works. The answer is that the archive has another purpose other than documenting the past. It is the Milken Archive's larger goal to stimulate new interest in Jewish music by America's artists in the next century. As I suggested, the effective artist is a repository of the past and these CDs will be a vital tool towards its recollection.

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While Israeli artists have an agenda independent of the creation of Jewish art, American artists need to exorcise themselves from 19th century shtetl-ism and find, at the very least, 20th century America in their 21st century Jewish creativity.

We have studied the Magen David as an illustration of the six component parts to the artistic experience in order to glean how we as Jews can create a Jewish art which is multi-dimensional and mindful of the past, present, and future. What conclusions can be made?

1. As Los Angeles artist Ruth Weisberg has summarized, there are five basic conflicts that need to be confronted. She lists them as:

- I - Appreciation of text over Icon.**
- II -Understanding of time over space**
- III-Dominance of representational art over abstract**
- IV -Valuing of high art over low art**
- V -Living in a multicultural society over a dominant culture**

2. The artist, the audience and the art are synergistically combined.

Without an understanding of the individual characteristics and the synergism of these three components, the artist cannot fully control his materials to achieve the greatest intellectual & emotional response.

3. The present and future of Jewish art far exceeds the opportunities of the past.

From an era of utilitarianism to a full spectrum of possibilities for personal expression, Jewish art in the 20th century has begun to come of age.

4. As always, art is only as good as the skill and information of the artist. Judaic understanding, not talent, remains the aspect of the Jewish artist that needs the most work.

Sustaining a sense of integrity amidst commercial seduction, and becoming more committed to Judaic studies are the surest way for a Jewish artist to create a work and a life with organic consistency and purpose.

5. In the Orwellian darkness of present art, Judaism still offers an artistic light unto the nations.

While much of today's art intimates the coming of Armageddon, Judaism offers unbounded hope. This is the greatest gift an artist can offer his audience - hope in the world's repair and rediscovery of holiness.

6. Deeds not words will create our children's artistic legacy.

Our task is to choose life, study, be active in achieving the finest in ourselves and remembering the finest achievements of others who came before us. A considered past and a focused and active present can only create the brightest of futures.

END OF THE 2nd HALF OF THE PRESENTATION.