

Gerald Cohen

Yedid Nefesh

For SATB chorus and piano
(2019)

PERUSAL SCORE

Program Note:

Yedid Nefesh ("Beloved of my soul") is a setting of a poem attributed to Eleazar Azikri, a mystical Jewish poet and scholar of the 16th century. The poem has become popularly sung at various times in the Jewish liturgy, but especially at the beginning of Shabbat. Its language expresses the relation between the individual and the divine as one of longing and of delight, using the imagery of a lover as its prime metaphor. The poem has been set to many different melodies; this piece is based on a beautiful and delicate Sephardic melody, which I originally found in Yitzhak Levy's *Antologia de liturgia judeo-española*.

I had used the melody before in an instrumental piece from 2007, and have long wanted to write a choral setting. I am honored to have written this piece for the 30th North American Jewish Choral Festival (2019). It was commissioned by the Zamir Choral Foundation, through the Jeanne and Irwin Mandell Fund for New Music, as part of my receiving—along with my wonderful colleagues Benjie-Ellen Schiller and Steve Cohen—the Festival's Hallel V'Zimrah Award.

—Gerald Cohen

Transliterated text, and translation:

Attributed to Eleazar Azkiri (16th Century)

*Yedid nefesh, av harachaman, m'shoch avdach el r'tzonach.
Yarutz avdach k'mo ayal, yishtachave el mul hadarach.
Yeerav lo y'didutach, minofet tsuf v'chol taam.*

*Hadur na'e ziv haolam, nafshi cholat ahavatach.
Ana El na r'fa na lah, b'harot lah no'am zivach.
Az titchazek v'titrape, v'hayta lah shifchat olam.*

*Vatik yehemu rachamecha v'chus na al ben olamach.
Ki ze kamah nichsof nichsaf, lirot b'tifet uzach.
Ana Eli, machmad libi, chusha na v'al titlam.*

*Higale na ufros chaviv alai, et sakkot sh tomach
Ta'ir eretz mik'vodach, nagila v'nism'cha bach.
Maher ahuv, ki va mo'ed, v'choneni kimei olam.*

Translation adapted from Siddur Chaveirim Kol Yisraeil (K'tav, 2000)

Soul-mate, Merciful Parent, draw Your servant to do Your will.
Your servant will run like a ram, will bow down before Your splendor.
For Your love is tastier than nectar or any imaginable delight.

Pleasing in Splendor, Light of the World, my soul is love-sick for You.
Please, God, heal her with the pleasure of Your light.
Then she will be strengthened and healed and will be Your hand-maiden forever.

Ancient One, let Your mercies be aroused. Pity Your beloved child,
who has so longed to see the beauty of Your power.
Pray, my God, my heart's desire, hurry, please, and do not hide.

Reveal Yourself, Beloved, spread over me Your canopy of peace.
Let the land be lit up with Your glory, let us rejoice and revel in You.
Come quickly, my Love, the time has come. Show me Your grace as of old.

through the Jeanne and Irwin Mandell Fund for New Music,
for the 30th North American Jewish Choral Festival, 2019

Words: attributed to Eleazar Azkiri
(16th Century)

Yedid Nefesh

Music: Gerald Cohen

(Based on a traditional Sephardic Melody)

A slow, calm 2 $\text{♩} = 40$ ($\text{♪} = 80$)

Soul-mate, Merciful Parent,

draw Your servant to do Your will.

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

A slow, calm 2 $\text{♩} = 40$ ($\text{♪} = 80$)

Your servant will run like a roe,

will bow down before Your splendor.

S

A

T

B

Pno.

For Your love is tastier

than nectar or any imaginable delight.

16 *p*

S
rach. Ye - e - rav — lo y' - di - du - tach, mi - no - fet tsuf — v' -

A
rach. Ye - e - rav — lo — y' - di - du - tach, mi -

T
8 rach. ah, — Ye - e - rav — lo y' - di - du - tach, mi - no - fet

B
Ye - e - rav lo — y' - di - du - tach, mi -

Pno.

Slightly faster $\text{♩} = 44$ ($\text{♩} = 88$)

Pleasing in Splendor, Light of the World,

23

S
chol — ta - am.

A
chol ta - am.

T
8 tsuf — v' - chol — ta - am. *mp* Ha - dur na - e

B
chol ta - am. *mp* Ha - dur na - e

Pno.

pp *p* *mp*

Slightly faster $\text{♩} = 44$ ($\text{♩} = 88$)

29

my soul is love-sick for You.

(Alto divisi next system)

S

A

T

B

ziv ha - o - lam, naf - shi cho - lat a - ha - va - tach.

ziv ha - o - lam, naf - shi cho - lat a - ha - va - tach.

29

Pno.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. change Ped. each measure *

35

Please, God, heal her

with the pleasure of Your light.

S

A1

(Alto divisi)

A2

T

B

A - na El na r'fa - na lah, b' - ha - rot lah

A - na r'fa lah, b' - ha - rot lah

A - na r'fa lah, b' - ha - rot

35

Pno.

Then she will be strengthened and healed

41

S no - am zi - vach, Az tit - cha - zek v' -

A1 no - am zi - vach, Az tit - cha - zek v' -

A2 (Alto unison) zi - vach, Az tit - cha - zek v' -

T Az tit - cha - zek v' - tit - ra -

B Az tit - ra -

Pno.

roll l.h chords as needed

and will be Your hand-maiden forever.

46

S (Alto unison) tit - ra - pe, v' - hay - ta lah shif - chat o - lam.

A tit - ra - pe, v' - hay - tah lah shif - chat o - lam.

T pe, v' - hay - ta lah shif - chat o - lam.

B pe, shif - chat o - lam.

Pno.

52 *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

S Va - tik — ye - he-

A *mp* Va - tik — ye - he-

T *mp* Va - tik — ye - he-

B *mp* Va - tik — ye - he-

Pno. *rit.* *cantabile espress.*

sempre legato, with pedal

56 *Pity Your beloved child,*

S mu ra - cha - me - cha v' - chus —

A mu ra - cha - me - cha v' - chus

T mu ra - cha - me - cha v' - chus —

B mu ra - cha - me - cha v' - chus

Pno.

60 *who has so longed*

S na al ben o - ha - vach.

A na al ben o - ha - vach.

T na al ben o - ha - vach. *mp* Ki ze ka -

B na al ben o - ha - vach. *mp* Ki ze ka -

Pno. *p*

64 *to see the beauty of Your power.*

S

A

T ma nich - sof nich - saf, lir - ot b' - ti -

B ma Ki ze ka - ma nich - sof nich - saf, lir - ot b' - ti -

Pno.

Pray, my God, my heart's desire,

69 *mp* *poco cresc.*

S A - na E - li,

A *mp* *poco cresc.*

T fe - ret u - zach. *mp* *poco cresc.* A - na E -

B fe - ret u - zach. *mp* *poco cresc.* A - - -

Pno. *mp*

hurry, please, and do not hide.

73 *mf* *dim.*

S mach - mad li bi, chu - sha na v' -

A li, mach - mad li - bi, chu - shah na v' - Alto divisi on next page

T li, mach - mad li - bi, chu - sha

B na E - - - li, chu -

Pno. *mf* *dim.*

77 *rit.* *mp* **tempo I** ♩ = 40 (♩ = 80) *p* *Reveal Yourself,*

S al tit - a - lam. Hi-ga - le na, hi - *p*

A1 al tit - a - lam. Hi-ga - le na, hi - *p*

A2 al tit - a - lam. Hi-ga - le na, hi - *p*

T *dim.* na v' - al tit - a - lam. *mp* Hi-ga - le na, hi - *p*

B *dim.* sha na Hi-ga - le na, hi - *p*

Pno. 77 *rit.* *mp* **Tempo I** ♩ = 40 (♩ = 80) *p*

82 *Beloved, spread over me Your canopy of peace.*

S ga - le - na, uf - ros cha - viv a - lai, et suk - kat sh'lo - mach,

A1 ga - le - na, uf - ros cha - viv a - lai, et suk - kat sh'lo - mach,

A2 ga - le - na, uf - ros cha - viv a - lai, et suk - kat sh'lo - mach,

T ga - le - na, uf - ros cha - viv a - lai, et suk - kat sh'lo - mach, sh'lo -

B ga - le - na, uf - ros cha - viv a - lai, et suk - kat sh'lo - mach

Pno. 82 *p*

With more motion ♩ = 46 (♩ = 92)

Let the land be lit up

accel.

88

S Ta - ir e - retz

A1 Ta - ir e - retz

A2 Ta - ir e - retz

T Ta - ir e - retz

B mach, *cresc.* Hi - ga - le Ta - ir e - retz

Hi - ga - le na, Ta - ir e - retz

mf *f* *cresc.* *mf* *f*

With more motion ♩ = 46 (♩ = 92)

88

Pno. *cresc.*

mf *f*

with Your glory,

let us rejoice and revel in You.

92

S mi - k' - vo - dach, na - - gi - la v' -

A1 mi - k' - vo - dach, na - - gi - lah v' -

A2 mi - k' - vo - dach, na - - gi - la v' -

T mi - k' - vo - dach, na - - gi - la v' -

B mi - k' - vo - dach, na - - gi - la v' -

92

Pno. *simile*
(sustained bass note and pedal each measure)

Come quickly, my Love,

96

S
nis - m' - cha bach. Ma - her a -

A1
nis - m' - cha bach. Ma - her a -

A2
nis - m' - cha bach. Ma - her a -

T
nis - m' - cha bach. Ma - her a -

B
nis - m' - cha bach. Ma - her a -

Pno.

the time has come.

99

S
huv, ki va mo - ed,

A1
huv, ki va mo - ed,

A2
huv, ki va mo - ed,

T
huv, ki va mo - ed,

B
huv, ki va mo - ed,

Pno.

102 *dim.* *Show me Your grace as of old.* *mp*

S v' - cho - ne - ni ki - mei o - lam.

A1 *dim.* *mp*

A2 *dim.* *mp*

T *dim.* *mp*

B *dim.* *mp*

Pno. *dim.*

106 *rit.* **Slower than Tempo I** ♩ = 68
Soprano solo: *p*

Sop. solo Ma-her a -

Note: Soprano section tacet to end of piece.
 Soprano 2 may sing with altos at conductor's discretion.

A *p* Ma - her a - huv, _____

T *p* Ma - her a - huv, _____

B *p* Ma - her a - huv, _____

Pno. *rit.* **Slower than Tempo I** ♩ = 68 *p*

111 *the time has come.* *rit.* *Show me Your grace as of old.*

Sop. solo
huv, ki va mo - ed,

A
ki va mo - ed, v' - cho - ne - ni ki - mei o

T
ki va mo - ed, ah, ah, ah.

B
ki va mo - ed, ah, ah, ah.

Pno.

116 *a tempo* *rit.*

Sop. solo
Ma-her a - huv, ki va mo - ed,

A
lam. *pp*

T
pp

B
pp

Pno. *a tempo* *rit.* *pp* *pp* *8va* (slow roll)