



# *The Songs They Sang*

*A musical narrative  
of the Vilna Ghetto.*

FEATURING ARRANGEMENTS  
AND ORIGINAL MUSIC BY

Joseph Giovinazzo

PERFORMANCES BY

Deborah Kayser

Michael Kieran Harvey

Aaron Barnden

Caerwen Martin

## PRODUCERS

Michael Hewes and Joseph Giovinazzo

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Anna Monea and Amadeo Marquez-Perez

Recorded at *Move Studio*, Eaglemont, Australia by Michael Hewes, Vaughan McAlley and Blake Stickland, except as indicated.

- \* Recorded at Lofish Studios, New York, USA  
Sound engineer: Alex Nizich
- \*\* Recorded at Oaklands Productions, Nunawading, Australia  
Sound engineer: Jarrad Gilson
- \*\*\* Recorded by Kaczerginski, New York, USA, 1948. Archive recording used with permission. Ben Stonehill Collection/  
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington

Mixed and mastered by Michael Hewes at  
*Run Stop Sound*, Abbotsford, Australia.

A selection of songs and music on this CD featured in the documentary, *The Songs They Sang*, directed by Rohan Spong. The film tells a story of solace and reflection through music, under the hardship of the Vilna Ghetto, Lithuania, during World War II. [www.songsheysang.com](http://www.songsheysang.com)

Design: Mark Fletcher Design

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**1. Springtime/Eriling**

Lyrics - Shmerke Kaczerginski Music - Abraham Brudno  
Performed by Shmerke Kaczerginski

**2. It's One, Two, Three/**

***Tsu Eyns, Tsvey, Dray***

Lyrics - Leyb Rozental  
Music - Adaptation of a Hans Eisler song  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

**3. Never Say/Zog Nit Keyn Mol**

Lyrics - Hirsh Glik  
Based on a melody by Dmitry Pokrass  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Aaron Barnden - violin

**4. Mrs Zuben**

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Michael Kieran Harvey - piano, Caerwen Martin - cello

**5. Never Say Reprise**

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Aaron Barnden - violin

**6. Quiet, Quiet/Shtiler, Shtiler**

Lyrics - Shmerke Kaczerginski  
Music - Alexander Tamir  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

**7. The Expanse**

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Michael Kieran Harvey - piano

**8. Does It Have To Be This Way?/**

***Tsi Darf Es Azoy Zayn?***

Lyrics - Kasriel Broydo  
Music - Composer unknown  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello

**9. As They Brush Past**

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Michael Kieran Harvey - piano, Caerwen Martin - cello,  
Aaron Barnden - violin

**10. Song Of An Unknown Partisan/**

***Lid Fun Umbakantn Partizan***

Lyrics - Lyricist unknown  
Music - Adaptation of a Yiddish song  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

**11. Mournful Voice**

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Caerwen Martin - cello

**12. Drowsing Birds/**

***Dremlen Feygl Af Di Tsvaygn***

Lyrics - Leah Rudnicki  
Based on an early Yiddish song *S'tz keyn broyt in shrub nishro*  
Words by Izi Charik, Music by Leyb Yampolski  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano

**13. Motif From Vayser Shtern**

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Michael Kieran Harvey - piano

#### 14. *Ghetto/Geto*

Lyrics - Kasriel Broydo  
Music - Recomposition by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

#### 15. *Why?*

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Caerwen Martin - cello

#### 16. *Hymn Of Youth/Yugt - Himen*

Lyrics - Shmerke Kacerginski Music - Joseph Giovinazzo  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

#### 17. *The Sorrows Will Melt*

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Caerwen Martin - cello,  
Aaron Barnden - violin

#### 18. *While We Waltz*

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano

#### 19. *The Vilna Laments*

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Caerwen Martin - cello,  
Aaron Barnden - violin

#### 20. *Under Your Starry Heaven/ Unter Dayne Vayse Shtern*

Lyrics - Abraham Sutzkever Music - Abraham Brudno  
Arranged by Larza Viener  
Cantor Robert Abelson - baritone  
Mimi Stern-Wolfe - piano

#### 21. *Vayser Shtern Fantasy*

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

#### 22. *The Wake*

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Caerwen Martin - cello

#### 23. *Mother/A Mame*

Lyrics and Music - Chayele Posnanski  
Arranged by Gregory Smith  
Pauline Sher - soprano  
Additional performers: Ben Hudson, Zac Johnston,  
Emma Rodda, Nathan Scemi, Adrian Szondy,  
Sophie Anderson, Danielle Tyson, Christopher Wiseman,  
Jane Patterson, Dorothy Yukilis, James Steendam,  
Tim Hennessy, Amy Tcheydjian, Katherine Quirk,  
Adrian Close, Sophia Ang, James Bradley,  
Catherine Buxton, Susan Batten, Jason Xanthoudakis,  
Matt Bailey, Megan Reeves, Matthew Pointer,  
Stuart Brownley.

#### 24. *The Ponar Forest*

Music by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

#### 25. *Under Your Starry Heaven/ Unter Dayne Vayse Shtern*

Lyrics - Abraham Sutzkever  
Music - Abraham Brudno  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano

#### 26. *I Long For My Home/Ikh Benk Abeym*

Lyrics - Leyb Rozental -  
Music - Recomposition by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Arranged by Joseph Giovinazzo  
Deborah Kayser - soprano, Michael Kieran Harvey - piano,  
Caerwen Martin - cello, Aaron Barnden - violin

#### 27. *Springtime/Eriling*

Lyrics - Shmerke Kacerginski  
Music - Abraham Brudno  
Performed by Shmerke Kacerginski



Photography: Marcus Thomson [www.marcusthompson.com.au](http://www.marcusthompson.com.au)

*The Vilna Ghetto in Lithuania existed from 1941 to 1943 during World War II. Starvation, disease, execution, and deportation to concentration camps, reduced the Jewish population of the ghetto from an estimated 40,000 to only a few hundred by the time it was liquidated in September 1943.*

*In January 1942, theatre emerged in the Vilna Ghetto as a means of solace and diversion. Productions included Yiddish and European classics, and original plays and revues which reflected the concerns, anxieties and fears of the ghetto residents.*

*Musical performances, poetry readings and seminars also took place. These events gave the audience a few critical hours of "forgetfulness" as a reprieve from their horrific circumstances.*

*All the songs in this collection were written in the Vilna Ghetto. The current arrangements have preserved their original Yiddish dialect.*

## *Springtime/Eriling*

LYRICS - SHMERKE KACZERGINSKI (1908 - 1954)

MUSIC - ABRAHAM BRUDNO (D. 1943)

Opening comments by Shmerke Kacerginski:

*[I will now sing] the song that I wrote in Vilna ghetto in 1943 after the murder of my wife. The melody was written by Avreml Brudno. Murdered.*

Springtime, dispel my sorrow,  
Bring my beloved,  
My dear one to me.  
Springtime, blue wings for me you'll borrow,  
Oh, take my poor heart,  
And return my joy to me.  
Springtime, blue wings for me you'll borrow,  
Oh, take my poor heart,  
And return my joy to me.\*

\* This is an extract. Please refer to page 14 for the complete song.

With thanks to Bret Werb for translation.

Recording by Kacerginski in New York City, 1948

Ben Stonehill Collection/United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,  
Washington

## *Hymn Of Youth/Yugnt – Himen*

LYRICS - SHMERKE KACZERGINSKI (1908 - 1954)

MUSIC - COMPOSED BY JOSEPH GIOVINAZZO

(ORIGINAL COMPOSER - BAYSE RUBIN)

ARRANGED BY JOSEPH GIOVINAZZO

Our song is filled with grieving,  
Bold our step, we mark along.  
Though the foe the gateway's watching,  
Youth comes storming with their song:

Young are they, are they, are they  
Whose age won't bind them,  
Years don't really mean a thing,  
Elders also, also, also, can be children  
In a newer, freer spring.

Those who roam upon the highways,  
Those whose step with hope is strong,  
From the ghetto youth salutes them  
And their greetings send along.

Young are they .....

We remember all our tyrants,  
We remember all our friends,  
And we pledge that in the future  
Our past and present blend.

Young are they .....

So we're girding our muscles,  
In our ranks we're planting steel,  
Where a blacksmith, builder marches,  
We will join them with our zeal!

Young are they .....

**Shmerke Kaczerginski** dedicated *Hymn Of Youth* to a youth club in the Vilna Ghetto. The music composer Bayse Rubin is believed to have survived the war. (For further information on Kaczerginski please see the entry for *Quiet*, *Quiet* and *Springtime*.) The music for *Hymn Of Youth*, on this CD, is not composed by Bayse Rubin. This version was composed by Joseph Giovinnazzo.

## *Springtime/Friling*

LYRICS - SHMERKE KACZERGINSKI (1908 - 1954)

MUSIC - ABRAHAM BRUDNO (D. 1943)

Springtime, dispel my sorrow,  
Bring my beloved,  
My dear one to me.  
Springtime, blue wings for me you'll borrow,  
Oh, take my poor heart,  
And return my joy to me.  
Springtime, blue wings for me you'll borrow,  
Oh, take my poor heart,  
And return my joy to me.

I roam through the ghetto  
From alley to alley  
Useless, no haven I find;  
Gone my beloved,  
Oh, how can I bear it?  
Won't somebody say something kind?  
My house is aglow now,  
The sky so much bluer -  
What does that mean in my life?  
I stand like a beggar,  
I huddle at gateways  
And beg for a handful of light.

Springtime, dispel my sorrow....

I go to my labour,  
I pass by our dwelling,  
Bereaved now - the gate is shut tight:  
The day bathed in sunshine,  
Sad flowers are fading,  
They weep, for them too it is night.  
At night when returning,  
With deep sadness gnawing,  
Right here, love, you waited for me.  
Right here in the shadow  
I still hear your step fall,  
Your arms held me so tenderly.

Springtime, dispel my sorrow....

This year the springtime  
Is with us so early,  
My longing for you burst in bloom,  
I see you as now, dear,  
All covered with flowers,  
With gladness you'll come to me soon.  
The sun has now showered  
The garden with sunshine,  
The earth is all covered in green.  
My darling, my loved one,  
Are you lost for all time?  
My mind cannot bear what that means.

Springtime, dispel my sorrow....

Shmerke Kaczerginski wrote *Friling* after the death of his wife in April 1943. Abraham Brudno wrote the music. (For further information on Kaczerginski please see the entry for *Quiet*, *Quiet* and *Hymn Of Youth*. For further information on Brudno please see the entry for *Under Your Starry Heaven*.)

## SOURCE MATERIAL

*We are Here, Songs of the Holocaust.*

Compiled by Eleanor Mlotek and Malke Gottlieb

Singable translations by Roslyn Bresnick Perry

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Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, New York  
[www.yivoinstitute.org](http://www.yivoinstitute.org)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,  
Washington [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)

Yad Vashem, The Holocaust History Museum,  
Israel [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)

Music and the Holocaust (website)  
<http://holocaustmusic.ort.org>

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