

Delfina Cheb Terrab  
*contemporary musical arts*

Recital in partial fulfillment of the  
Doctor of Musical Arts degree, 2024  
Student of Anthony Coleman

with  
Anthony Coleman, piano

Sunday, December 11, 2022  
8:00 p.m.  
Eben Jordan

PROGRAM

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**Mordechai Gebirtig**  
(1877–1942)

*Dray Tekhterlekh*

*Reyzele*

*Yankele*

*Moyshele Mayn Frandt*

*Mayn Yovi*

Delfina Cheb Terrab, voice  
Anthony Coleman, piano

*Thank you to  
Hankus Netsky for coaching me and for making me feel that there is a place for me  
in the music of my people.*

*And to my grandmother Margarita Berdicevski  
for letting me hear her speak Yiddish for the first time in my life  
as she corrected my pronunciation.*

*Delfina Cheb Terrab is the recipient of the Kimball P. Stickney Memorial Scholarship  
and the Salmon-Garner-Anderson Scholarship.*

**Mordechai Gebirtig** was a Yiddish poet and songwriter born in Krakow, Poland in 1877. There are many theories and speculations about the artist's early life, including him being a carpenter, but the truth about his early days remains a mystery.

What we do know is that he began his acting career in an amateur theatrical company in the first years of the twentieth century. Around that time Gebirtig also started writing and publishing his works in the periodical *Der sotsyal demokrat*, the official publication of the Jewish Social Democratic Party of Galicia. After serving the Imperial Austro-Hungarian in the first World War, Gebirtig published his first collection of songs titled *Folkstimlekh* (In the Folk Style).

His songs and poems portrayed characters and stories of his neighborhood with a unique sense of humor and a very evocative sense of specificity. His songs, unlike other Yiddish songs, don't tell the story of the "golden old times," but one that questions the nostalgic lifestyle Jews had in twentieth century Krakow. His songs provide us with a window into his community, not just in a general but in a personal way, portraying this as a transitional period and a fragile one.

In 1942, while being marched to train station on the way to the Belzec death camp, Gebirtig was murdered by random Nazi fire.

– Based on Nathan Cohen's "Mordechai Gebirtig" entry for Yivo Archival Resources

Gebirtig's simplicity and honesty granted me the possibility of exploring a repertoire rich in anecdotes, laughter, pain, and history. Through it, I was able to imagine what my ancestor's life could have been like before WW2. It is our responsibility to preserve the history and the music of our people through learning by listening with the heart.

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### ***Dray Tekhterlekh***

This song tells the story of a father that attends the wedding of his youngest daughter. He confesses he feels great relief about his three daughters being married, but also some sadness to know that "the last bed will be vacant tonight." He says that although it was hard to raise three daughters, it is much harder to see them all leave the house.

### ***Reyzele***

*Reyzele* tells the story of a religious woman who falls in love with a non-religious Jewish man. Dovidl promises to become religious just so that they can be together, he says he will even go to Sabbath at the synagogue every Friday. The man only wants to convince Reyzele to come out despite her saying that she doesn't want her parents to find out she is in love with him.

### *Yankele*

In *Yankele*, a mother sings a lullaby to her baby while fantasizing about his future. Will he become a scholar? A businessman? A bridegroom? She knows it will cost her much hard work and many tears to make a man out of him.

### *Moyshela Mayn Frandt*

In this song, our character asks Moyshela how he is doing. They were once best friends and it's been years since they saw each other. He reminisces about their pranks together in Kheyder (afternoon Jewish school) and about their time together. He remembers these years with nostalgia but also with the joy of being young.

### *Mayn Yovl*

"Shpil Klezmer shpil oyf mir a lidl": in this song our character is asking for a "freilaj" for his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. A "freilaj" is a typical dance that is performed in Jewish festivities and celebrations. This particular "freilaj" is a bittersweet one; our character remembers his life and wonders what type of celebration one should have when one turns 50.

Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,  
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.  
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contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.  
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